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# Lane County celebrates Martin Luther King Jr.

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**By Elissa Harrington**

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EUGENE, Ore - 45 years ago, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. The diverse turnout at the Eugene Hult Center's MLK celebration might suggest many of those dreams have come true.

Blacks, whites, the old, and the young. All different types of races and all different types of religions all came together in one room to honor one man. Martin Luther King Jr.

"We've had a lot to celebrate this weekend," says Linda Hamilton of the local MLK Celebration committee.

This MLK day, the nation is seeing one of Dr. King's ultimate dreams come true. Tuesday, Barack Obama will be sworn in as the first black president of the United States.

"It also lets a lot of young people with color know that it can happen," says Hamilton. "This dream can come true."

Keynote speaker of the MLK celebration, Jonah Edelman, says education is Oregon's number one civil rights issue. Edelman is the founder and CEO of Oregon's "Stand for Children." It's a grassroots organization that tries to help kids get education and support.

Edelman says civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. inspired him, as well as his own mom. His mother was the first black woman to be admitted to the Mississippi bar. She then moved forward with her education to fight Jim Crow laws.


"She brought a lawsuit against segregated schools that finally rid the state of all white schools," says Edelman.

From the steps of the Lincoln Memorial where Dr. King delivered his speech 45 years ago to the Hult Center of Eugene, King's message lives on. Many say his legacy gives them hope their dreams will also come true.

"King is probably smiling right now," says Hamilton.

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