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In light of our American holiday honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. we must remember his work supporting the essential workers of Memphis during the strike of their sanitation workers in 1968.

As RCRLN and its greater membership head into 2021, each of us cannot forget our city's essential workers.

Yes, the pandemic in Indianapolis does not seem to be slowing down much. This will mean that for the months ahead, RCRLN and its greater membership will have to improvise our everyday lives. Most will have to continue to self-isolate and hopefully work at home.

Those who can afford to have groceries delivered can feel safer. Those who have the wherewithal can go out to eat but will have to follow Covid rules.

What's missing from this picture are all of the essential workers who are also under these same dire circumstances, yet who are working to: pick our fruits and vegetables, and process and can them; prepare our fish and chicken and other meats for purchase; package, box, load and deliver these food products and produce to grocery stores where essential workers unload and stock the shelves; and, where cashiers take our money and workers bag our groceries.

Remember too, behind-the-scenes are mechanics and maintenance people who keep the food production machinery and the delivery trucks running, and the janitorial staff who clean up after everyone at the plant or grocery store--keeping the floors swept/mopped, bathrooms usable, and the wastebaskets and trash cans empty...

And, there's the laundry people who wash, press, and package workers' (drivers, janitor, maintenance) uniforms so they look professional and who are supported by the maintenance and janitorial workers at the laundries.

It's all an interconnected web of essential workers who have to work and who are also risking their very lives so RCRLN and its greater membership do not necessarily have to.

Finally, we can't ignore our "sanitation workers" who picked up our garbage in our alleys and streets--and the mechanics and maintenance people who keep the garbage trucks running and working, and maintenance people who keep our city's garages functioning and maintained.

If one dines out, waitresses, waiters, or bartenders take our orders, cooks prepare our meal and others bus the tables and wash dishes and utensils. And just like grocery stores, restaurant janitorial staff clean up after everyone--keeping the floors

swept/mopped, bathrooms usable, and the wastebaskets and trash cans empty. Also, the food has to be delivered and the restaurant dumpsters have to be emptied, etc., etc.

And this is just the food aspects of our lives which encompass the job responsibilities these essential workers have.

I believe it is time for RCRLN to recognize and validate these essential food workers. I will help RCRLN contact these workers and have them come to/on a monthly meeting and discuss what they do and how it affects their lives.

Of course, these hourly employees will have to be paid just like our salaried RCRLN leaders are paid, or when IMPD or other guests who are salaried employees speak at our regular RCRLN and now Zoom meetings are paid as part of their job descriptions.

We cannot take for granted that others are at-risk for our sake when they provide the essential needs of RCRLN and its greater membership.

Dr. King would expect this of our now nationally-recognized Indianapolis RCRLN.

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