

City of Winston-Salem MLK “Helping Hands” Day

**“Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?' ”
“Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.”**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Purpose:

To provide a venue for city employees to have hands-on experiences with community service and giving back in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Goal:

To encourage city employees to make a tangible, positive difference in the Winston-Salem community by working with non-profit organizations that serve the poor and under-privileged.

Concept:

In 2015, Mayor Pro Tempore/Council Member Vivian H. Burke worked with Wanda Allen-Abraha, the Human Relations Department Director, to create a City program honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The concept was to develop a King Holiday Weekend Kick-Off for the community at-large, which is how the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Helping Hands Day for community service began in 2016. The precursor to the MLK Helping Hands program features members of the City Council at a news conference. The City Council discusses the importance of the King Holiday and the City’s commitment to encouraging employees to give back to the community. Employees are afforded a paid two-hour volunteer shift (10 a.m. -12:00 p.m.), during the work day on the Friday of the King Holiday weekend, in order to volunteer at pre-selected organizations/agencies. Employees pre-register for the organization/agency of their choice. Pizzas and drinks are provided to participating employees at the conclusion of the community service volunteer work shift. Employees are also provided with t-shirts to wear while they are serving.

Internal Partners:

Human Relations Department, Marketing and Communications Department, Human Resources, and the City Manager’s Office

External Partners:

In partnership with HandsOn NW North Carolina, participating community service agencies have included: Goodwill, United Way, The Salvation Army, Friends of Happy Hills Cemetery, Second Harvest Food Bank, HOPE, the Sawtooth School for Visual Arts, Senior Services, Dress for Success, The Diaper Bank of North Carolina Greater Triad, Forsyth Humane Society, Crisis Control Ministries, Sunnyside Ministries, Habitat for Humanity Restore, The Arts Council, and The Shepherd’s Center.