# My MLK Day at Food Bank

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**By Samantha Katel**
(second row, far left)

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" In honor of MLK Day, I went with my mother to Food Bank's Community Kitchen and Food Pantry in Harlem to make lunch for children who are hungry. Not just any children--kids who are homeless or live in shelters and can't afford to buy food or necessities. The director of the Community Kitchen told all of us volunteers that it's especially hard for them during the winter. He told us about a woman and baby that he saw walking outside in the cold with no place to go.

The volunteers were given bright orange MLK "Weekend of Service" T-shirts, buttons and wristbands, as well as plastic gloves and hair nets for cleanliness. Then we were put to work, assembly line-style, packing lunch bags. Half of us made sandwiches; the other half made chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies. My job was to drop little balls of batter onto about 40 trays before they were put into the ovens. I was careful not to eat any of the finished cookies. It was tempting because they smelled so delicious, but I didn't want to take any away from the homeless kids. The lunch bags included a sandwich, potato chips and a juice box. Messages of love and luck were written in markers by a group of girl scouts who came up from Brooklyn.

There was one special moment that I'll never forget. As I was scooping the cookies into baggies, I looked up to see our new mayor, Bill de Blasio! He thanked us for our service, spoke to the TV cameras that were there, and then rolled up his sleeves to help us with the lunches. The mayor spoke about how we should help others, not just one day a year, but every day. It was really fun and a great feeling to know that I was helping people who are in need and have nowhere else to turn. It was a perfect way to honor Reverend King.

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