Every year, WE WIN Institute's Rites of Passage programs at Olson Middle School study and honor the contributions of the great, late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King was a great African American revolutionary who taught Black people to use non-violent resistance to change unjust systems in the United States. His leadership and direction paved the way for America to have its first African American president, Barack Obama.

Seventh and eighth grade students in WE WIN's classes at Olson Middle School were given the assignment of reading and discussing Dr. King. Their assignment was to write a poem about Dr. King. The poem had to be five stanzas and each stanza had to have at least four lines. The poem had to have five facts about this tremendous civil and human rights leader.

WE WIN uses African history and culture as a way to create pride in being Black and pride in the contributions that African Americans have made to the United States and humanity. Besides Rites of Passage assisting teenagers' transition into adulthood, we help strengthen their reading and writing skills.

WE WIN Institute has started a movement called Black Excellence that asserts that all Black children can be successful in school. Black Excellence is an inclusive movement which we all must be part of. Black Excellence says that we will no longer tolerate Black children in MinnesotaUnited States at 38% while simultaneously, White students in Minnesota have amongst the highest graduation rates at 83%. Our students' poems are an example of Black Excellence. having the lowest graduation rates in the

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**
**By Kijana Ransom**
**Seventh Grade**

On January 15th in 1929

Segregation was happening at the time

It was a time to

Put Black Americans

To Shame

On that day

Martin Luther King

Began the change

He grew to become a man

A preacher, husband and a father

He could not stand the injustice

He began his fight

For all of us

Dr. King married

The love of his life

Coretta Scott

In 1953

They had 4 beautiful children

2 boys and 2 girls

They were mostly quiet

And hardly bad

He organized the bus boycott

After Rosa Parks

Refused to give up her seat

To a White man

Because she was tired

Of standing on her feet

The bus boycott

Lasted for 11 months

Until the Supreme Court said

“That’s enough”

The buses was integrated

The boycott came to an end

Now more work for civil rights

Was about to begin

Blacks marched on Washington, D.C.

Dr. King performed his

I Have a Dream speech in

Washington, D.C.

On August 28 in 1963

On March 28 1968

Dr. King led the March in

Memphis, Tennessee

During the march

A 16 year old was shot

Dr. King returned to Memphis

April 3rd

To prepare a truly nonviolent march

That night he made his Mountaintop speech

April 4, 1968

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Was shot on the

Lorraine Motel balcony

He was shot by

James Earl Ray

Ray claimed that

The FBI was at fault

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**
**By Kevin Moore**
**Seventh Grade**

Dr. Martin Luther King

Had a dream

That all boys and girls

Of all colors

Could go to school

With each other

He wished we could all use

The same restrooms

And…

The same Schools

They killed him

But they can never

Killed his dream

They burned his house

They put him down

He will always be around

He did not believe in

Separate ways

Things should never

Stay that way

James Earl Ray

Killed

Dr. Martin Luther King

In

Memphis, Tennessee

I wonder if

The man was crazy

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**
**By Myeisha Purdimon**
**Eighth Grade**

Dr. Martin Luther King is a wonderful man

He was born in 1929

He died in 1968

Dr. King was an important man

Today he is very well known

Dr. King had many marches

He wanted freedom

And peace

Dr. King was a kind and nice man

Dr. King had four children

Dr. King was married to Coretta Scott

They married in 1953

Dr. King worked to change people’s hearts

About segregation

He wanted nothing but happiness

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Became a pastor

Of the Dexter Ave. Baptist Church

On December 1, 1955

Rosa Parks, a tailor’s assistant

Was tired after a hard days work

She refused to give up her bus seat to

A white man

For 11 months 17,000

Black people in Montgomery, Alabama

Walked to work or

Received rides from small cars owned

By the Black population of the city

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Was King

On April 4, 1968

He was shot at a motel in

Memphis, Tennessee

Every year

We celebrate his birthday