

Martin Luther King Memorial Construction Gets Underway



If all goes according to plan, a new memorial will open in Washington, D.C., in two years. The Martin Luther King National Memorial will stand on land not far from the Lincoln Memorial, where Dr. King gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech in 1963. The memorial will be the first on the National Mall to honor an African American.

When construction of the King Memorial is complete, three large stones will stand on the site. People will enter by walking between two 30-foot-tall stones. Another large stone will stand off in the distance. Together, the three stones appear to have been a boulder from which the center was carved out and pushed back. The two entry stones will be called the Mountain of Despair, which are words taken from a line in Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. The other stone is named the Stone of Hope, from the same line in the speech.

The Stone of Hope will be the centerpiece of the King Memorial. One side of that stone will have a 3-story-tall sculpture of Dr. King carved into it. Quotes from Dr. King will be carved into the other side of the stone and into a stone wall that will ring the memorial site, too. The likeness of Dr. King, which is being carved by a Chinese sculptor, is almost finished. Soon it will be loaded aboard ships for the 11,000-mile journey to Washington.

NEWS WORD BOX

organizers acre
despair sculpture
centerpiece generations

Construction just got underway on the 4-acre memorial. As workers began removing sidewalks and trees where the memorial will stand, Dr. King’s sister spoke about her brother. “I think he would say, ‘No, don’t do this for me,’” she said, “but we have to do it because generations yet unborn need to know about Martin Luther King, Jr.”

KIDS HELP RAISE MONEY FOR THE MEMORIAL

Money is still being raised to build the King Memorial. So far, organizers have raised about 90 percent of their \$120 million goal. Students around the world have played a key role in raising money. In 2008, for example, students in Baltimore collected 40 pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, or dollars on the 40th anniversary of King’s death. More recently, kids in New York held a “Reading to Build the Dream” read-a-thon. Students in Germany sold “Build the Dream” wristbands to help build the memorial.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

If people in your state or community were to construct a new memorial, which person or group of people might that memorial honor?