

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contacts:**

Mitch Tlustos, Office of Advancement  
360.383.3316 | [pio@whatcom.ctc.edu](mailto:pio@whatcom.ctc.edu)

Marni Saling-Mayer, Director of Communications  
360.752.8325 | [msmayer@btc.ctc.edu](mailto:msmayer@btc.ctc.edu)

---

## **College Campuses Honor Martin Luther King Holiday by Call to Action**

Bellingham Washington – January 9, 2012 – Whatcom Community College (WCC) and Bellingham Technical College (BTC) students, faculty, and staff will join together on January 16, 2012 to honor Martin Luther King’s legacy of social justice and equal opportunity. Participants of the day will gather for the community-wide Poverty Action March and Essential Needs Drive. This march is inspired by Dr. King’s “Poor People’s March” being planned before his assassination in 1968. WCC and BTC will join thousands of Americans across the country honoring this national day of service by making the holiday a day on, not a day off.

The day will start with a kick-off event on WCC’s campus where there will be speakers and student-led discussion on poverty and social justice. Participants are encouraged to bring a donation item to the kick-off event. Buses will then transport participants downtown for the March and Drive. Here, the two campuses will join the community at large to march with those in poverty and support them in the struggle for equal opportunity. After the march, the campuses will convene behind the Public Library for a post reflection and discuss how to further meet community needs. The kick-off and post reflection events are organized by AmeriCorps members at Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College. This event is sponsored by WCC’s Service-Learning Program and local businesses.

The timing of this call to action event comes during a crucial time. Services and resources for those in poverty in Whatcom County continue to decrease while the number of citizens in need continues to rise. Jim Cozad, Housing Case Manager of the Opportunity Council and Chair of the March, addresses this difficulty: “Moving people from poverty to prosperity has been tough in this economic climate,” says Cozad. “The purpose of this apolitical march is to raise a level of awareness for the unmet needs in our community.” WCC and BTC hope to trigger dialogue around these topics and generate further student volunteerism in Whatcom County.

This is the third year WCC and BTC have participated in the MLK Day of Service. Last year, 97 students and staff took part and served a total of 425 hours for their community. Participation is expected to increase this year and include greater faculty and staff involvement. The national effort for the MLK Day of Service is led by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Projects are taking place in all fifty states and include home builds, reading to children, food and clothing drives, tree planting, and more.

WCC is providing free transportation from BTC College Services visitor’s parking lot to WCC at 7:30 am on Monday, January 16. Return transportation leaves the Public Market at 1:00 pm, back to BTC.

**Please take the time to thank the local businesses who support this event:**

Whatcom Community College Service-Learning Club  
Whatcom Community College BRANCHES Peer Mentoring Program  
Bellingham Technical College Learning Center  
Community Food Co Op  
Avenue Bread  
Great Harvest Bread Company  
Espresso Avellino  
Costco Wholesale  
The Markets L.L.C.  
Haggen

**About Whatcom Community College**

Whatcom Community College is a comprehensive two-year college serving over 7,000 students. Whatcom offers transfer degrees, and professional training programs, as well as basic education and enrichment classes. For more information on Whatcom Community College, please visit [www.whatcom.ctc.edu](http://www.whatcom.ctc.edu).

**About Bellingham Technical College**

Bellingham Technical College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and offers 35 associate degree and 64 certificate options providing professional technical education to support local and regional industry workforce needs. For more information, go to [www.btc.ctc.edu](http://www.btc.ctc.edu)

# # #