



CELEBRATING
4

BLACK LIVES MATTER

2013



YEARS

CELEBRATING FOUR YEARS OF ORGANIZING TO PROTECT BLACK LIVES

John





BLACK LIVES MATTER

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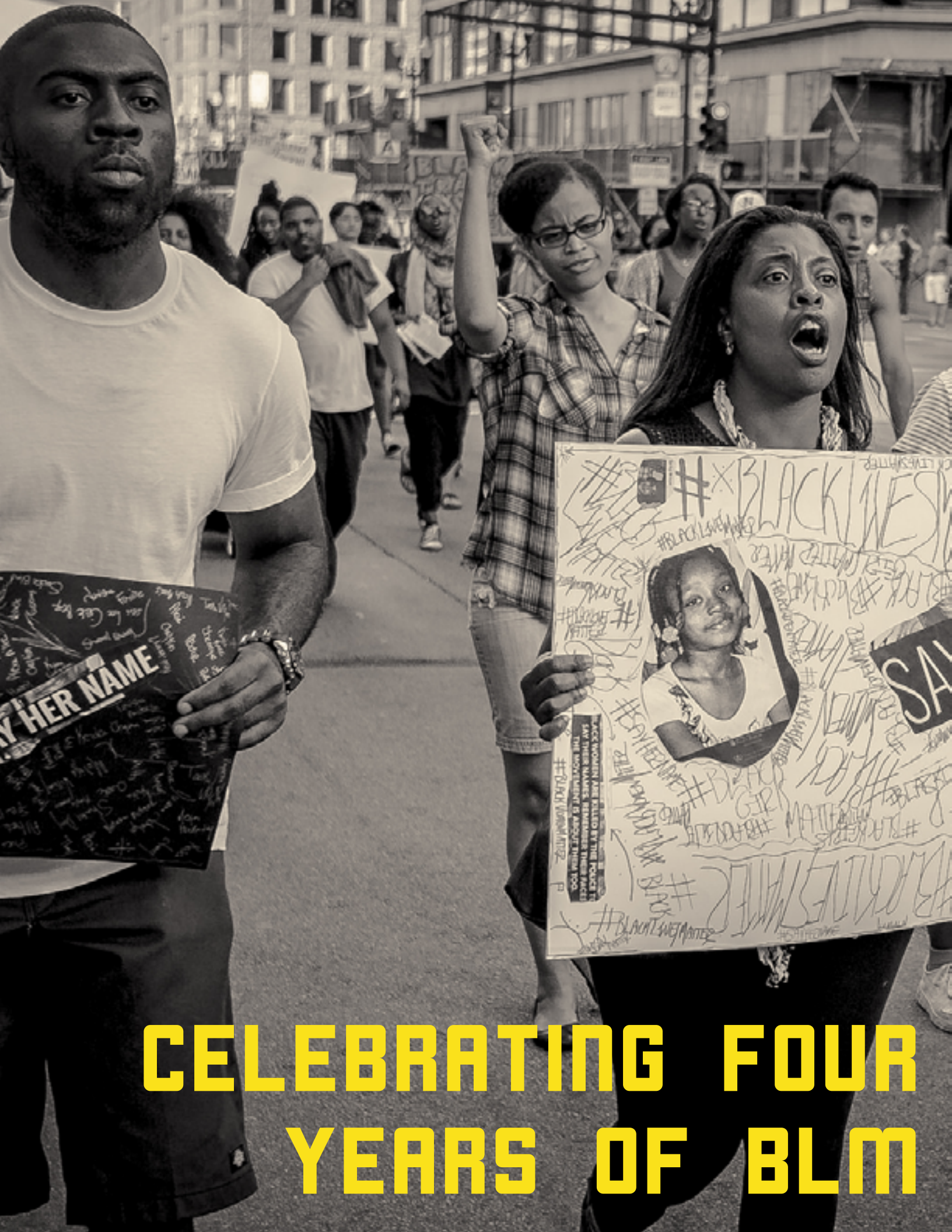
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CELEBRATING FOUR YEARS OF BLM

Four years ago, what is now known as the Black Lives Matter Global Network began to organize. It started out as a Black-centered political will and movement building project turned chapter-based, member-led organization whose mission is to build local power and to intervene when violence was inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.

In the years since, we've committed to struggling together and to imagining and creating a world free of anti-Blackness, where every Black person has the social, economic, and political power to thrive.

Black Lives Matter began as a call to action in response to state-sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism. Our intention from the very beginning was to connect Black people from all over the world who have a shared desire for justice to act together in their communities. The impetus for that commitment was, and still is, the rampant and deliberate violence inflicted on us by the state.

Enraged by the death of Trayvon Martin and the subsequent acquittal of his killer, George Zimmerman, and inspired by the 31-day takeover of the Florida State Capitol by POWER U and the Dream Defenders, we took to the streets. A year later, we set out together on the Black Lives Matter Freedom Ride to Ferguson, in search of justice for Mike Brown and all of those who have been torn apart by state-sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism. Forever changed, we returned home and began building the infrastructure for the Black Lives Matter Global Network, which, even in its infancy, has become a political home for many.

We've accomplished a lot in four short years. Ferguson helped to catalyze a movement to which we've all helped give life. Organizers who call this network home have ousted anti-Black politicians, won critical legislation to benefit Black lives, and changed the terms of conversations around Blackness globally. Through movement and relationship building, we have also helped catalyze other movements and shifted culture with an eye toward the dangerous impacts of anti-Blackness.

These are the results of our collective efforts.

THE BLACK LIVES MATTER GLOBAL NETWORK IS AS POWERFUL AS IT IS BECAUSE OF OUR MEMBERSHIP, OUR PARTNERS, OUR SUPPORTERS, OUR STAFF, AND YOU. OUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO LIBERATION FOR ALL BLACK PEOPLE MEANS WE ARE CONTINUING THE WORK OF OUR ANCESTORS AND FIGHTING FOR OUR COLLECTIVE FREEDOM BECAUSE IT IS OUR DUTY.

HERSTORY

In 2013, three radical Black organizers—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, and Opal Tometi—created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman.

The project is now a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters. Our members organize and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.

Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

As organizers who work with everyday people, BLM members see and understand significant gaps in movement spaces and leadership. Black liberation movements in this country have created room, space, and leadership mostly for Black heterosexual, cisgender men—leaving women, queer and transgender people, and others either out of the movement or in the background to move the work forward with little or no recognition. As a network, we have always recognized the need to center the leadership of women and queer and trans people. To maximize our movement muscle, and to be intentional about not replicating harmful practices that excluded so many in past movements for liberation, we made a commitment to placing those at the margins closer to the center.

