

Tonight
Mostly cloudy, with a low around 35.



Wednesday
A chance of showers, mainly after noon. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 58.

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Kids celebrate King with service

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More than three-dozen Pulaski Middle School students gave up their holiday Monday to perform community service in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The 37 students were taking part in the Martin Luther King Day of Service, which has been held at the middle school for the past four years. The event is organized by Beans & Rice Inc., Americorps and Community Housing Partners.

The purpose of the Day of Service, initiated by Congress in 1994, is to transform the federal holiday day honoring King into a day of community service, where the students have a "day on" rather than a "day off."

Students choosing to participate in the event performed a variety of com-



Melinda Williams/SWT

Pulaski Middle School students taking part in Monday's Martin Luther King Day of Service with a banner they created, thanking Dr. King for his contributions to civil rights and the community as a whole.

community service including serving meals at Pulaski Daily Bread, cleaning museum artifacts and organizing museum pic-

tures for the town of Pulaski, cleaning cages and exercising dogs at Pulaski County Humane Society and dusting shelves and

boxing books for Friends of Pulaski County Library. Other agencies providing service projects included Habitat for Humanity

ReStore, PMS, Pulaski Health and Rehab Center, Central Gym and Hensel Eckman YMCA. The students were supervised throughout the day by about 16 volunteers. At the end of the day,

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King

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the youth joined members of the community in honoring King with a Community Night event in the PMS Auditorium.

"All of our volunteers have a lot to be proud of today as they worked toward becoming our next generation of community servants," master of ceremonies Geoffrey Cooper told those attending the community night.

Two of the students who volunteered their services Monday were Emily Pittensbarger and Moeshia Finley.

Pittensbarger said she chose to take part in the day of service because she wants to "leave a mark on my community."

Finley, who was in her third year of community service, said she feels it is important to serve the community. She felt she was doing what King would want her to do when she volunteered to help clean kennels at Pulaski County Animal Shelter.

Finley said it's also possible to make a day of community service a day of fun.

Guest speaker for the evening was David Allen, a Pulaski businessman who owns Allen Providing Healthcare Services LLC.

"I count it a blessing

being here at this school that I attended in the 60s," Allen told the audience. He said he was overwhelmed to hear what the students had done for their community Monday.

"We are where we are right now because of great men like Dr. Martin Luther King," said Allen, who noted he was among the first African Americans to attend the school (formerly Pulaski High School) following desegregation.

At that time, he said he didn't fully appreciate the education he was receiving, so he urged the students to work hard, pay attention to their teachers and get the most out of their education.

"Back in the 60s I never thought I would amount to much myself, but I've come a long way since then because of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King," Allen said. "He showed us we can all be great and lead."

Allen said he knows in his heart there is nothing he can't do because the same one who strengthens him, the Lord, is the same one who strengthened King.

Allen said he once didn't understand what King meant when he said he has been to the mountaintop,

looked over and seen the Promised Land, but now he does.

"He (King) saw the vision of what is going on now — people coming together and being as one," Allen said. "What he did wasn't just for minorities, it was for all people."

In closing, Allen urged the students to "keep 'yes we can do it' in your mind."

Students participating in Monday's Day of Service included Abby Coble, Bradley Coleman, Christian Cook, Darius Cook, Emmanuel Cook, Heather Dean, Scotti Diamond, Caleb Dunford, Christopher Edwards, Taylor Estep, Moeshia Finley, Christie Foster, Christina Foster, Heather Grimsley, Elizabeth Hunley, Andrea Hutson, Charlee Jackson, Zack Johnson and Brianna Jones.

Also, Gracie Krunsberg, Kobe Krunsberg, Kassandra Larios, Emily Llaneras, Merina Nelson, Sidney Jane Nelson, Emily Pittensbarger, Tierra Plummer, Jeanette Reed, Nathaniel Robinson, Rosa Salmanca, Destiny Semones, Jade Serrano, Haelan Smith, Jaqueline Snider, Kamren Taylor, Ryan Taylor and Nicholas Viar.

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longer on the Board of Supervisors, Conner will continue representing the county, along with Sheffey, on the New River

Authority and two years on the New River Valley Regional Jail Authority.

Sheffey has indicated an interest in succeeding

will continue to serve on the Tornado Finance Committee.

McCready and Pratt will serve on the Local

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