



Leah Quintero

writing, 13-18

“A riot is the language of the unheard”

Martin Luther King jr. left a lasting mark on this world. He is a civil rights legend and was an amazing man. In school we are taught about him and his work, and we spend a few days a year around January learning about his life. But now, thinking about what would happen if MLK was still alive, I believe he would be upset by how little progress has been made. King dedicated his entire life to racial justice, and although he undoubtedly changed the course of history, it's still as if we've only moved an inch in this race for equality and we are miles away from the finish line. For years and years people of color have been ignored and casted aside, they are the “unheard” that King talked about in his quote. So it's no wonder that to get their voices heard they have to burn a building down.

These immense protests and riots that occurred over the last year could be a sign that the world has not forgotten all about what MLK did and what he fought for. His work could be what inspired thousands of people to get out of their houses and stand up for what they believe in. But now the question is: “How do we continue to keep his legacy alive if there aren't these massive groups of people yelling in the streets?”. To me, honoring someone so influential as MLK could be something as simple as putting up a poster in your room or writing a piece like this one, but sometimes those little things just don't feel like they're enough. Martin Luther King spent years protesting and speaking out, and was even killed for expressing his opinion, so it feels as if our actions, although they are honoring him in a way, are so trivial. The summer of 2020 was spent getting the attention of the big politicians and people in power by rioting, but now, before they look away again, we have to get them to make a difference. We have to get them to sign bills and pass laws to make streets safer for black and brown folks, we have to get them to listen when people of color have something to say, and in that way, I believe we can keep Martin Luther King's legacy alive.