As #BlackLivesMatter developed throughout 2013 and 2014, we utilized it as a platform and organizing tool. Other groups, organizations, and individuals used it to amplify anti-Black racism across the country, in all the ways it showed up. Tamir Rice, Tanisha Anderson, Mya Hall, Walter Scott, Sandra Bland—these names are inherently important. The space that #BlackLivesMatter held and continues to hold helped propel the conversation around the state-sanctioned violence they experienced. We particularly highlighted the egregious ways in which Black women, specifically Black trans women, are violated. #BlackLivesMatter was developed in support of all Black lives.

In 2014, Mike Brown was murdered by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson. It was a guttural response to be with our people, our family—in support of the brave and courageous community of Ferguson and St. Louis as they were being brutalized by law enforcement, criticized by media, tear gassed, and pepper sprayed night after night. Darnell Moore and Patrisse Khan-Cullors organized a national ride during Labor Day weekend that year. We called it the Black Life Matters Ride. In 15

days, we developed a plan of action to head to the occupied territory to support our brothers and sisters. Over 600 people gathered. We made two commitments: to support the team on the ground in St. Louis, and to go back home and do the work there. We understood Ferguson was not an aberration, but in fact, a clear point of reference for what was happening to Black communities everywhere.

When it was time for us to leave, inspired by our friends in Ferguson, organizers from 18 different cities went back home and developed Black Lives Matter chapters in their communities and towns—broadening the political will and movement building reach catalyzed by the #BlackLivesMatter project and the work on the ground in Ferguson.

It became clear that we needed to continue organizing and building Black power across the country. People were hungry to galvanize their communities to end state-sanctioned violence against Black people, the way Ferguson organizers and allies were doing. Soon we created the Black Lives Matter Global Network infrastructure. It is adaptive and decentralized, with a set of guiding principles. Our goal is to support the development of new Black leaders, as well as create a network where Black people feel empowered to determine our destinies in our communities.

The Black Lives Matter Global Network would not be recognized worldwide if it weren't for the folks in St. Louis and Ferguson who put their bodies on the line day in and day out, and who continue to show up for Black lives.

WHO WE ARE

The Black Lives Matter Global Network is a chapter-based, member-led organization whose mission is to build local power and to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.

We are expansive. We are a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement. We also believe that in order to win and bring as many people with us along the way, we must move beyond the narrow nationalism that is all too prevalent in Black communities. We must ensure we are building a movement that brings all of us to the front.

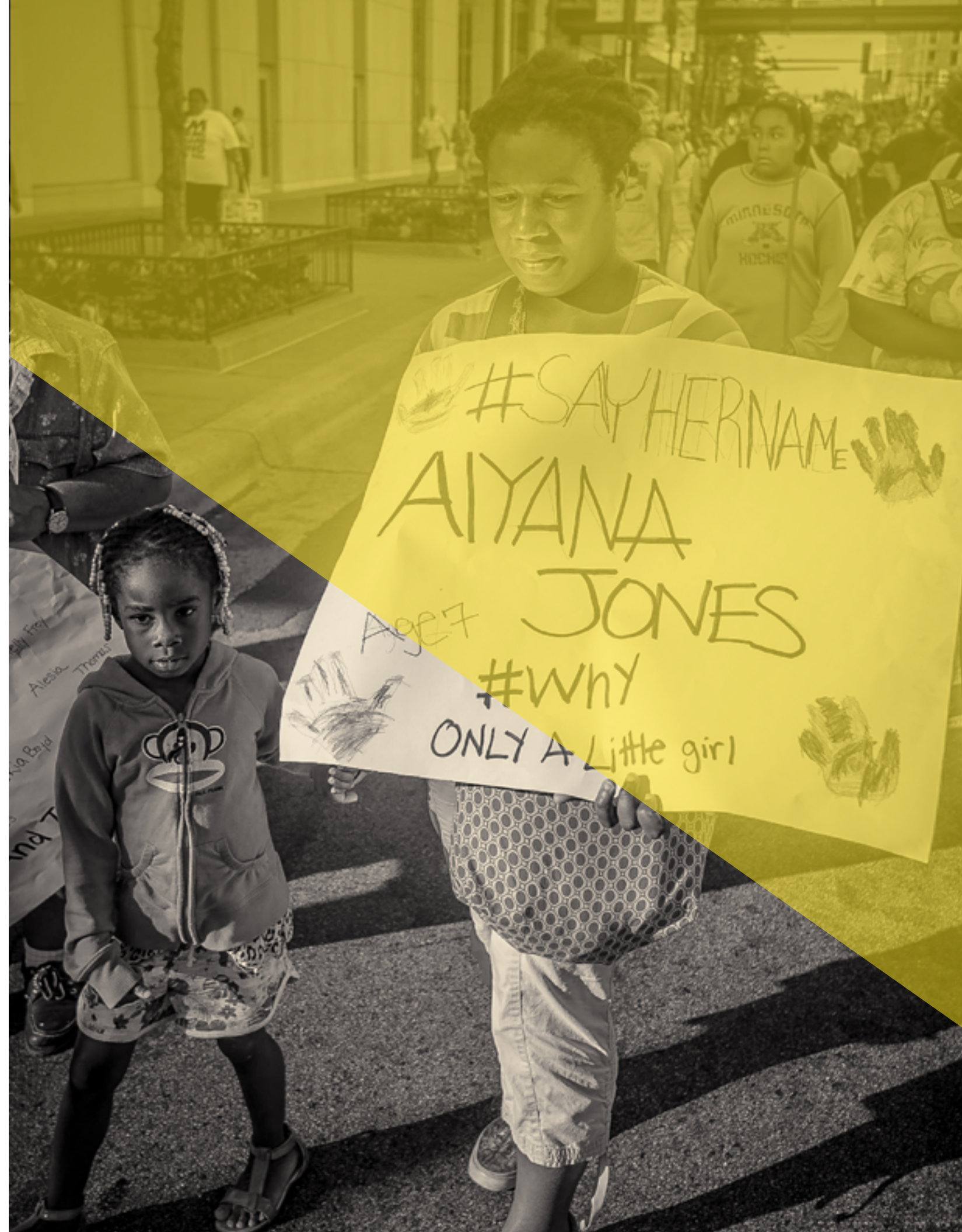
We affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. Our network centers those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements.

We are working for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.

