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Mayor: Can we make MLK Day one of nonviolence?

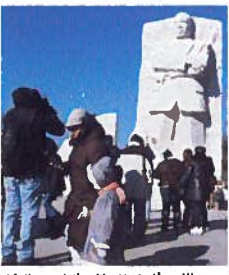
January 16, 2012 | BY DAN GERINGER, gerindg@phillynews.com 215-854-5961

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SHOCKED and angered by the senseless shooting deaths of three teenage boys in Juniata Park last week, Mayor Nutter asked: "Can we be nonviolent for just one day in this city?"

After a weekend in which a young man was beaten to death by thugs in Old City - the 20th homicide of the new year - maybe today, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, will be that nonviolent day.

About 85,000 Philadelphians will volunteer citywide, and Nutter will speak at a 4 p.m. community anti-violence meeting at Bethel Temple Community Bible Church, on Allegheny Avenue near Elia Street in Kensington.



Visitors at the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial in Washington, D.C. (ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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He will discuss the Juniata Park homicides, in which a 30-year-old man allegedly shot up a car filled with seven teenage boys who planned to fight the man's stepsons. Three of the teens in the car died.

"We caught that little bastard in 24 hours," Nutter told the Daily News yesterday, referring to the alleged shooter's arrest in a Bensalem motel. "You thought your kids might get beat up by the kids in the car? So instead of saying, 'Hey, fellas, I know why you're here, go home,' your solution was to wait for them in an alley and kill them?"

"So now your kids are not going to have a father because you've got three murders and an attempted murder and you're done. Did that cross your mind?"

U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah will join Nutter and thousands of students at Girard College today to package 100,000 meals to be distributed worldwide by an organization called Stop Hunger Now.

Cleanups are scheduled for today by PhillyRising, the mayor's MLK-spirited campaign to stem violence in the city's most crime-ridden neighborhoods. Here's the schedule: Swampoodle (8 a.m., Chalmers Park); Frankford (12 p.m., Hedge Park and Wilmot Park); Strawberry Mansion (12 p.m., 32nd Street near Cumberland); Hartranft (12 p.m., Germantown Avenue near Lehigh); Elmwood (9 a.m., Woodland Avenue near 70th), and South Philly (1 p.m., Christian Street near 17th).

Members of the city's immigrant communities will gather at Arch Street United Methodist Church on Broad Street near Arch for a noon march to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement building on 16th Street near Callowhill to support Philadelphians facing detention and deportation. Marchers will be from DreamActivist PA, Juntos, Media Mobilizing Project and One Love Movement.

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