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### **For Immediate Release**

#### AREA YOUTH EXPRESS THEIR *DREAMS TOO* IN MEMORY OF DR. KING

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 17, 2006 — “I have a dream that people will live together in harmony,” writes Harry Smith, a finalist in the “I Have a Dream Too” essay contest held at the Arlington Science Focus School in Arlington, VA. Smith, a third grader also dreams that “everyone will have their needs met” and that “this will be the day when there will be peace.”

In the contest sponsored by the Equal Rights Center in Washington, DC, the Grade 3 and 4 students were assigned to dream their own dreams for the future based on inspiration from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Over 65 children also viewed the video, “We Still Have a Dream” and participated in conversations with advocates from the ERC about civil rights.

Nathan Fajtar, one of the contest winners, states that “we will be able to make the world an even better place for every single person” and that “this day will be when the whole world has observed and tries to be like Martin Luther King Jr.”

Dozens of entries from Mrs. Kniseley’s, Ms. Sleeper’s, Mrs. Herman’s, and Mrs. Well’s classes included dreams for peace, a better environment, universal education, an end to bullying, war, hunger, poverty, homelessness and racism. Some however were more light-hearted as one dreamt of a 2 minute-long school day and another for a kids appreciation day.

“This was such a great way for these young people to reflect on not only what Dr. King’s life and legacy means to them but how it could impact them in the future. We certainly hope to continue holding this contest in celebration of Dr. King and his dream at many different schools throughout the area for many years to come,” says Jessica Lightfoot, Assistant Executive Director of the Equal Rights Center.

Special ceremonies in recognition of the contest winners will be held at the Arlington Science Focus School on Monday, February 27, for the third graders at 2:30 p.m. and the fourth graders at 2:45 p.m. Authors of the winning essays will be asked to read their essays and will be presented with an award. Anyone interested in attending this event is asked to contact the Equal Rights Center by Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Originally established in 1983 as the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, the Equal Rights Center is a private, not-for-profit, civil rights agency that is now a product of mergers with both the Fair Employment Council in 1999 and the Disability Rights Council of Greater Washington on June 30, 2005. It is dedicated to identifying, challenging, and eliminating discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, and government services through education, research, testing, counseling, enforcement, and advocacy. To obtain more information about the Equal Rights Center, please go to [www.equalrightscenter.org](http://www.equalrightscenter.org) or call the Equal Rights Center at (202) 234-3062.

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