

# Residents gather for peace at King festival

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Though he delivered his message over 30 years ago, his words are as relevant today as they were in the 1960s, according to the Guam residents assembled at the Guam Federation of Teachers compound in Mangilao yesterday evening.

Martin Luther King Jr. who was a leader of the African-American civil rights movement, is someone Guam leaders should model themselves after, according to Neeti Prakash, Department of Education teachers union chairperson under the Guam Federation of Teachers.

"We're here to spread his message of hope for the whole world, and the message of peace," Prakash said. "We can apply it by continuing to practice non-violence, modeling ourselves after his example," she said.

King is one of the most renowned leaders of the 20th century, Prakash said.

"Everyone knows him as someone who was a great person, great hero, and great fighter for civil rights," she said, adding the GFT members strive to model themselves after him.

GFT's president, Sen. Matt Rector, has likened his struggles to King's.

Rector, in a two-part online video posted on his Web site and on YouTube in November, compared "ridiculous" complaints against him to the persecution of the late King and Mahatma Gandhi, a worldwide icon of non-violent political resistance.

"History has shown that time and time again progressive lead-



Rick Cruz/For Pacific Daily News

**'Infinite Hope':** Guam Federation of Teachers Vice President Tim Fedenko takes the microphone as the emcee of the union's Martin Luther King Jr. "Infinite Hope" festival held at the GFT compound in Mangilao yesterday.

ers who have fought against the rich and powerful and the tyranny of corporate power have been attacked and assassinated," Rector said in a statement he released after he applied for a concealed weapon permit.

## Peaceful platform

Others who attended yesterday's King festival used it as a platform to promote peace.

One stall set up by We Are Guåhan was pegged with posters urging residents to speak out

against the buildup because there is still time to submit comments in response to the Defense Department's draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Member Audrey Ward said it's part of the propaganda being circulated by the military that the buildup is a "done deal." In reality, there's still time to stop it, she said, explaining to passers-by the contents of the Defense Department document, and encouraging them to provide their input.

Frank Matanane, who had a stall

of hand-made jewelry set up at the festival, said King's teachings apply to Guam today because the Chamorro people can relate themselves to the African-Americans in the United States who were not given equal rights. He said although Guamanians have repeatedly joined the U.S. forces to fight threats overseas, Guam's people have not been given a chance to vote for president.

Guamanians should stand up for their rights as King did, he said.

"They were trying to find their

## IF YOU GO

Other celebrations for Martin Luther King Jr. Day are:

▲ Gov. Felix Camacho will sign a proclamation at 10 a.m. today at the Agaña Shopping Center center court. For more information, please contact Charlene Calip at 475-9303 or 788-0589, or e-mail her at charlene.calip@guam.gov.

▲ The Guam Community College Center for Civic Engagement will host a one-hour presentation twice, at 2 p.m. and at 6 p.m. Wednesday, at the college's multipurpose auditorium in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The presentation will end with a free public screening of a local student independent film titled "Sway."

## PHOTOS ONLINE



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identity as blacks, we are trying to find our identity as Chamorros against the super power," Matanane said, referring to the United States.

The festivities continued with songs performed by students, and recorded excerpts from King's speeches played over the speakers.

"There is something fundamentally wrong with a world that seeks to solve its problems on the battlefield," King's voice resounded. "We must find some alternative to war."