

32nd Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Children's Program

Christie Wood/Tony Stewart

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. In January 1986 the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations joined the school districts of Post Falls and Coeur d'Alene to inaugurate an annual program for all 5th graders to remember and honor the life, works and birthday of civil rights icon Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This long running partnership has featured prominent civil rights guest speakers visiting the classrooms as well as presenting a portion of the program at the end of the week when the students gather to celebrate Dr. King's birthday through song, dance and the children's essay readings. At the end of the 31st year, there had been more than 36,000 fifth graders through the program.

On Thursday, January 12, 2017 the KCTFHR and the two school districts will convene the 32nd year of the event at the Lake City Community Church, 6000 N Ramsey Road in Coeur d'Alene. The program for the Coeur d'Alene 5th graders will be at 9:30 am followed by the Post Falls 5th graders at 11:30 am.

Along with the children's performances, this year's guest speaker will be Stu Cabe, the founder of the Ovation Company, Standing Up for What Is Good (established in 2004). His topic for the 5th graders will be a wonderful children's story of kindness titled "The Big Elephant Story".

Cabe's work takes him to schools across the United States and Canada to assist in building strong school communities and improve campus culture and climate. The work includes information and methods to combat student bullying.

He is a children's theatre expert and he has worked with professional theatre companies, both nationally and internationally.

Cabe holds a B.A degree in Drama and double Master degree in education. He has taught both high school and middle school.

He and his wife Callie have two kids that attend school in Coeur d'Alene.

The school coordinators for this year's celebration will be educators' Bill Rutherford and Aaron Drake from the Coeur d'Alene School District and Lisa Hoffeld and Janelle Baker from the Post Falls School District.

"We are so pleased and proud to have been part of this remarkable event for 32 years and observing the outstanding work of the teachers and administrators that have touched the lives of some 36,000 children," stated KCTFHR Board president Christie Wood. "We know that this meaningful work teaches the children the importance of treating all persons with respect and dignity," Wood continued.

NOTE: The annual KCTFHR January Gala will not be held in January 2017. The Gala is being combined with the KCTFHR Human Rights Banquet on April 28, 2017. The details of the banquet will be released at a later date.