We affirm our humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

The call for Black lives to matter is a rallying cry for ALL Black lives striving for liberation.

Every day, we recommit to healing ourselves and each other, and to co-creating alongside comrades, allies, and family a culture where each person feels seen, heard, and supported.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WE ACKNOWLEDGE, RESPECT, AND CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES AND COMMONALITIES.

We work vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension, all people.

We intentionally build and nurture a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleting.

We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a prerequisite for wanting the same for others.

We see ourselves as part of the global Black family, and we are aware of the different ways we are impacted or privileged as Black people who exist in different parts of the world.

We are guided by the fact that all Black lives matter, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status, or location.

We make space for transgender brothers and sisters to participate and lead.

We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.

We build a space that affirms Black women and is free from sexism, misogyny, and environments in which men are centered.

We practice empathy. We engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.

We make our spaces family-friendly and enable parents to fully participate with their children. We dismantle the patriarchal practice that requires mothers to work “double shifts” so that they can mother in private even as they participate in public justice work.

We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.

We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).

We cultivate an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism. We believe that all people, regardless of age, show up with the capacity to lead and learn.

We embody and practice justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another.



WHY WE ORGANIZE: A LETTER FROM OUR ORGANIZING DIRECTOR

BY NIKITA MITCHELL

A movement is not an individual, an organization, or even a cluster of organizations. A movement is when the masses, with different opinions and ideas, engage in collective action towards a common goal. Black Lives Matter is one co-creator of the 21st-century Black Freedom Movement, and, on our four-year anniversary, I am moved to reflect on our contributions.

I hold true the value that we must honor our elders first. We are indebted to our movement elders, comprising individuals and organizations who continue to inspire and inform our direction. A short list includes the New Afrikan Movement, former iterations of the Civil Rights Movement, the human rights activists of the mid 1900s, the Black Power Movement, Black feminist theorists, Black trans and gender-nonconforming theorists, the freedom fighters of Stonewall, etc. These are the folks who laid the foundation for us.

I must also honor the roots of the current iteration of the Black Freedom Movement. Black Lives Matter is informed and shaped by the Justice for Oscar Grant Campaign, which resulted in the first officer being charged with assassinating a Black person; the Justice for Trayvon Martin campaign, which revealed the power of well-coordinated (inter)national organizing against the police state; and the Ferguson Uprising, which showed us what's possible when we are bolder in our vision and strategies, as well as when we disregard respectability politics.

Black Lives Matter arose as a call to action. Our first intervention was a narrative shift that eroded post-racial rhetoric that said, "We are all equal now." Three simple words have become a calling card for the Black Freedom Movement, a reminder of what shared vision and collective power felt like. I remember the first couple of times I said, "Black Lives Matter." My voice was small and uncertain, and I wore my distrust on my face. Did my life actually matter? Because I have never encountered an institution that wasn't threatening my life in some way. What I saw in

the last four years was Black people leaning into the belief that their lives mattered, and being inspired to organize from that place.

We have shut down, discredited, and worked to dismantle institutions that threaten Black life. We have also developed alternatives that make space for Black folks to thrive a little bit more than before. We have taken the charge of ending state-sanctioned violence against Black and other oppressed bodies—from pushing accountability for police murders to removing local prosecutors.

A short list of victories and interventions:

- Black Lives Matter Birmingham, alongside immigrant rights coalitions, achieved sanctuary city status for Birmingham.
- Black Lives Matter Los Angeles occupied the LA police headquarters for 40 days to demand LA #FireChiefBeck.
- Black Lives Matter Toronto shut down Toronto Pride, which resulted in all of their demands being met.
- Black Lives Matter Louisville reclaimed a home in west Louisville to provide a safe place for Black people.

We have made these strides amid challenging times. We face blatant anti-Blackness, capitalist values, and imperial projects. While Blackness and the Black experience are not a monolith, the fact of our material conditions cannot be ignored or erased.

Black people around the world experience extreme poverty, the daily threat of violence against their bodies, housing discrimination, high infant mortality rates, and more. Black people in the United States

are murdered every 28 hours, with little to no police accountability. Black queer and trans people are vulnerable at the hands of inter-communal violence, which is exacerbated by patriarchy.

We are witnessing a rise of conservatism that has resulted in a fascist president. Government repression has cracked down on organizers, communities fighting for change, and all Black folks. We have seen an increase in vigilantism and police murders of Black and Brown folks, with less and less coverage. We have seen wiretapping of our folks, ridiculous lawsuits that are an attempt to distract us from our business, and a rollback of protections for our most vulnerable communities. We have also seen our members struggle to organize while handling rampant joblessness, gentrification, and threats on their person, amid other struggles.

These conditions are not accidental, but the consequence of power in the hands of those who do not have our best interests at heart. Our material reality is the result of institutions and individuals with power deciding for us the quality of life we can have. This means that every day, Black people are up against the reality of not knowing what tomorrow brings.

There is a lot at stake here. We have made many mistakes, yet we remain committed to keeping our eyes on our liberation.

We organize because it is a matter of life or death. Our ancestors and movement elders dedicated their lives to organizing because they envisioned a day when their grandchildren could thrive outside the confines of oppression.

Organizing is building and leveraging people power in order to disrupt systems that threaten our lives and the lives of others, and to build our own life-affirming systems. This can only be done at the intersections of identities, as we cannot get free until the most marginalized of us do.

We are committed to protecting, defending, and destroying harmful institutions and systems in order to build, create, and innovate. We are also committed to building political and economic power, and taking

charge of the narratives that impact our lives. Our work expands across police accountability and abolition work, anti-displacement campaigns, and the celebration of Black art and culture in shaping the aesthetic and social values of the U.S. and the world.

So, in celebrating Black Lives Matter's four-year anniversary, we celebrate our continued contributions to the Black Resistance Movement. We celebrate the tangible victories, the challenges that resulted in our growth, and most importantly, the labor of love our organizers across the country have put into shifting for the better the material conditions of Black people everywhere.

We celebrate you, the people who donated to our organization and came to an action or event, put your bodies on the line, used the hashtag, uplifted Black magic, and provided much-needed critiques or just politicking at home about the movement.

The movement could not exist without all our contributions and resilience.

WE INVITE YOU TO GO DEEPER WITH US, SO THAT HISTORY WILL RECORD THAT WE DID OUR PART IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE LIBERATION OF BLACK PEOPLE, AND TO THE MOVEMENT THAT MADE IT HAPPEN.

