

Officials gather to honor Dr. King

BY ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

A tribute to the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. helped bring his message home to Staten Islanders as 50 clergy, politicians and other guests gathered yesterday at the state Developmental Disabilities Service Office in Willowbrook.

The civil rights leader was recalled in speeches and song in one of the first of a great number of events scheduled this weekend honoring King's birthday Monday.

"Are we reaching out to the homeless, the elderly, the disabled? If others would follow the example set here at the Staten Island Developmental Center, Dr. King's dream would be much closer to reality," said Faye Goodman, affirmative action administrator.

Racism, militarism and materialism are three main blocks to improving human relations, said the Rev. Lee MacCallum, pastor of Olivet Presbyterian Church in West Brighton. "We step over people in the street as we step into the door of Trump Tower."

The Rev. Calvin O. Rice of First Central Baptist Church in Stapleton applied King's principles of non-violence and justice to local

events. "Here on Staten Island alone, we've had 36 or more racial incidents" in the past year, he said.

"What can you do? Go back home and be a good neighbor to somebody, no matter if he's on the other side of the track . . . and the dream will live on," he concluded.

Also during the event, achievement awards were presented to service office employees Geneva Jones and Lennox Tannis. The ceremony was the office's eighth annual tribute to King.