

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Benton to Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with Events Focused on Unity, Service, and Youth Voice

Benton, AR – January 6, 2026 – The Alpha Alpha Rho Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, in partnership with several community organizations, invites Saline County residents to participate in the 2026 Benton events & activities celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community partners include Ralph Bunche Community Development Council (CDC), the Benton School District, Central Arkansas Development Council (CADC), the City of Benton, Everett Buick GMC, First Baptist Church, First United Methodist Church, Northside Church of Christ, the Ralph Bunche Neighborhood Association (RBNA), Recycle Saline, Saline County, Summerwood Partners, the Saline Courier, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Alpha Alpha Rho Omega Chapter, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated®, Tau Phi Lambda Chapter, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and other local churches. This year’s theme, **“Building Bridges, Not Barriers,”** calls the community to come together in service, reflection, and collective action.

The 2026 celebration includes a **Unity Parade & Block Party**, a **Community Service Project**, a **Community Prayer Breakfast**, and a **Student Essay Contest**, all designed to strengthen families, connect communities, and advance Dr. King’s dream.

Unity Parade

On **Saturday, January 17, 2026**, the community is invited to gather for the Unity Parade beginning at **10:00 a.m.**, with lineup starting at **9:15 a.m.** at **C.W. Lewis Stadium**. Neighbors, churches, schools, organizations, vehicles, floats, and community groups are encouraged to participate in this joyful march of solidarity, celebrating unity and togetherness. Entry is free. Sign up using the QR code on our flyer or by contacting Quawana Bryant at qbryant542@gmail.com.

The **Unity Block Party** will follow the Unity Parade and will begin at **11:00 a.m.** at the Saline County Courthouse. The block party will include community booths, live entertainment, kids' activities, and complimentary food & beverages for everyone. Sign up using the QR code on our flyers or by contacting Tonya Willingham at tywillingham@gmail.com.

Community Service Project

In the spirit of service, Alpha Alpha Rho Omega Chapter is leading a community initiative to help launch a much-needed food pantry at the **Ralph Bunche Community Center**. Community members are encouraged to donate nonperishable food items, hygiene essentials, and basic household necessities to support families facing hardship. Donations and additional details are available via the QR code on event flyers or email serve@fbcbenton.org for extra ways to give and to learn more. The donation **deadline is February 2, 2026**.

Community Prayer Breakfast

On Monday, January 19, 2026, at 8:00 AM, a Community Prayer Breakfast will be held at **the Northside Church of Christ Outreach Center, 917 North East Street, Benton**. The fellowship will include inspiring words, powerful prayer, and breakfast as the community gathers to honor Dr. King's vision of unity and peace. Entry is free.

Student Essay Contest

The celebration also includes a **Student Essay Contest**, empowering area students to reflect on themes of unity and justice. The contest is open to area students, with guidelines available through participating schools. **Winners will be recognized in February 2026**. Check with your school for details.

Together, these events provide meaningful opportunities for residents of all ages to serve, celebrate, learn, uplift, and unite while honoring Dr. King's enduring legacy.

About Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Alpha Alpha Rho Omega Chapter

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® is the first historically African American Greek-lettered sorority. The Alpha Alpha Rho Omega Chapter is committed to service,

sisterhood, and programs that uplift and empower the Benton and Saline County communities.

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