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# King's life celebrated with calls to do his deeds

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Howard Lipin

Members of Eveoke Dance Theatre performed yesterday during the 22nd annual All People's Breakfast at Golden Hall honoring the legacy and birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.



Ashley Walker, former executive director of San Diego's Human Relations Commission, gave the keynote address at Golden Hall. Walker urged the more than 1,000 in attendance to embrace King's agenda seeking social justice for all.

Residents throughout the region yesterday celebrated the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. on his national birthday holiday at events that emphasized his accomplishments and unfinished work.

"I bear witness to the conditions and the circumstance Dr. King sought to change," said Ashley Walker, a black woman who grew up in pre-civil rights Alabama and later became head of San Diego's Human Relations Commission.

Walker was the keynote speaker at the 22nd annual All People's Breakfast at Golden Hall in downtown San Diego.

"I have an obligation to Dr. King that can only be paid forward," Walker said.

She urged the audience of more than 1,000 to remember the civil-rights icon as a revolutionary who believed in freedom and justice for all.

"There is a lot to do before 'all' includes everyone," Walker said. "So pick an issue, immigration, rights of indigenous people, disparities in health care and criminal justice."

Walker said the drive for equality also includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

In North County, speakers at the King breakfast at MiraCosta College focused on parental involvement and other commitments.

"In today's society, we must go beyond what we're asked for our children," said Gerald Johnson, pastor of City of Refuge Church of God in Christ in Oceanside and a chaplain with the city's Police Department.

Others planned to take a more active role. More than 250 Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus were planning to participate in a "day of service" cleanup at Balboa Park, but the event was postponed until Feb. 15 because of the rainy weather.

At Golden Hall, Michael Gaulden, a college-bound San Diego High School senior who has struggled with homelessness, received a standing ovation after he vowed to end the cycle of poverty in his family.

"It stops with me," said Gaulden, who participates in the Reality Changers college-prep and mentoring

program in San Diego.

Ashley Grisham, a Rancho Bernardo High School graduate, received the Human Relations Commission's first Ashley Walker award for speaking out about a racial incident involving a noose that was found in the theater at her former high school in 2007. Grisham is a sophomore at Spelman College, a historically black women's college in Georgia.

Walker, 61, retired last fall after 16 years as executive director of the Human Relations Commission, which investigates and mediates discrimination complaints related to employment, housing and public accommodations.

Her call for residents to go beyond the "I have a dream sound bites" and embrace King's more radical agenda of social justice for all was well received yesterday.

Linda Barufaldi of La Mesa thanked Walker after her speech for her support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Jay Powell, executive director of the City Heights Community Development Corp., said King believed in helping the poor.

"People forget that Dr. King stood for economic development," Powell said. "We've got to create jobs for people."

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