

Peace Makers: Living "The Dream"

BY MADELINE LACORE



BARRY LENOIR OF THE UNITED BLACK FUND SPEAKS WITH MLK WALK PARTICIPANTS

PHOTO CREDIT: TYRONE HARRIS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - As the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. advocated, the residents of the Anacostia neighborhood in South East Washington marked his birthday in solidarity, celebrating what they share, rather than what divides them. This year they were 200 plus strong and included members of the United Black Fund, Korean and Latino communities.

Reminiscent of the walks King led during his lifetime, this year's effort was titled, "Global Peacemaker." Keith Silver, one of the organizers, said "Dr. King said it best, he said everybody is great because everybody can serve. And that's what this organization is about, no big "I", no little "U" everybody's equal." Among the many participants were local leaders like, Merilyn Holmes, president and founder of the nonprofit Corporation, Total Sunshine. "Most people know me as Ms. Total Sunshine," said Holmes, who also hosts a TV Show of the same name. "Every year we have a ceremony where we give valedictorians and salutatorians from D.C. a laptop for college. They were not getting that support and it's much needed." Holmes said she wants to make a difference in the lives she serves as an EMT-paramedic in the District.

Meanwhile, for Robert Wright, vice president of the Progressive Fire Fighters Association of Washington, D.C., a part of the International Association of Black Firefighters, explained that, "We've been looking out for the community on the fire EMS side. And this is just an extension of what we do." "Dr. King talks about bringing all the races, all the creed, all the religions as God's children. And I'm here because of that," said Peter Cho who owns the Martin Luther King Grocery Store on MLK Ave. He is also the Vice President of the Korean-American Grocers Association. Eight of his 11 employees are African American, a testament to his belief of togetherness. "Because if you separate you lose, if you unite, you win." For Tyrone Parker, executive director of The Alliance of Concerned Men in D.C., the Peace Walk is about making a difference for all. "One of the reasons is that we demonstrate the spirit of Martin so that the world will be able to see that we come together under one spirit to make a difference for the greater good of people," he said.