

Jan 18, 2018 Rajesh MLK day talk – 5 min/ 480 words

Theme – It is not over. Parents, we signal our priorities when we show up to do the right thing, for social justice.

The kids do not get there on their own ... our Roeper families are with them. Parents, we signal our priorities when we show up to do the right thing for social justice.

Greetings everyone! thank you for making time to be here at the Roeper School to celebrate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King. My name is Rajesh Radhakrishnan, and I am honored to speak here today as a Parent and in my volunteer-capacity as Parent Representative for Inclusion & Diversity with the Roeper Parent Club, also known as the RPC.

I want to thank you - students of Roeper, parents and members of the extended community for making it a priority to be here today. Where we choose to spend our time is a signal we send to our children, ... more meaningful than many of the words we hear, is that we chose to be here on a snowy Monday evening; this is the signal we send to our children and to the extended community.

This school is creating more avenues for its youth to be involved in the community in a hands-on manner; we have increased community service activities; and incorporated into the curriculum more ways to broaden exposure and to cross boundaries. This week our 8th graders are spending several days in Detroit doing a combination of fun and learning activities, interacting with community leaders and artists. Some of them will stay overnight at a community center that was a vibrant synagogue in downtown Detroit right up to the 50s and 60s. I am proud of the fact that Roeper 8th graders will play a part in trying to reverse the trend of fleeing from our troubled spots, I am proud our youth will cross boundaries that may help leave behind a unified, welcoming community in not only in Downtown Detroit but also in their young minds.

I am saddened that in 2017 divisive actions and polarizing rhetoric only increased. Ignorance of the powerful in decision-making authority has huge repercussions (I don't know if it was Dr King or Dr Who who said that ...) – let us be careful this year with the choices we make and in whom we vest power.

Dr. King is as relevant today as he was in 1963 or 1958. Roeper School has a special place with its legacy and voice for social justice.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that. We have different ethnicities, colors, sexual orientations, and countries of heritage in our small 600-student Roeper village. We benefit when we open our minds to inclusion and social justice. I would like to take the time to sit down, meditate to clarify and strengthen my resolve so that I can be strong and firm in action.

Again, I want to thank you all for making it a priority to be here today, to signal to our children and to our community that the time is always right to do the right thing.

Thank you,

Namaste! Shalom! As salamu alaykum! God Bless!