

CITY OF COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND

4500 Knox Road ♦ College Park, Maryland 20740-3390



Mark Cook
Councilmember
District 3

January 19, 2009

To the Community:

With the inauguration of Barack Obama coming the day after this Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Remembrance, people have spoken how there is a change and a new beginning.

What is this "new beginning"? Is the struggle for social justice really over? Have we achieved equity in everything? Are all men and women not simply created equal, but treated equally? Do we have equal opportunity for education when most cannot afford the tuition? Do we have equal opportunity for healthcare when families are forced into bankruptcy or denied medical care? Do we finally live in a nation where we are not judged by the color of our skin, but by the content of our character? With the election of Barack Obama, have we achieved that dream?

Is this a new beginning where we can move beyond the struggle for racial justice? But are we ready to declare that we have racial harmony or do we still have challenges to overcome? Do we not look twice at the man in the turban getting on an airplane; are women who wear burkas invisible to us?

Or does the new beginning mean something else; that after so many years of division, we are finally uniting and coming together?

We do have a new beginning; America made another payment on that promissory note that our forefathers signed. Finally, we are starting the 21st Century. We as a people have chosen someone on the content of their character, just as Dr. King dreamed.

We finally have a new beginning, and we also have new challenges. But we can celebrate, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, that this past year, we finally declared that we will be a nation united in hope! Yes we can! Yes we did! Yes we will!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Cook". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a thick black line.

Mark Cook
Councilmember
City of College Park, Maryland