The theme for the 2015 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Week, "5 DAYS...54 MILES...50 YEARS: THE MARCH FROM SELMA", was inspired by the 50th anniversary of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference made Selma, Alabama the focus of its efforts to register black voters in the South after several attempts by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were met with violence. SNCC planned peaceful demonstrations and asked demonstrators not to fight back against anyone who committed violence against them. However, demonstrators were tear-gassed, clubbed, spat on, whipped, trampled by horses, and jeered by others for demanding the right to register to vote. Television and newspapers carried pictures of the event in what became known as "Bloody Sunday." Dr. King called for another protest. On March 21st Dr. King and hundreds of protesters marched from Selma to the capitol in Montgomery, protected by U.S. Army troops and Alabama National Guard forces that President Lyndon Johnson had ordered under federal control. As they marched, their numbers swelled. It took the demonstrators 5 days and they travelled 54 miles. By the time they reached Montgomery, 25,000 supporters—black and white—had gathered in front of the state capitol to hear Dr. King and other speakers and performers address the crowd. Congress responded to these events by enacting the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

We come together each year to honor Dr. King because his story continues to inspire people to want to live in the world that he envisioned where justice is available to all people. And 50 years later, as we work in our communities today to build trust around issues of difference and justice we should remember the legacy of Dr. King.
Service Week Events – January 19th to 23rd

Monday: Feed Em’ Soup Dinner. NIU students, staff, and faculty volunteered by serving food and cleaning the kitchen at Feed Em’ Soup.

Tuesday: Memorial March and Think Tank. The NIU and DeKalb communities came together to March in remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the March on Selma. Afterwards, everyone engaged in a Think Tank to discuss some solutions to the civil rights problems that we face today.
Wednesday: Feed Em’ Soup.

Thursday: Speech Performances and Concert. NIU Students recited Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speeches, sung old African American spirituals, incorporated African dance, and performed poems dedicated to Dr. King’s memory.

Friday: Presidential Breakfast. Members of NIU and surrounding communities were recognized for their contributions on the NIU campus and within the community. The award categories included the P.E.A.C.E Award received by Randiss Hopkins; the Outstanding Community Service Award received by Nancy Prange; and the Communiuniversity Leadership Award received by Menelek Shah.
The Dream Wall was put in the Middle and High Schools in Dekalb for children to write their dreams. Pieces of the wall were also on display at every program during the week. The wall was put together with all six pieces at the Presidential Breakfast to display all of the Dreams of NIU and it's surrounding communities.

This year, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Week Planning Committee consisted of diversity centers, campus units, and student representatives from various student organizations who helped to plan and coordinate most of the Service Week events. Congrats to the Planning Committee and all of the sponsors:

African Student Alliance, Alpha Phi Alpha, Center for Black Studies, Center for NGO Leadership and Development, Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, Gender & Sexuality Resource Center, Latino Resource Center, M.O.V.E., O.B.E.A. Women of SAAS, Office of Community Affairs, Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning, Office of the President, Student Involvement and Leadership Development, and S.I.S.T.E.R.S....Special thanks also to Julio Ruiz-Santana, Latino Resource Center for creating the amazing graphics for the fliers and program, Commander Rodman and the NIU police for aiding with the March, and University Marketing and Media Services for the amazing photos of all of the events this week.
PICTURED ABOVE – CENTER FOR BLACK STUDIES STAFF [LEFT TO RIGHT]: Mr. Derrick Smith, Community Outreach Coordinator; Dr. LaVerne Gyant, Director; Dr. Joy Coates, Associate Director; and Ms. Regina Curry, S-Plan Coordinator