

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DAY MARCH
FEBRUARY 19, 2015
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Monday, January 19, 2015, Martin Luther King, Jr. Street, San Antonio Texas. My first ever public march. Seven UUs from UUCHC joined about thirty UUs from San Antonio in the gigantic Colliseum Parking lot, boarded large buses - - an unending line of buses at this one of two loading zones in SA.

We grouped at Martin Luther King Jr. Park and the end of the already existing parade line. For almost an hour and a half we stood in one place and watched. People arrived in pairs and in small and large groups. They moved around us along the curb lines on either side and proceeded way beyond us to find places closer to the front of the parade route. Those who didn't head up to the front got in line behind us.

Even from our one little section of the march we could see and hear church groups, business groups, school groups, and just folks who came to march. Many of them carried banners or wore t-shirts identifying the group they represented or a social justice issue they supported. Many wore t-shirts honoring MLK; one such was black with white silhouette of MLK and the words, "Honoring the Dream."

And along the parade route: homeowners – older couples, multi-generation families, young families - sitting in lawn chairs in their front yards or gathered along front fences; folks of all ages on street corners, between chores at their businesses; one motorcycle club gathered curbside with their brilliantly shiny and brightly colored monster machines. At one of the many small independent churches there was a table set in the grass where they offered the marchers bottles of water. In front of one of the residences were various colored MLK t-shirts hanging in tree branches and along the fence with a hand written price sign. There were several hand-held signs referring to President Obama, in refreshingly different tones than some I've seen in Kerrville. At one corner we saw a gigantic beach umbrella atop a patio table, booth seats on either side - all installed into the bed of a large pick-up. What a way to watch a parade! Just in front of our UU group a large group of young people (which grew larger as the parade moved along), led by a young woman with a megaphone, repeated a number of slogans focused on police brutality and unjust arrest practices.

We were over half way along the 2.8 mile route when the street climbed a bit then leveled out at a high point. People began turning around and pointing as they looked ahead of us and behind us. As far as we could see up and down MLK Street moved a solid mass of humanity, all flowing like a wave toward the Pittman-Sullivan Park, at the west end of Martin Luther King, Jr. Street. Chills down my spine and goose bumps on my arms, I was overwhelmed by what I had become part of. We had no idea how many thousands of people were ahead of us in this parade, but we could see in the distance, far behind us, several thousand more marchers.

Being a part of this peaceful public testimony to the ideas and goals of Rev. King – to sing "We Shall Overcome" as we walked along-side some singing and others chanting not so peaceful slogans related to the recent events of violence around our country; to parade before people in their front yards or at local businesses or on street corners - families, older folks, younger guys with their gorgeous macho motorcycles, and some folks just trying to cross the street. An incredible experience!