

This has been an interesting beginning to 2021. Despite the recent negativity in our country, it is a perfect time to take stock in our arsenal of good. To set us in the right direction, I invite you to turn to two relevant people who are at the forefront of the recent news cycle to give us guidance.

Joanne Rogers, who with her husband Mister Rogers, was committed to improving our communities and the lives of our children passed away at the age of 91. She carried on the legacy of her husband and helped make it a more beautiful day in our neighborhood in so many ways. After Fred passed away in 2003, Joanne continued to be a beacon of light focused on how to help children make sense of the negativity that they faced in their lives.

Today, we celebrate the life and impact of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a towering and iconic figure in our nation's history whose prophetic ministry called all of us to give ourselves to the cause of racial and social justice. I imagine how Dr. King would teach us to deal with recent events if he was still with us. He would most likely urge us to ponder how our own actions can affect change, harkening us to his words, "What are you doing for others?"

As I reflect on the events in our nation, I turn to Mrs. Rogers and Dr. King for inspiration to share important lessons within our school community. Each of these people in his or her way was a teacher. For me, teaching is sacred. Teaching is personal, heart to heart, soul to soul. Making ourselves available to the students is truly a privilege. The great mystery of teaching is that we are often unaware of the impact and the relationship. True, we remember icons like Dr. King and Mister Rogers because they were famous, but think about the teachers who helped you through the negativity you faced as a student. Good teachers leave a part of themselves behind everyday and every day we have an opportunity to impart lessons well beyond the typical school subjects.

Every one of us in the Maplebrook community is a teacher in some way. There is more negative in our lives than ever before. It's on TV, it's on the internet and with a click of a button, we are engaged. Let's draw upon the advice of Rogers and King by asking how we can help? Let's honor their legacies by taking the positive path and being a good example for our students. After all, they are always watching. This is how we create a world for our students that teaches them to feel resilient enough to handle challenges. What a privilege, in what can be perceived as a dark time, to be the adult in the room, helping our students find their way.

Wishing you all a healthy and peaceful week ahead.