

**The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's
Dr. Martin Luther King's
I Have A Dream Speech Event
Martha's Vineyard • 1998**



On August 28, 1998, the Institute organized a major event in conjunction with the 35th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech at **Union Chapel in Oak Bluffs**. Originally planned as a healing ceremony for Vineyard residents who were troubled by the July, drug-related death of a young, black man who lived on the island, the event turned into something more. Invited guests brought the national media. Union Chapels 300 seats overflowed to the 2,000 people who listened outside on loud speakers.

Vineyard youth were on center-stage. **Sebastian Corwin** dressed as Dr. King and read his bio. Three youth read Dr. King's speech: **Giles Welch, Olivia Lew** and **Mia Gonsaleves**. **Democratic US Representative John Lewis** of Georgia, the youngest leader on Dr. King's team recently published book *Walking With the Wind*. He inspired the audience with his passionate plea: "Don't give up. Don't become bitter. Don't get lost in a sea of despair. Keep the faith, keep your eyes on the prize. Keep focused on your dreams. Walk with the wind. Let the spirit of history be your guide." **President Bill Clinton** spoke of **Nelson Mandela's** journey to freedom and how he had to practice forgiveness. Harvard Law School professor **Dr. Charles Ogletree Jr.** served as the Master of Ceremonies. People in the book attended **Trude Lash, Eleanor Roosevelt's** collaborator **City Year** founders **Allen Khazei** and **Michael Brown, Captain Ray Gatchalian, Terry Mollner**.

The Institute's executive director, Marianne Larned, spoke of how her father had marched with Dr. King and how she was inspired by Dr. King's

vision that inspired her to volunteer as a youth in Roxbury to teach black youth to read. "Our hope is that through the stories in the book we will pass on the dream and legacy of service to as many children as possible and inspire people to build a better world - with and for our children."

As it does with all its programs, the Institute closed by singing the civil rights movement anthem: ***We Shall Overcome***. Congressman Lewis showed us how Dr. King would sing the song – "crossing arms in front of you and holding hands with your neighbors to keep you strong."

Background

The Martha's Vineyard community has deep roots and a rich legacy from the civil rights movement. "The **NAACP** was actually started in the 1960's," says **Bob Tankard, Principal, West Tisbury School**. "They realized the struggle, went to marches, became advocates for civil and equal rights in our community and financially supported the movement." Tankard's sister-in-law, Carrie Tankard recently discovered that Dr. King had a special connection with the Vineyard. The summer of 1963, he was a guest at **Mrs. Lambert's** home on Eastville Avenue in Oak Bluffs. "Mrs. Lambert talked of how Dr. King was working on his speech for the March on Washington in August," Carrie says. That speech became his most memorable, "I Have a Dream."

"I'm concerned that young people today have forgotten the 'Dream,'" says Tankard. "When I ask students what Dr. King means to them, they often respond that it's a school holiday." Tankard was saddened to realize, "They had lost the purpose of Dr. King's work. As educators and parents, it's up to each one of us to retell this story to our young people, so we can keep the 'Dream' alive."

"***Stone Soup for the World*** teaches us how we can reach out beyond the boundaries of our own communities and make a difference on the other side of town or on the other side of the world," says Randi Vega, Executive Director, Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce. "We can bring our communities together to improve the quality of life for everyone, not just the privileged few," she says. "We can rekindle the 'Dream' in young people and we can start by giving them this book."