About Nikita:

Nikita Mitchell comes to the Black Lives Matter Global Network with over eight years of experience in community organizing, union organizing, and popular education development. Born and raised in Oakland, Nikita first saw the power of organizing when she joined Oakland's student movement and experienced how people power can change our material conditions. After years of multiracial organizing, she has found her commitment to Black liberation, and uses all her talents and magic to ensure that Black folks taste freedom in their lifetimes.



ORGANIZING BEYOND BORDERS

BY MISKI NOOR & SANDY HUDSON

“WE SEE OURSELVES AS PART OF THE GLOBAL BLACK FAMILY AND WE ARE AWARE OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS WE ARE IMPACTED OR PRIVILEGED AS BLACK PEOPLE WHO EXIST IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD”

“We see ourselves as part of the global Black family, and we are aware of the different ways we are impacted or privileged as Black people who exist in different parts of the world.” Black Lives Matter Guiding Principles

In a world where anti-Blackness exists in every location, culture, and continent, and Black people experience targeted oppression in our daily lives through micro-aggressions and overt slurs and assaults on our basic needs, we know that the Black liberation struggle is global.

We see the impact of our work in the U.S. as connected beyond colonial, white supremacist borders, as our struggle is directly connected to the struggle of Black folks across the world. Our struggle from within the epicenter of the American imperialist empire is closely watched by Black organizers struggling across the globe. They lend us their organizing power by adding to their local acts of disruption and protests occurring in alignment with Black organizing in the U.S., such as when Philando Castile and Alton Sterling were murdered and organizers and activists in Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Canada took to their streets—recognizing the intersections of white supremacy and the dehumanization of Black people across the globe.

We, too, should ensure that we struggle alongside our Black global family when they protest the very similar murders of Black people by their states, and not let the borders of empire deny us the global Black solidarities we must build.

Organizers of all shapes and sizes, from all different backgrounds and language groups, are part of a legacy that connects Black folks across the world: the legacy of organizing to build power and take our freedom. This encompasses the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, as well as Kenyan mothers winning the release of their children who were held as political prisoners in the 1990s. It goes back to the Haitian Revolution; to slave revolts in South America, the Caribbean, the U.S. and Canada; to Black radicals currently incarcerated all over this country and Black refugees being denied entry to European states that are ultimately responsible for their refugee status.

There are lessons to share and to learn, and truths to be told and honored—and this is our work.

We must see beyond ourselves and reach for a world that we only imagine and sometimes practice in our relationships with each other, that provides us the space to fight for our lives and for a greater Black future.

And, we know that none of us are free until all of us are free. There is no liberation within these false borders. We are of this country and many others. As much as the prosperity of this country is built on the backs of Black people within it, so too is it built on the backs of Black people outside of it. Our cultures and peoples are deep and abiding, and our many manifestations of Blackness are met with as much love as we can hold. We are committed to growing, learning, and challenging ourselves; to showing up in different and freer ways; and to building a global movement for all Black lives.

About Miski:

Miski Noor is an organizer and writer based in Minneapolis, MN where they work as a Communications Strategist for the BLM Network and a leader with the local Black Lives Matter–Minneapolis chapter. Miski has worked in congressional and electoral politics developing media strategy, and has a background in immigration, direct action, movement building, and infrastructure development. Miski is equal parts 90s’ R&B and ratchet. They love fancy flavored water with bubbles, board games, and Black owned makeup. Miski prioritizes relationship building, healing justice, and creating movement cultures that are collaborative and sustainable, and is honored to do this within our Network.

About Sandy:

Miski Noor is an organizer and writer based in Minneapolis, MN where they work as a Communications Strategist for the BLM Network and a leader with the local Black Lives Matter–Minneapolis chapter. Miski has worked in congressional and electoral politics developing media strategy, and has a background in immigration, direct action, movement building, and infrastructure development. Miski is equal parts 90s’ R&B and ratchet. They love fancy flavored water with bubbles, board games, and Black owned makeup. Miski prioritizes relationship building, healing justice, and creating movement cultures that are collaborative and sustainable, and is honored to do this within our Network.



WHERE WE'VE BEEN / WHERE WE ARE: A SNAPSHOT

SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONVENING



By Cazembe Murphy Jackson, BLM Atlanta

December 15-18, 2016, the Southern Chapters of the Black Lives Matter Global Network came together for a convening at the historic Highlander Research and Education center. Chapters from Atlanta, Birmingham, Bowling Green, Greensboro, Little Rock, Louisville, Memphis and Nashville were all in attendance. We spent the days working to get shared understanding of movement principles, developing strategies for our individual chapters and visioning together as a region. We shared meals with each other, laughed and cried together. We learned about our history from movement elders (Kai Lumumba Barrow, Karen Spellman, Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, Roz Woodward-Pelles) and were given opportunities to ask them questions and even advice.

We did some mapping of the political landscape to help name the political moment. We created a timeline of the Black Liberation Movement, Our movement, and the opposition. We facilitated and participated in multiple trainings that included ones about movement building, visioning, and building momentum. At the end of the convening we decided to build a regional body to develop and implement regional strategy, share resources, and offer leadership and organizer training support.

THE ARREST AND CONVICTION OF BLM-PASADENA ORGANIZER JASMINE ABDULLAH



In June 2016, after months of targeting and harassment by Pasadena police and the Los Angeles County District Attorney in Pasadena, Black Lives Matter organizer Jasmine Abdullah, a.k.a. Jasmine Richards, was convicted of attempted lynching, a conviction that carries a maximum sentence of four years' imprisonment. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Elaine Lu presided over the case.

The California Penal Code defines lynching as "the taking by means of a riot of any person from the lawful custody of any peace officer." Penal Code 405b provides the penalty: "Every person who participates in any lynching is punishable by imprisonment...for two, three, or four years." While it is notable that the term lynching was challenged and changed in 2015 by state senator Holly Mitchell through the legislative process, the substance of the charge remains the same.

Organizers from all over the world sent letters of support, love, and solidarity to Jasmine. BLM-Pasadena, BLM-Los Angeles, and other local chapters organized rallies, fundraisers, and legal support for Jasmine. Her lawyer, Nana Gyamfi, developed a comprehensive legal strategy to keep Jasmine out of a cage.

MAMA'S DAY NATIONAL BAILOUT

Several BLM chapters, including Memphis, Atlanta, and the Bay Area, participated in the Movement for Black Lives Mama's Day Bailout campaign. Raising over \$500,000 and bailing out more than a hundred Black mothers across the country, organizers lifted the burden of money bail and helped families be together on Mother's Day.

