

# Newsday

## LONG ISLAND

### Preaching peace across LI

BY BRANDON BAIN

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Around Long Island yesterday, hundreds attended memorial events that praised the legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King through speech and song, with interfaith community groups discussing racial tolerance and gang violence.

At Hofstra University, about 200 people attended the Stop the Hate Vigil, at which several community and religious leaders spoke of King's legacy in today's world.

Civil rights attorney Fred Brewington said he once rode his bike at age 8 to see King and that King even rubbed his head. "I was pumped up," he recalled.

He praised King's legacy as a crusader against war and poverty through nonviolence and speaking out.

Brewington also led the Shepherd's Singers Christian ministry in an upbeat rendition of the traditional spiritual "Wade in the Water."

"Dr. King has had an impact on a lot of people, but Dr.



PHOTO BY JAMES CARBONE

About 200 attend the Stop the Hate Vigil yesterday at Hofstra University, one of several events to honor King.

King's holiday is not an African-American holiday, it is an American holiday," Brewington said to applause. "He was probably one of the greatest people to come out of the 20th century. His ability to transform a negative into a positive was amazing."

Sergio Argueta, executive director of S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, normally focuses on preventing gang violence, but yesterday, he encouraged young people to "step it up" and become more active in continuing

King's legacy.

King "led the movement, but it was the young people who were there to do the work," Argueta said.

"He enlisted all of us to be drum majors for peace and for justice," said Margaret Melkonian, of the Long Island Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives.

Other events highlighted connections between the African-American and Jewish communities during King's career and the civil rights movement.

"You realize that they destroyed his body, but they couldn't destroy his spirit," said Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, executive vice president of the New York Board of Rabbis. He was speaking at a ceremony in King's honor attended by about 200 people at Temple Israel of Lawrence last night, including members of the Muslim, Jewish and Christian faiths.

In Huntington Station, a service at St. Hugh of Lincoln Roman Catholic Church commemorated King's campaign to aid the poor, with members of the Christian, Jewish Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Baha'i faiths offering prayers and song.

Nearly 400 attended the two-hour service organized by the Mobilized Interfaith Coalition Against Hunger.

"It's a shame we only spend one day talking about him. Maybe we should be doing it more often," said Liz, a New Hyde Park resident at the Hofstra vigil.

Staff writer Tim Healy contributed to this story.