

The setting for this one act play is Lincoln's presidential office in the White House, during the uncertain summer of 1864. He summons Frederick Douglass for a conference on encouraging slaves to desert their Southern masters and fight for their freedom. Lincoln fears that recent military setbacks may cause him to lose the presidency in the upcoming election of 1864. The likely successor, George B. McClellan (no friend of abolition) might rescind the Emancipation Proclamation. This was actually the second time Lincoln and Douglass had met. The first had been a year earlier when Douglass had pleaded with Lincoln to employ the use of black troops in the Union's war effort. Out of this came the formation of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, composed of black soldiers, led by white officers. Douglass's own son, Lewis, enlisted in the 54th Massachusetts. He became its first black sergeant major.

The scene opens with Lincoln greeting his caller. In their historic meeting, Douglass and Lincoln paved the way for other advocates of Black freedom to follow their lead. It was they [Douglass and Lincoln] who conceived the "dream," that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. articulated almost 100 years later in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. It is a dream that America still struggles to achieve.

Two Men, One Dream earned the YWCA of Mankato's Youth Eliminating Racism Award because of the impact it had on youth and the community. Black and white students worked together to achieve a shared mission while teaching the community about a significant historical event with lasting impact on the present day. These students set an example by showing what mutual cooperation and respect between people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds can accomplish. The play is a vehicle that many can use to share a similar message.

~ Anne Ganey, Executive Director, Mankato, MN YWCA

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