

# Community Organizers of Distinction

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community organizations.

The conference provided leadership training in Christian non-violence and opportunities for networking and strategizing, and eventually became a base for King's movement that would change the directory of the country.

King understood that meaningful change comes from the ground up. His efforts were successful because he was able to reach people through community institutions, like churches.

Times have changed since then, and so have the way people interact with each other.

When a little-known senator from Illinois named Barack Obama decided to take a stab at the White House, he was expected to make some ripples, but was still a long shot.

Hillary Clinton, a Democratic senator from New York and wife of former president Bill Clinton, commanded a powerful political machine and a slew of wealthy backers.

When asked by Katie Couric

how disappointed she would be if she didn't get the nomination, Clinton didn't even bother answering directly.

"Well," replied Clinton, who was self-assured that she was guaranteed the nomination, "it will be me."

However, Obama, who worked as a community organizer in the gritty urban environment of Chicago, grasped a lesson that made King's efforts so successful: activating dormant social segments at the grass level

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*Martin Luther King Jr. addresses a multitude on Aug. 28, 1963 during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The rally was an enormous success thanks to King's skills in focusing on social hubs, like churches, for his organizing efforts. Decades later, Barack Obama would employ a similar strategy focusing on the Internet.*



*"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Quality of life doesn't mean much if you don't have a job.

In times of economic challenge, livability starts with family wage jobs, reliable ways to get to work and housing that's affordable.

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