While we were able to bring some of our mamas home, tens of thousands of our loved ones remain caged in local jails simply because they cannot afford to buy their freedom. We will continue raising money to bail out more of our people and bring them home. We will bail out our people in all of our varieties: queer, trans, young, elder, and immigrant.

Donate to help us bring more of our loved ones home and fight against the impact of inhumane and destructive bail practices.

BLM-TORONTO PRIDE INTERVENTION

BLM-Toronto successfully reclaimed LGBTQ pride spaces last year as they re-centered Black queer and trans experiences in movement history. In 2016, BLM-Toronto organized a sit-in during the Pride Parade. They donned glitter and gold with black capes, reminding the world that Black people are literal superheroes. Among their demands were that police officers be barred from future Pride events and that Pride Toronto increase its Black staff and commit to actively supporting Black events. BLM-Toronto's actions caused a necessary ripple effect across the network and larger movement resulting in dozens of chapters in the U.S. articulating similar demands and shutting down Pride marches this past June.



MINNEAPOLIS FOURTH PRECINCT OCCUPATION

On Sunday, November 15, 2015, at approximately 12:45 AM, Minneapolis Police murdered Jamar Clark. Eyewitnesses confirm that Jamar was shot execution style in the head while handcuffed. BLM–Minneapolis mobilized immediately, declaring an occupation of Minneapolis' Fourth Precinct until three demands were met: 1) The release of the footage of Jamar Clark's shooting, 2) The release of the names of the officers involved, and 3) An independent investigation into Jamar Clark's killing.

BLM–Minneapolis uncovered video of Jamar Clark moments after he was shot by Minneapolis police. This footage completely contradicted the police narrative, and we demanded that the officers involved be directly prosecuted without involving a grand jury, given that over 97 percent of cases involving police killings end without indictment.

The Black Lives Matter demands were supported by Jamar's family and echoed by city council members and state representatives. Further, we have received a tremendous outpouring of national support, garnering over 50,000 signatures for our Color of Change petition; raising more than \$30,000 to support the family and the occupation; and changing the terms of the debate in the Twin Cities around state violence, police terror, and accountability.

State-sanctioned violence against Black people must end, not only in the state of Minnesota but globally. As we move towards our collective liberation, we must center our communities and our leadership. We must listen to our community members in order to make the necessary changes to begin creating a world that celebrates our humanity.

MIDWEST REGIONAL CONVENING

By John Sloan III, BLM Detroit

From June 30th – July 3rd chapters from across the Midwest came together for the first ever Black Lives Matter Midwest Regional Convening. Representatives from each chapter gathered in Chicago, IL dedicated to answering one collective question: "How do we best utilize our resources for the benefit of the group as a whole?" While the initial question might have seemed structural, the result of our time together was profound growth in trust and relationship building. This work is hard, and progress is never easy. And, as a result, a tendency can develop to focus on "doing" at the expense of collective wellbeing. Participants made an intentional decision to consider each other by both centering an acknowledgment of trauma, and erasing the preconception that weakness and vulnerability are synonymous. Strength lies in the ability to ask for assistance, and growth only comes from the honoring of collective intention – whether through a common harm or shared trauma. The Midwest Region made an intentional and collective decision to place great emphasis on how we care for each other, using that emotive capacity as a conduit for greater affirmation.

The Convening challenged both individuals and chapters to dream outside of their comfort zones, and imagine the world we want to build. Believing that nothing is ever out of reach, chapters offered their strengths and resources in a collaborative skill share. Members offered workshops and facilitated break out sessions dedicated to the intentional growth of a regional strategy. And, while nothing is ever built overnight, participants were able to establish the foundational pieces necessary to allowing for continued collaboration. Individuals and chapters arrived, but a unified Region emerged.



BLM-TORONTO TENT CITY



On March 20, 2016, BLM-Toronto organized #BLMTOtentCity to protest the murder of Andrew Loku by the Toronto Police Department. Black organizers shut down Nathan Phillips Square and were joined by groups of protesters who camped in solidarity with them in order to ensure that their demands were addressed and met. This occupation continued for 15 days, including protests, actions, vigils, and 24/7 community space held at Nathan Phillips Square.

BLM-Toronto organizers had several demands, including the release of the names of Andrew Loku and Jermaine Carby's killers, that Loku's killer be brought to justice, that apologies and compensation be provided to his family, and that the footage of his murder be immediately released.

The occupation emphasized the importance of Black leadership and community direction; many who participated in the occupation sacrificed their work and stood for what they believed in, remaining rooted despite police attempts to escalate and harm them. Although the Special Investigation Unit refused to both prosecute and reveal the identity of Loku's killer, #BLMTOtentCity was an intervention against police terror and the oppressive structures that harm Black folks in Canada.

BLM-LOS ANGELES DECOLONIZE CITY HALL



On July 12, 2016, BLM-Los Angeles organized an impromptu camp-in outside City Hall. Organizers shut down City Hall because they were protesting the police commissioner's ruling that the officer who shot and killed Redel Jones, a 30-year-old mother of two, had not violated the department's police policy for using deadly force. The chapter demanded that Chief of Police Charlie Beck be fired for his mismanagement of the deadliest police force in the United States, resulting in the #FireChiefBeck campaign that people across the country supported. Community members refused to leave until the mayor fired Beck, and proceeded to camp out for 54 days in front of City Hall.

Despite multiple attempts by the police to thwart their plans, the community holding space remained strong and unshaken. In their perseverance during this period, BLM-LA saw their membership double as the chapter reached over 480 members and organizers were able to create strategic alliances within the Los Angeles community, including support and participation in the encampment by many Black celebrities. After the 54th day of the encampment, organizers switched tactics and began a strategy that continues to this day: to closely follow the mayor and hold him accountable so that justice prevails in the City of Los Angeles. BLM-LA's dedication to its community is clear as it continues its efforts to improve the conditions of Black people in Los Angeles.

BLACK LIVES MATTER GLOBAL NETWORK AT STANDING ROCK

During the spring of 2016, young Indigenous leaders began action to protect Indigenous lands and water in North Dakota as the Dakota Access Pipeline was being built on sacred grounds. The Dakota Access Pipeline will be able to carry more than 400,000 barrels of crude oil a day from western North Dakota across South Dakota and Iowa to connect with an existing pipeline in Illinois. It is a 1,100-mile pipeline, estimated to cost \$3.7 billion, and is about halfway complete.

