Martin Luther King, Jr. changed the course of history with his determination to overcome racism in this country. He led the Civil Rights Movement for over a decade and inspired millions with his “I Have a Dream” speech. Though assassinated in the late 1960s, MLK, Jr. will forever be known as a social activist. Did you know that activism is a key component of Citizenship?

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service** – To honor Dr. King and his persistent encouragement for all citizens to make the country a better place, the United States declared a new holiday in 1983: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. It is a way to put his teachings and solutions for social problems into action as a community. “On this day, Americans of every age and background celebrate Dr. King through service projects that strengthen communities, empower individuals, bridge barriers, and create solutions” ([http://www.nationalservice.gov/MLKDay](http://www.nationalservice.gov/MLKDay)).

You can make an impact on MLK, Jr. Day of Service:

- Research social problems in your local area
- Brainstorm ideas of how to combat unique social problems
- Pull together a couple of friends, your class or 4-H club to go out into your community and create positive change!
- Find events near you: [www.nationalservice.gov/MLKDay](http://www.nationalservice.gov/MLKDay)

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A list of other monthly events can be found on the [Global Citizenship webpage](http://www.volunteeractioncount.org/en/ivd2015.html).

**December 5th**

**Int’l Volunteer Day**

Volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. Make an impact on International Volunteer Day. Ideas can be found in the [November issue](http://www.nationalservice.gov/MLKDay).

**January 18th, 2016**

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service**

See article to the left.

"The time is always right to do what is right."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.
Global Citizenship

Share your story: #iowa4HGlobal

From Peace Corps to Youth Program Specialist

Before beginning her career, current Region 3 Youth Program Specialist Gail Castillo completed her undergraduate studies at Iowa State University pursuing a degree in social work. One of her professors encouraged her to apply to the Peace Corps, though she didn’t believe much would come of it. Shortly after, she went through an interview process and was assigned to serve for two years in a very small, Spanish-speaking, central African country: Equatorial Guinea. This was the first time Peace Corps was sending individuals into this country and there was no training center. Therefore, Gail’s training was split in two – half of it was at the Peace Corps training center in the country of Cameroon and half was spent with a host family so she could learn cultural customs. The family empathized with her because they had spent time in Spain and knew how difficult it was to be immersed in a completely different culture.

Adjusting to the culture – the customs, language, food and more – proved to be difficult. Gail noted, “It was an interesting thing to learn how to fit in.” She discovered the little, important things like getting to the taxi early so she could sit inside the cab rather than on a bench in the bed of the small, Toyota truck. There were also the big cultural experiences; she observed the place where slaves were kept before boarding ships to America and she learned that polygamy was still being practiced. One thing that will always stick with her is this memory: “I was traveling in a taxi and chatting with a woman sitting next to me. She was very cheerful and I would have never guessed that anything was wrong. I had no idea she was traveling for the funeral of a family member, but when she arrived at her hometown, she got out of the taxi and fell to the ground weeping and wailing. It wasn’t until she was on home ground that she began her mourning. I watched as she performed a ritual honoring the deceased and then her grieving was done. The experience was fascinating and one I will never forget.”

“You feel like you’re going to be gone forever and the whole world is going to change, but then the time flies and the only thing that has changed is you.” – Gail

Since her experience, Gail tries to truly listen to everyone around her. She believes you can learn so much about others’ perspectives of the world just by simply listening and asking questions to understand where they’re coming from. “You don’t have to travel the world to learn about it.” Gail encourages anyone who is seeking to gain international experience through an aid organization to ask a lot of questions to make sure it will be right for you. “It’s a leap of faith, but it’s worth taking and knowing if it’s for you.”

“You are only limited by your own imagination and what you want to learn about the world.” – Gail

To be featured in our newsletter, share your story! E-mail: youth_rachelw@iastate.edu | Social Media: #iowa4HGlobal

Any questions, comments, or ideas regarding events, global citizenship or stories: share with me today!