



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Communities Across Oregon and Southwest Washington Honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day Through Service with SOLVE**

**Portland, Ore., January 20, 2026** – On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, communities across Oregon and Southwest Washington came together to turn shared values into action through a series of volunteer-led cleanup and restoration projects supported by SOLVE. Neighbors and community groups, families and corporate teams gathered in parks, school grounds, downtown districts, and natural areas to care for the places they call home, honoring Dr. King’s legacy through service.

Across the region, over **800 volunteers** participated in **six Martin Luther King Jr. Day service projects**, collectively removing **over 6,000 pounds of trash** and completing hands-on work that included litter cleanup, invasive species removal, mulching, planting native vegetation, and trail maintenance.

Starting off at **Irving Park**, approximately **450 volunteers** spread out to remove an estimated amount of 1,700 pounds of litter and recyclables from the historic Albina neighborhood, helping keep the area welcoming while preventing waste from entering local waterways. Following the cleanup, participants and neighbors were invited across the street to **Mike Bennett Studios** for a family-friendly community gathering featuring SOLVE-themed coloring sheets, warm drinks, snacks, and conversation. The gathering also featured an **exclusive sneak peek** of the first unreleased episode of the **Zooquarium Podcast**, officially launching that day, along with a **Q&A with Mike Bennett and co-host Chanel Hason**.

“Martin Luther King Jr. Day reminds us of the power of service and community,” said **Keith Wilson**, Mayor of Portland, who joined SOLVE’s litter cleanup at Irving Park. “Seeing people come together today to care for shared spaces reflects the values Dr. King championed and the kind of city we continue to build.”

Martin Luther King Jr. Day service projects reflected a wide range of ways communities showed up to care for shared spaces. Together with the **Multnomah Neighborhood Association**, volunteers removed debris from abandoned campsites, accumulated trash, and illegally dumped bulky items such as furniture and tires along SW Barbur Blvd. Under guidance of the **Fruit Tree Project**, community members gathered at the Fruits of Diversity Orchard in North Portland to pick up trash and orchard debris, spread mulch, and remove invasive blackberry canes. At **Mary S. Young Park in West Linn**, volunteers focused

on forest restoration by removing invasive plants, mulching native species, planting shrubs and trees, and helping maintain trails.

In Southwest Washington, **Hockinson High School Band students** and community members picked up litter around the high school campus in Brush Prairie, while in **Hillsboro**, volunteers cleaned up downtown streets and removed graffiti, helping support a more welcoming and vibrant city center.

*“Martin Luther King Jr. Day is about showing up for one another and for the places we share,”* said Kris Carico, CEO of SOLVE. *“What made this day especially meaningful was seeing people not only take action through cleanup and restoration, but also stay to connect, whether through conversation, creativity, or simply being together as a community.”*

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is recognized nationally as a Day of Service, a reminder that caring for our communities and shared spaces is an ongoing commitment. Through cleanup, restoration, and connection, volunteers honored Dr. King’s legacy by turning reflection into action.

SOLVE’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2026 events were presented by **Kaiser Permanente** and supported by **Swire Coca-Cola**, the **National Recreation and Park Association**, **Love Your Happy Place**, and **Portland Parks & Recreation**. These projects were part of SOLVE’s broader effort to support year-round community-led service opportunities across Oregon and Southwest Washington.

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#### **About SOLVE**

SOLVE brings communities together to take care of our environment and enhance our waterways. Since 1969, the organization has grown from a small, grassroots initiative to a national model of volunteer action. Today, SOLVE mobilizes and trains thousands of volunteers of all ages across Oregon, and SW Washington, to clean and restore our neighborhoods and natural areas, while empowering a community of environmental stewards for our state. For more information about SOLVE’s volunteer opportunities, visit [solve.org](http://solve.org).

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