The Indigenous leaders' call to action was rooted in a deep understanding of our connection to this Earth as living beings, and our duty to protect it for our own and future generations' survival. This mass reclamation of Indigenous land brought people from across the U.S. and the globe to Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

Through direct coordination with Standing Rock organizers, leaders of the Black Lives Matter Global Network traveled to North Dakota to stand in solidarity with water protectors putting their bodies and lives on the line to not only protect our right to clean water, but to take a critical stand against the erasure of Indigenous sovereignty and the continual annihilation of our planet. BLM members built powerful relationships, provided on-the-ground support for day-to-day operations, and generated resources for water protectors camping out in inclement weather conditions.

To identify the ways in which white supremacist society has historically pitted Black and Indigenous to North America communities against each other, leaders engaged in conversations about anti-Blackness, as well as how to defend Indigenous sovereignty and our shared struggle for liberation. Though the encampment has ended, water protectors and BLM members continue to lift up environmental injustice and wage a critical fight against big oil for our collective right to water and the protection of Mother Earth.



OTHER WORK AND CAMPAIGNS

CHANNEL BLACK

Black Lives Matter houses Channel Black, an immersive training program that prepares the next generation of Black leaders to construct, optimize, and implement strategic interventions on race. As the Movement for Black Lives and Black Lives Matter work to end state-sanctioned violence against Black people, the Channel Black program is a core component of our long-term strategy.

Taking an iterative approach that is built on the principles of design thinking, our innovative curriculum and seasoned trainers provide wraparound support for Black millennials to absorb, implement, and evaluate best practices in political strategy, media, and spokespersonship. In the short term, we will diversify the faces of people identified as experts and featured on television, radio, and print media discussing and intervening in important and polarizing issues that impact Black communities.

Our long-term goals include transcending barriers to empathizing with and understanding Blackness and the plight of Black communities in America; developing the strategic thinking, media savvy, and persuasive debate skills of Black millennial leaders; and supplementing tried-and-true, on-the-ground organizing tactics with empirically backed interventions that lead to a reduction in implicit racial bias and prejudicial treatment by law enforcement, vigilantes, and everyday people. We will do this by using cognitive linguistics, cultural competency, and effective communications to change the way people understand race and racism. We also aim to increase support for building the social, economic, and political power of Black people.

BLM-BOSTON LAUNCHED A NEW RADIO SHOW!

The BLM-Boston chapter launched an online radio show on insightradioapp.com. You can tune in every Thursday night at 7:00 p.m. EST as the chapter discusses local and international news related to BLM and our greater movement.

SUPPORT BLM-CAMBRIDGE'S #BLMSUMMER CAMPAIGN

[BLM-Cambridge](#) has had a busy fall and winter, and is now gearing up for summer! They'll be sending representatives to Haiti and surrounding areas to learn how to better assist our Caribbean family. Proceeds from this campaign will go towards purchasing solar panels for Haiti's disaster relief. Additionally, they'll be helping to supplement housing and travel expenses for BLM organizers and Cambridge families in need. We also have direct actions planned that will require fortifying our legal reserve fund.

Please help complete summer initiatives by contributing to the [BLM-Cambridge Summer 2017 Action Plan & Fundraiser](#).

TRAINING ORGANIZERS FOR LIBERATION

Aaron Goggans of BLM-DC is creating an [online training course](#) that gives people the critical education needed to move from being passive supporters of liberal police reform to people actively working towards getting free.

Aaron is now launching this crowdfunding campaign, and his goal is to finish the online curriculum and create an organizer training designed to help new activists become effective community and campaign organizers.

Please read more about the origins, purpose, and

vision for this project [here](#). Please support this project by doing these three things:

Share it widely!
Donate directly!
Give Aaron thoughts, pushback, and resources for the training!

ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS

Chapters working on police accountability:

- [BLM-LA](#) launched [#FireChiefBeck](#).
- [BLM-Sacramento](#) and [BLM-Chicago](#) are working with families to address multiple police murders.
- [BLM-Toronto](#) launched the [Justice For Andrew Loku Campaign](#).
- [BLM-Minneapolis](#) spearheaded the [Fourth Precinct Occupation](#)

Chapters working on dismantling the prison industrial complex:

- [BLM-Memphis](#) and [BLM-Birmingham](#) are helping a campaign to end money bails.
- [BLM-Philly](#), [BLM-Memphis](#), [BLM-Birmingham](#), [BLM-Nashville](#), and [BLM-Louisville](#) are working with the [Mama's Day Bailout Coalition](#) to release our families from prison.

Chapters working on land liberation and alternative structures:

- [BLM Denver](#), [BLM-Nashville](#), and [BLM-Louisville](#) are reclaiming land space for the benefit of the Black community.

Other:

- [BLM-NYC](#) began the [Swipe It Forward](#) campaign to offer commuters free subway rides and highlight the role of fare-beating arrests.
- [BLM Toronto](#), [BLM-Vancouver](#), and [BLM-NYC](#) worked on the campaign to remove police from Pride.
- [BLM-Bay Area](#) conducted [Say Her Name](#) interventions and protests in San Francisco.
- [BLM-Cleveland](#) ousted a local prosecutor.

HEALING JUSTICE AS A FRAMEWORK

BY PRENTIS HEMPHILL

"...A FRAMEWORK FOR HOW WE CAN HOLISTICALLY RESPOND TO AND INTERVENE IN GENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE, AND BRING COLLECTIVE PRACTICES THAT CAN IMPACT AND TRANSFORM THE CONSEQUENCES OF OPPRESSION ON OUR BODIES, HEARTS, AND MINDS."

One of the most important offerings that Black Lives Matter has made to the current movement is helping to center the importance of healing justice in our organizing and community building. Cara Page has articulated healing justice as "...a framework for how we can holistically respond to and intervene in generational trauma and violence, and bring collective practices that can impact and transform the consequences of oppression on our bodies, hearts, and minds."

This, for us, has meant that the work for our freedom exists in our organizing, especially organizing against institutions that harm and traumatize. It has also meant that the work of freedom happens between us in how we heal, how we care for one another, how we move through conflict, and how we build the skills to create a culture that liberates.

Healing justice has us address how we heal from the trauma of oppression and sustain ourselves and our wellness in the struggle for justice. Throughout the network, there are brilliant responses and strategies for addressing wellness, conflict, and transformation. There's also incredible pressure and challenging conditions that make this work difficult, but necessary.

