Connecticut High School Students to Honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with First Memorial Dedicated to His Teenage Years

BLOOMFIELD, Conn., January 16, 2012 - A group of students from Simsbury, Conn. had long heard tales of a teenage Martin Luther King, Jr. residing in their hometown. Last year they created an award winning documentary about Martin Luther King. This year, those students were inspired to honor their former resident and leader of the Civil Rights movement with a special memorial to Dr. King. The memorial will be built with the support of a $20,000 grant from the Cigna Foundation.

"We are honored to help the Simsbury community pay tribute to Dr. King and his dream of equality," said Cigna Chief Executive Officer David Cordani, "Dr. King's dreams ring truer today than ever before and Cigna stands committed to honoring his life and legacy so his vision remains alive for future generations."

Cigna, a global health service company headquartered in Connecticut, is committed to helping people improve their health and well-being by nurturing their unique personal strengths. The King memorial demonstrates this commitment by helping inspire students with the story of a man of great personal strength who paved the way for racial equality.

For years, residents of Simsbury told tales of a young Martin Luther King, Jr. who lived, worked and worshiped in their town and Hartford while laboring on a Simsbury farm earning money for school during the summers of 1944 and 1947 as a student at Morehouse College. Under the guidance of their history teacher, Richard Curtiss, students at Simsbury High School investigated these claims and proved them to be true. With this discovery came a sense of kinship and familiarity with the man who lived among them and went on to change the world with his determination to achieve equality. The students learned that during his time in Simsbury Dr. King was much like them - traveling to new parts of the country, growing up, trying to earn extra money with summer jobs and keeping in touch with his family.

Cigna and the Cigna Foundation have supported many projects and programs over the years to acknowledge Dr. King's life and works. Of great significance is the $1 million sponsorship of the new MLK Memorial on the National Mall in Washington D.C., which was unveiled in 2011. Additionally, for the past 22 years, Cigna has partnered with The Philadelphia Orchestra to sponsor a tribute concert to commemorate Dr. King at his namesake high school in the Philadelphia area. Cigna will also sponsor the University of Hartford's Martin Luther King Day program on January 16, 2012.

In addition, the Cigna Foundation is working with the Simsbury Public School system to create a scholarship that honors the life and legacy of Dr. King. The annual scholarship, called the Cigna Service to Community Award, will provide $1,000 to benefit an accomplished college-bound Simsbury High School student who has overcome personal challenges and is providing impactful service to the community at large.

About Cigna:
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About the Cigna Foundation:

The Cigna Foundation is a private foundation funded by contributions from Cigna Corporation and its subsidiaries. The Cigna Foundation supports organizations sharing its commitment to enhancing the health of individuals and families, and the well-being of their communities, with a special focus on those communities where Cigna employees live and work.