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A mural of Martin Luther King Jr. and other key figures in African-American history appears on the Hudson Avenue building that houses the Rochester offices of Neighbors at Work Revitalizing the Upper Falls Community.

Keeping the dream alive

King's vision still shared 40 years after his speech

In his famous Aug. 1963 speech during the March on Washington, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said he dreamed of the day when "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers."

Almost 40 years later, on the evening of Jan. 12, the assembly gathered at St. Bridget's Church in Rochester embodied King's dream. Whites and blacks, Protestants and Catholics, gathered to honor three eighth-graders and three high-school seniors who exemplified King's qualities of leadership and faith. Four of the students were African-American. The other two were white.

Held in anticipation of Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 20, the event honored children who were recipients of St. Bridget's 16th

Annual Martin Luther King Scholarship Awards. The seniors received \$1,000 scholarships, and the eighth-graders received "Early Recognition" plaques recognizing their exemplary lives. Juliet Anderson, chairwoman of the Martin Luther King Scholarship Committee at St. Bridget's, said the awards were designed, in part, to keep alive for children King's dream of a compassionate world of interracial harmony.

"All of the right things are being said," she said of efforts to promote knowledge of King's ideals. "But some people are listening, and some are not."

It was apparent that the children who came to St. Bridget's were among those who are listening. They all wrote movingly of King's life and its effect on them. The three eighth-graders were Shemeka Elliott of Bishop Hogan Catholic Academy in Irondequoit, a bell choir member, choir member and altar server at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral; Leo Fisher IV of Victor Junior High, a lector and Eucharistic minister at Victor's St. Patrick Parish; and Terresha Flowers of Rochester's Jefferson Middle

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Story by Rob Culivan • Photo by Karin von Voigtlander