Each chapter relates to healing justice differently, and all have some value, practice, and/or dedicated capacity around addressing these issues. We have a network-

wide Healing Justice working group that meets monthly to offer peer support, receive and offer trainings, create healing justice campaigns, and support each other in bringing deeper integration of healing justice into our chapters.

About Prentis:

Prentis Hemphill currently works as Director of Healing Justice at Black Lives Matter. Along with supporting the brilliance of the healing justice working group, they help to lift up healing justice analysis and interventions within chapters and the broader network. As a member of Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity's (BOLD) teaching team, Prentis works to teach a somatics practice relevant to Black movement leaders and organizers. Trained as a therapist and somatic practitioner, and brought up through prison justice and anti-violence organizing, Prentis has spent the last several years working to articulate the connection between liberation and personal transformation through teaching and hands-on healing and counseling work with groups and individuals. In their work, they are guided and grounded by a relationship to nature, and the interdependence found of healing and movement, and a personal commitment to the embodiment of rigorous and unconditional love for self and all Black people.





HEALING JUSTICE

BLM HEALING JUSTICE WORKING GROUP

The Black Lives Matter Healing Justice Working Group is a space for BLM chapters to build a shared political analysis of healing justice, develop skills around healing justice interventions, develop network-wide healing justice campaigns, and offer cross-chapter support. We hold this space together as sacred to our learning and practice of how to bring us all into an embodied, restorative, and transformative practice towards Black liberation.

We hold a vision of an intersectional, interdisciplinary, and holistic approach to Black healing and wellness. We believe in many paths to our wholeness and the vastness of Black spirituality. We also work to remember, as well as recreate, rituals and culture that can sustain us in and beyond struggle, and bring us into our rightful connection with the Earth, each other, and our collective purpose.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Black Healing and Wellness Are Essential to our Liberation

State violence and systems of oppression traumatize us and our communities, and make it simultaneously impossible for us to fully heal. We have the inherent right to access healing and be free of institutions and systems that explicitly harm and undermine our capacity to live with our full humanity, connection, and purpose.

How We Treat Each Other Is the Work

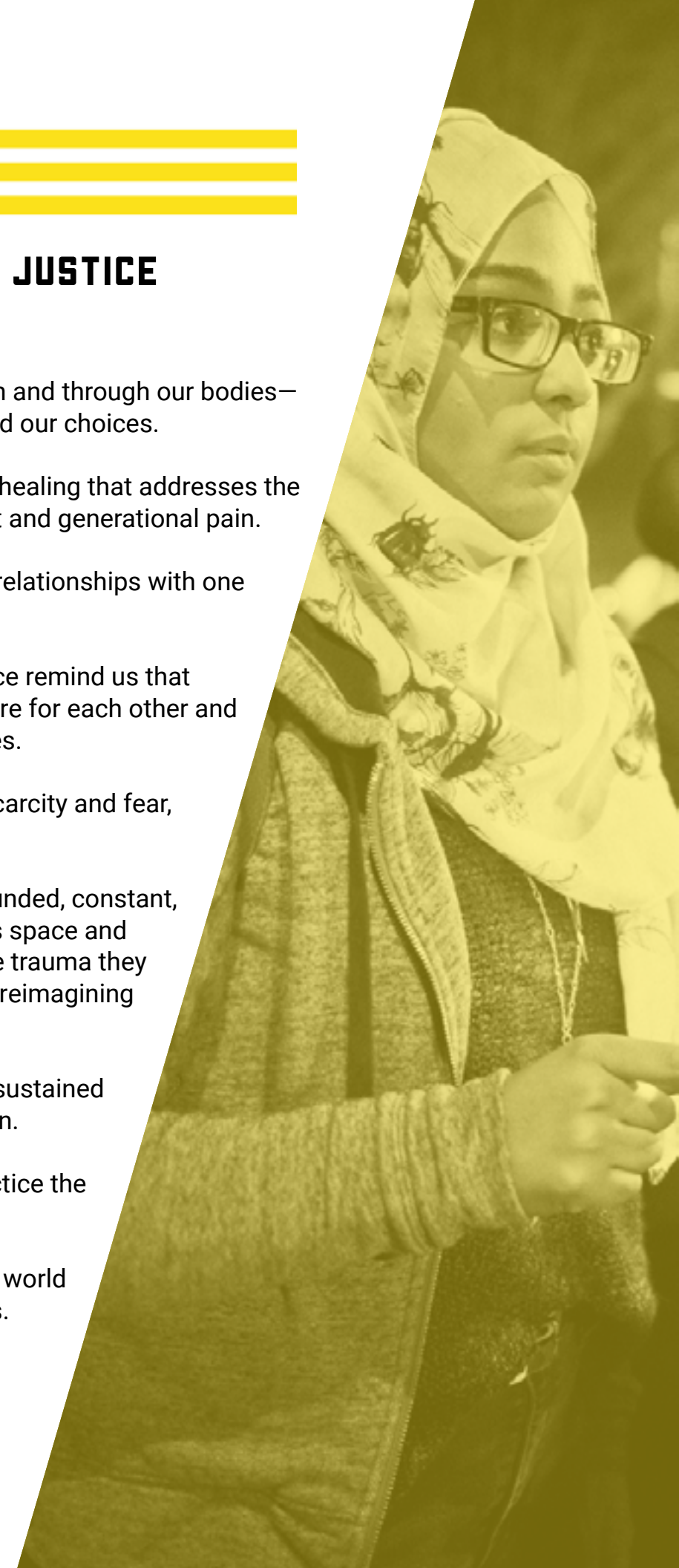
Loosely defined, liberation is freedom from limitations. Liberation is not gained by the outcomes of a singular political event or destination. Its roots live deep inside us and in all of our relationships. We know that our politic is revealed in our practice, in our intimacy and communication with one another. Through healing, we free ourselves from the oppression of respectability, and we ground our interactions in love and accountability.

Black Wellness Is Self-Determination

We recognize the sacredness, brilliance, and inherent worth in every Black body. Healing justice calls us to be changed in our consciousness and transform the internalized practices of ableism, heteropatriarchy, classism, and all other forms of oppression that place value and order on our bodies. We see Black self-determination as bringing our communities into our whole, varied, and vibrant expressions. Black self-determination is in direct contrast to oppressive efforts to dehumanize Black people.

