

RITE NOW @ ROP



On January 21, 2020, the students and faculty of Silver Oak Academy, along with members of the community, gathered for the school's annual Martin Luther King Celebration. The annual celebration brought an array of presentations, talks and music, including Robert Young, who teaches history at Carroll Community College, sharing his memory of King - whose murder was tied to Young's own political and historical awakening.

Keynote speaker Carlos Ojeda told his story of coming to understand King's dream. Ojeda grew up in a poor Puerto Rican neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey, but his parents moved him to Reading, Pennsylvania after he witnessed a murder on his street when he was just 10. Initially placed in a stagnant, unhelpful bilingual class despite being fluent in English, Ojeda said he got into trouble over the years, until a few adults showed they believed in him, guided him into taking the SATs and getting into college.

A former university administrator, professor and small business development center director, Carlos now focuses his energy on empowering students to succeed by teaching them that their voice is their power. Carlos aligned his life success with King's nonviolence approach: "Power is the ability to influence the behavior of others with or without resistance." Carlos also challenged the students of Silver Oak Academy to not allow their past or negative people to influence their future successes.
