

Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast remarks

Mayor Brian C. Wahler

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Thank you Reverend and Mrs. Saunders, and to everyone on the Piscataway Civil Rights Advisory Commission. This is always a great event because of your many volunteer hours.

Thank you all for this opportunity to speak for just a few minutes today.

When I look at our nation and our world today – when I think about the past few years – I can tell you one thing: we cannot take progress for granted.

It was Congressman Elijah Cummings who said, “I’m going to try and make people realize that in order to live the life they are living, they need to have democracy, and it’s being threatened.”

America is once again in turmoil, not because of an external enemy but because the worst side of human nature has been allowed to flourish.

However, we are thankful to have harmony in our own community. In Piscataway, we do not just live next to each other but we are truly neighbors.

Let me please share a quote of Dr. King with you.

“People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other.”

We all know Dr. King as a leader of non-violent protest. However, he knew that being non-violent and protesting was not enough to bring about equality and justice. He knew that we had to love one another, to care for one another. That love begins with a desire to sit at a table with your neighbor, to see yourself in your neighbor's eyes, to build a community with your neighbor.

Community is built not just by speaking out but by listening. We free ourselves when we recognize our own common desires and humanity.

It was Congressman John Lewis who said, “Hold only love, only peace in your heart, knowing that the battle of good to overcome evil is already won.”

I hope this weekend that the spirit of Dr. King will move many communities forward, and with that, move our nation forward once again.

Thank you.