



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SOLVE Partners with Mike Bennett Studios for Martin Luther King Jr. Day Cleanup and Creative Gathering**

**Portland, Ore., January 12, 2026** – SOLVE is partnering with **Mike Bennett Studios** to bring together environmental service, art, and community connection during a special Martin Luther King Jr. Day cleanup and creative gathering at **Irving Park**.

Taking place on **Monday, January 19**, the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Cleanup invites community members to care for Irving Park through litter removal, followed by a creative community connection hosted by Mike Bennett Studios. From 10 am and 12 pm, volunteers of all ages will come together to remove litter and recyclables from Irving Park and nearby streets, helping keep this neighborhood welcoming while preventing waste from entering our waterways. Cleanup supplies will be provided, and all ages are welcome.

Following the cleanup, participants and neighbors are invited to cross the street to **Mike Bennett Studios** for a family-friendly community gathering celebrating service, creativity, and connection. The gathering will feature SOLVE-themed coloring sheets, warm drinks, snacks, and conversation, along with an exclusive sneak peek of the first unreleased episode of the **Zooquarium Podcast** and Q&A with **Mike Bennett** and co-host **Chanel Hason**.

*“This collaboration is about more than a cleanup,” said Kris Carico, CEO of SOLVE. “It’s about creating spaces where people come together across backgrounds to care for shared places, connect through creativity, and celebrate community values that align deeply with Martin Luther King Jr. Day.”*

Mike Bennett, Portland-based artist and founder of Mike Bennett Studios, added that partnering with SOLVE felt like a natural fit. *“Art, community, and care for place are all connected. We’re excited to open our space as part of this day and celebrate the people who show up for their neighborhood.”*

**Event Details**

- **What:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day Cleanup & Community Gathering
- **When:** Monday, January 19, 2026

- **Where:** Irving Park & Mike Bennett Studios
- **Who:** Hosted by SOLVE in collaboration with Mike Bennett Studios
- **Highlights:**
  - Community cleanup (10 am – 12 pm)
  - Creative gathering and Zooquarium Podcast release party (11 am – 4 pm)
- **Registration:** [volunteer.solveoregon.org](http://volunteer.solveoregon.org)

The cleanup and community gathering offer a meaningful way to honor Dr. King's legacy through hands-on service and shared creative experiences. SOLVE's Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2026 is presented by **Kaiser Permanente**, and part of SOLVE's broader effort to support **community-led service projects** across Oregon and Southwest Washington. The event is free and open to the public.

For more information about the event and to register, visit [solveoregon.org/mlk](http://solveoregon.org/mlk).

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#### **About SOLVE**

SOLVE brings communities together to take care of our environment and enhance our waterways. Since 1969, the organization has grown from a small, grassroots initiative to a national model of volunteer action. Today, SOLVE mobilizes and trains thousands of volunteers of all ages across Oregon, and SW Washington, to clean and restore our neighborhoods and natural areas, while empowering a community of environmental stewards for our state. Learn more at [solveoregon.org](http://solveoregon.org).

#### **About Mike Bennett**

Mike Bennett is a Portland-based cartoonist and public joy creator who turns his imagination into real-life experiences. A former preschool teacher, he combines his love of art and education to create immersive installations and experiences where curiosity takes center stage.

The [Zooquarium Podcast](http://zooquariumpodcast.com) is a new educational podcast for curious kids of all ages who love animals. In each episode, friends from the community ask questions about animals, which are explored alongside invited scientists and artists. Co-hosted by Mike Bennett and Chanel Hason, the podcast blends curiosity, science, and creativity to make learning about the natural world accessible and engaging for all ages. Learn more at [mikebennettstudios.com](http://mikebennettstudios.com).

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