

By [Alison Matas](#)

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## King Day speakers focus on peace, participation

The Leila Green Alliance of Black School Educators sponsored the 40th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration at the Edward "Peel" Coleman Community Center.

All violence and fighting has the same source, Leroy J. Tavares Jr. told a crowd of people Monday.

He quoted James 4:1 — which says people quarrel because of the evil desires at war within them — and named pride, jealousy and anger among the culprits for what he called “atrocities in Canton.”

“The good God already told us where they come from,” Tavares said.

The senior pastor of Grace Christian Fellowship Church was the keynote speaker at the 40th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration, held Monday at the Edward “Peel” Coleman Community Center.

The Leila Green Alliance of Black School Educators sponsored the event, which was dedicated to the memory of pastor George Dunwoody and centered on the King quotation: “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

People of all ages filled the gymnasium to sing, pray, listen to a student essay and hear about ways to improve Canton.

When King died, Tavares said, he passed his work on to those still alive.

“Every little bit counts in the struggle that we find ourselves going through,” he said.

Tavares pointed out promises the Bible makes about peace: that there is no peace for the wicked and that the peacemakers are blessed because they are the children of God.

He said to achieve peace, Canton needs fearless commitment from leadership to open-minded discussion, bold participation from the people who live here, and courageous action.

Also Monday, Councilwoman Chris Smith, D-4, and Councilman Thomas West, D-2, both spoke about city news, highlighting the parks and recreation levy, the comprehensive plan and the redevelopment of Market Square. They asked those in attendance to come to meetings and to register to vote.

“We’re going to have something here in Canton,” West said, “but we have to take the first step.”

Reach Alison at 330-580-8312 or [alison.matas@cantonrep.com](mailto:alison.matas@cantonrep.com). On Twitter: @amatasREP



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Minister JaQuan Gamble, with L.I.F.E.’s Warriors of Worship, participates in The 40th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration at Edward “Peel” Coleman Center on Monday.

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## Outstanding community service award winners

• Patrice Fetzer, manager of service delivery for the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Stark County • Monica Womack, admissions counselor and adjunct faculty member at Stark State College • Robert Smith, pastor emeritus of Grace Christian Fellowship Church, and his wife • Jill Hogan, VXi Global Solutions

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