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Jan. 29-31, students at Radford University got the chance to see what being a dreamer is all about from the perspective of a revolutionary man. An individual who wished for something else - whether it was for his personal, recreational, or spiritual need. His dreams were visions of desire that create a sought after mission for himself and other individuals in life. Plowing into the nether regions of the mind a seed of hope to be flowered into change, storing ambitious energies for a later place in life. However in all cases, one thing is essential to keep in mind, his dream is never at its final destination of magnum aspiration, so long as it remains visions of future realities rather than that of the now. During this Black History Month, such a leader is celebrated for his voluntary aims of piety. And though this specific visionary has left, his dream has thus transcended time and been embedded into the cerebral of the many that aspire to knock off further infesting fragments from this stone of hope.

This was the mission of awaking that the Center for Diversity and Inclusion with assistance from the Scholar-Citizen Initiative, had last week when they took their fourth annual cultural excursion to the Peach State: Atlanta, Georgia. The Athens of the South has played an important role in the social and cultural theaters of black history, but although it is the Peach State, all the trials by chains that have taken place on this Georgia soil have not all been fruitful. From the racial injustices, recent gentrifying, and historical controversy, Atlanta has made more of a name for itself than just being the home of the predatory birds. It is also the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr.

One essay on King's legacy opened the door for roughly 30 students to get the opportunity to visit his historic landmark in Sweet Auburn Neighborhood.

"Seeing it was pretty cool, I think that having this opportunity to actually see where he was born and knowing where his journey started was really important," stated sophomore Elease Cook.

The childhood home of King was just one of the many places that the students got to see. On the very first day of the excursion, they got the chance to uncover and get a real taste of the World of Coca Cola, and were able to visit the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

“When we went into the museum, there was this simulation that let us experience what a sit-in was like in the 1960s,” said freshman Carmichael Ware. “There was yelling in my ear, banging on my seat, and I kept thinking that this was something that blacks went through for a lifetime and we only did it for a minute, it was really hard not to react. Stuff like this makes me want to be a better person.”

There was nothing easy about the experiences and series of unfortunate events that happened during the Civil Rights Movements, and the students were able to explore this. Further in the museum, the Radford undergrads told accounts of harsh videos being shown that portrayed white political figures speaking on the behalf of blacks, speaking from a soft-minded view of segregation, and why it was a necessary: Men like Strom Thurmond, the man who directed the use of fire hoses and attack dogs in 1963 against peaceful protestors, Jim Clark, the sheriff who used Arkansas National Guardsmen to block the enrollment of nine black students at Little Rock Central High School in 1957, and George C. Wallace, who was a firm believer in “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!”

Contrary to those ideals, the diverse group of students were able to visit Freedom Hall, The King Center, and the timeless representation of the continuing efforts of King’s dream: The Eternal Flame.

“The thing that surprised me the most was the pool that surrounded where he and Coretta were incased, and also the neighborhood felt so homely reminding me of my grandmothers. I’ve never experienced something like this before,” said senior Christina Dent.

The conclusion of the three day trip ended with Sunday morning service at the famous and historical Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King gave many of his iconic speeches and sermons. Students described it as being “ageless” and the pastor who gave the sermon seemed to wrap up the weekend for these young adults in search of higher learning.

“The two most important days in a person’s life is the day they were born and the day they discover why,” quoted Rev. Raphael G. Warnock.

In the case of the dreamer, it is the second of these days in which the awaking happens. The first is a build-up of chance after the coming of existence, but what are they to do with this birth? The "why," the "rebirth," is the transformation where simply being, has become or is in the stages of becoming a life that is filled with a sense of purpose. According to the students on the trip, this is the dream made possible, once the last of the five W's has been acknowledged and placed towards the epicenter of the path of purpose. King understood the power of dreams, but also well accounted for the need to awaken as his critical thinking, philosophy, and theology eagerly invites those still in slumber to rise and shine.