Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend of Service

Each year, the Office of Active Citizenship and Service seeks to actively engage students in discussion and service in order to become a positive change agent in the Nashville community. In addition to coordinating the annual MLK Weekend of Service, OACS was an active participant in the MLK Commemoration Series committee at Vanderbilt University. Each event presented students, faculty and staff members with the opportunity learn, think, and reflect on community engagement in the context of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy of hope, determination, and service.

By the Numbers
4 days of service
226 Vanderbilt students participated in the Weekend of Service
720 hours of service to local organizations
300+ participants in the MLK Day of Service with other universities
1 hour reflection session with staff and students

MLK Day of Service

For a second year in a row, OACS was actively involved with coordinating a collaborative service event with fellow Nashville universities, including Belmont, Trevecca Nazarene, Lipscomb, and Tennessee State Universities. The Day of Service also saw participants from Fisk University and Meharry College. Together, we were able to coordinate almost 300 students, staff, and faculty volunteers at eight service project sites in the Nashville community. The service sites included:

- Bailey STEM Elementary School
- Feed the Children
- Gernert Towers
- Habitat Restore
- Hadley Park Towers
- Nashville Rescue Mission
- Project CURE
- Soles for Souls
Vanderbilt had seven students serve as site leaders for the event. Student leaders ended the Day of Service by facilitating a reflection session focused on the role of community service in the context of Martin Luther King’s legacy.

Vanderbilt Weekend of Service

As a part of the Weekend of Service, many Vanderbilt student organizations hosted service projects in the Nashville community, including Nashville Tools for Schools, Freedom Farms Animal Sanctuary, and the Center for Refugees and Immigrants of Tennessee. Together, over 140 students participated in 22 service projects in the Nashville community. Student leaders were also charged to facilitate a reflection session that is pertinent to their respective service projects in order to create a meaningful and intentional service-learning experience.

OACS Global Service Cohort Service Project

The 2015 OACS Global Service Programs cohorts (London, Ecuador, Morocco, and South Africa) participated in a collective service project at Looby Community Center on Saturday, January 17, 2015. Hosted by Hands on Nashville, student cohorts and OACS program coordinators stripped and repainted three gyms. In total, approximately 150 service hours dedicated to enhance the community center recreational space.

OACS Reflection Session: Nashville Student Movement

As a capstone to the Weekend of Service, OACS hosted a reflection session highlighting the role of Nashville college students in the Civil Rights Movement. The session and discussion
focused on the modern-day meaning of segregation and how it should be addressed in issues of race and class today. As an outcome, both students and staff gained a new perspective of Nashville’s founding role in the Civil Rights Movement as well as an emerging perception of the student’s role in current social justice movements. The reflection session was very visual and interactive with videos and photos on loan from the Nashville Public Library’s Special Collections Department.