

NAACP

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane.” Martin Luther King jr.

Program at the Gillioz Honoring Dr. King



The new president of the local NAACP, Toni Robinson emceed the Gillioz event following the MLK march which included music, poetry, theater and art. “Three Little Birds” sang two numbers and a multicultural ensemble led by the talented Robert Gibson wowed the crowd with several inspiring selections.



Meet Mariah Fuller, LPN

Tell us about your background. I was born at Citizen’s Memorial Hospital in Bolivar, Mo. to a white mom and a black father. I have always lived near Bolivar, growing up on a small farm outside of town. When I was 5 years old I knew I wanted to help people. My great grandmother was ill with cancer and as I helped her she



told me how good I was at it. I was one of the few black people in Bolivar. My family is predominately white and Baptist in a town where not many people approved of me as a biracial child. There was always a question in my mind as to whether or not I was welcome in my friends’ homes.

What can you tell us about your family? My mom has two children and dad has eight children. My brother goes to Parkview High school and my other siblings live on the East Coast near my dad. Although my parents were always present emotionally, we were often very poor. There were times when we ate sleep for dinner. *Where did you get your education?* I went to high school in Bolivar and earned my nursing degree at OTC. I graduated with my LPN degree in December of 2016. *Where do you practice now?* I work for Phoenix Home Health as a pediatric home health nurse. As a nurse you may have many roles, caregiver, advocate and sometimes a shoulder to cry on. What I find to be very important is the 1:1 care situation with patients. *What difficulties have you had to overcome?* I have worked since I was 15 years old. I did a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) program in



MLK March Draws Large, Diverse Crowd

A crowd of around 1,000 people came out on a cold and blustery day to celebrate the legacy of our national treasure, Martin Luther King. The marchers assembled at the Ice Park where Reverend TJ Appleby led the throng in prayer. Our new leadership led the march out of the Ice Park and into the streets.

Denny Wayne was present at the front of the march leading as he often has in the past. Denny was the first African American to be on the city council since the dismemberment of reconstruction in the 1870's. There currently is no African American member on the Springfield City council.

Many congregations of diverse faith communities were represented in the march holding signs with Bible Verses of love and acceptance. The Mayor's Human Rights Commission provided doughnuts and coffee for the assembling marchers.

Hats and gloves were collected for the Rare Breed youth center. The march terminated at the Gillioz theater for a program to honor Dr. King.

high school and began working as a CNA at age 17. There were times where I was responsible for my family and my little brother. I had to put myself through college and I am the first person in my family to go to college. I failed at nursing school during a time where I had assumed responsibility for my family and an important family member died. After that failure, I got myself together, went back and graduated at the top of my class and even won the "Clinical Excellence" award. *What are your goals?* I am enrolled in a program to get my RN Degree in North Carolina (as this is published, she has begun this process). My five year goal is to be a nurse practitioner. I am looking forward to my move to North Carolina, school and a relationship with an amazing man. *What hobbies do you have?* I kayak, swim, do hot yoga, travel, play the piano and guitar. When I am stressed one of my favorite things to do is to kayak underneath the highway over Springfield Lake, sit quietly in the water and listen to the traffic overhead while enjoying my thoughts. My aunt and I have volunteered at the "Rare Breed" to teach classes on family/consumer sciences. On a recent trip I saw the National Lynching Museum in Montgomery AL. *Have you read any good books recently?* I just finished "The Hate U Give" which was good, but my favorite book is "The Help". *What advice do you have for young people?*

1. Chase your dreams and chase them hard.
2. The situation does not define the person.
3. Even though the world will provide many reasons for you to fail, you can overcome your circumstances.
4. My Great Grandmother (who was white) said, "It doesn't matter what color you are, what matters is how you treat other people. We do not have to change the way they are (regarding racist people), they may change but you are not responsible."
5. Travel as much as you can. The people you encounter will make you a better person.
6. You do not have to fit a stereotype that has been predetermined for you because you have the ability to be your own person.
7. Get off of social media. I was on it too much for confirmation from others, I now get it from personal interaction with others.

"The power of the vote is the ONLY place where the power of the poor man is equal to that of the rich man." Denise Lieberman Esq.