

Dear Friends,



This week, we honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Florida's African-American leaders, who have contributed so much to our state's history and heritage. Our celebrations began last week, when the First Lady and I hosted a reception honoring and kicking off Florida's Black History Month events. The theme this year is *Past Pioneers + Present Role Models = A Brighter Future*. Activities include art and essay contests for students, and we are encouraging students, parents, teachers and principals to nominate full-time African-

American educators in elementary, middle or high schools for the Black History Month Excellence in Education Award. Visit www.FloridaBlackHistory.com for more information.

Tuesday I had the opportunity to experience the historical swearing-in of our 44th President. As I looked out over the millions of Americans gathered on our National Mall – the sea of humanity – I was hopeful for America's future. I had an overwhelming sense that our nation is coming together like never before for a common cause. These historic times have brought a renewed energy to the American people. President Obama spoke of our nation's rising to the occasion in this time of national crisis. He called for work to be done – for action, bold and swift. The President pledged to build bridges and roads – not just to create new jobs – but to lay a new foundation for growth. We share that cause here in Florida.

Just as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. held out hope to the nation more than four decades ago when he stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and spoke to the thousands who were there: He called us to believe “that somehow this situation can and will be changed.” Dr. King encouraged us to “not wallow in the valley of despair” – ...“though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow – [as Americans and Floridians we] STILL have a dream.”

I am committed to working together – with Republicans, Democrats and Independents in our congressional delegation and our state legislature to move Florida forward during this new era in our nation's history.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Photo Caption:

Top Left: At a reception honoring Martin Luther King Jr. and Florida's African-American leaders, Governor Charlie Crist and the First Lady invite students to participate in this year's Black History Month activities including art and essay contests.