10 REASON WHY HEALING JUSTICE BY PRENTIS HEMPHILL

1. Trauma, violence, and oppression live on and through our bodies—limiting our experience, our connection, and our choices.
2. Freedom for Black people must include healing that addresses the individual and collective, as well as current and generational pain.
3. Our healing brings us into new kinds of relationships with one another.
4. Healing justice and transformative justice remind us that conflict can be generative, and a way to care for each other and learn more about our needs and boundaries.
5. Healing allows us to move away from scarcity and fear, and into connection and choice.
6. The trauma Black people feel is compounded, constant, and complex. Building a world that creates space and time for Black people to heal and limits the trauma they experience requires a deep reworking and reimagining of relationships and institutions.
7. Healing, culture, and spirit have always sustained us and informed our struggles for liberation.
8. Healing justice allows us a place to practice the care with each other that we deserve.
9. Healing justice makes care political in a world that harms and dehumanizes Black bodies.
10. Healing justice makes it possible to transform and heal a legacy of trauma for future generations of Black people.



ART & CULTURE

BY NONI LIMAR

Artists are vital to the Black Liberation Movement. Art demands that we see ourselves in our fullness, as we really are. During an era in which we are experiencing an oppressive regime and strategic rebellion, this reflection is necessary. We need artists who can illuminate where we are currently as a culture while reimagining our collective future. Our movement needs artists who are awake, committed, and united.

As we know, the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965 inspired a more radical engagement in the fight for Black liberation. What is often forgotten is the key role and lasting impact the Black Arts Movement played at the time.

The Black Arts Movement was a political group of artists creating work that spoke directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America from 1965 to 1975. The Black Arts Movement set out to serve the spiritual and cultural needs of Black people through a newly defined Black aesthetic. We take for granted the roles our predecessors played in reevaluating the Western artistic aesthetic and centering Blackness. Within a fiercely divided Black and white America, they created a Black American identity.

Black Lives Matter Arts + Culture has found great inspiration in the work of the Black Arts Movement. Although we recognize many of the artists held problematic beliefs, we value the collective body of work they left for us to inherit. The writers, dancers, painters, dramatists, and musicians of the Black Arts Movement shifted the way we thought about ourselves, impacting the culture for generations. We know that lasting change occurs when we change hearts and minds.

Our current work with Black Lives Matter Arts + Culture is centered on building a core group of artists who are strategically creating multidisciplinary art in alignment with current campaigns locally, nationally, and internationally. We are initiating this work by offering creative programming that will inspire and invigorate artists within our network and throughout the movement. We believe we can have a resurgence of the energy, innovation, and creativity of the Black Arts Movement. This moment is calling for it.

About Noni: Noni Limar is a content creator, cultural worker, and love storyteller living in Southern California.

10 REASONS WHY ART + CULTURE IS IMPERATIVE FOR OUR MOVEMENT

BY NONI LIMAR

1. ART REDEFINES NARRATIVES

When we tell our own stories, in our own voices, with our own style, we define who we are. We have spent decades consuming false images and narratives about ourselves. Anti-Black narratives have contributed to creating a culture where we fear for our lives. When we steer our own narratives, we are in the seat of power.

2. ART IS A NEUTRALIZER

Our movement is complex and diverse. At times, our various ideas, theories, and opinions can collide. Art connects the heart and mind, leaving us open and receptive. It brings us together, making us more effective organizers. When we have a shared positive experience, it allows us to connect and build a stronger community.

3. ART SHIFTS CULTURE

Our generation has witnessed major policy leaps and setbacks. When leadership changes hands, our hard-earned political wins can become sudden losses. Permanent change happens when we change our core beliefs as a culture. Art changes minds.

4. ART DEFIES BORDERS

Our movement is global. Despite language barriers or geographical differences, art can connect our movement beyond borders. Within our diaspora, our creative signifiers and similarities in music, dance, image, and performance become entry points for connection, conversation, and trust.

5. ART IS JOY

Mainstream and social media are saturated with images of Black pain and Black death. Black Lives Matter Art + Culture work is committed to creating spaces and uplifting artists that center joy, levity, and life.

6. ART IMAGINES FREEDOM AND ABOLITION

Everything in our lived experience was once imagined and created. BLM Arts + Culture asks, "What does abolition look like?" We need artists who are working to imagine a life rooted in freedom and dignity for Black people.

7. ART WILL LIVE ON

Generations from today, the art we create now will be a significant factor in how this movement moment is understood and defined. It is essential that we invest in our artists who are telling our collective story in this historic time.

8. INFLUENTIAL ARTISTS INFLUENCE PEOPLE

BLM Art + Culture is working to create allies and collaborators in the greater art and entertainment communities. As influential artists utilize their platform to share our work, we all benefit as a culture.

9. ART IS A MESSAGING STRATEGY

BLM Art + Culture is a part of the larger communications strategy for Black Lives Matter. Utilizing storytelling, music, film/television, etc., to communicate our bigger platform is creative organizing.

10. ART HEALS

In this work, we need sacred spaces that allow us to heal ourselves and support the healing of one another. Art is a container for healing and transformation.



BLACK LIVES MATTER GLOBAL NETWORK CHAPTERS



“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE, WE ALL GET FREE!”

SEE AND SHARE QUOTES FROM BLM CHAPTERS ON CELEBRATEBLM.COM



LORRELL / Gary, Indiana

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"Our collective Black Joy is probably best described by our end-of-meeting ritual. We all stand in a close circle and someone begins by saying a few words about how they are feeling in the moment. After sharing, they place their right hand on the back/shoulder of the person next to them and say, 'I got your back.' They leave their hand there, and the next person takes their turn until we make our way around the whole circle. At the end of this ritual, we are all connected physically and say out loud, together, 'I got your back.' It is incredibly affirming to love on each other consistently in every meeting."



MISKI / Toronto, Canada

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"Our chapter celebrates Black Joy by creating space to spend time and manifest joy with each other. We've taken day trips to float down the river, camped up North, attended Beyonce concerts, hosted poetry nights, and got together cookouts in the park. We are learning all the time how to create more joy and happiness. This is what will sustain us in the long run, because our resilience as a people is rooted in our joy. And not only do we need it—we deserve it."



BIG TREE / Chicago, Illinois

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"Our chapter plays all day every day! The work we do is often heavy and can take a toll on our spirits. Regardless of the many various situations we find ourselves in, we always find ways to laugh. There's also a lot of random dancing and love being thrown around whenever we get together."



MICHAEL / Denver, Colorado

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"We take time to celebrate each other and our victories. We uplift Black students by advising, people organizing, and whenever Black people are fighting for liberation. The work can be depressing with the negativity that comes in on us from all sides, but we find joy in spite of that and are joyful as a form of resistance against oppression."



KEZIA / Detroit, Michigan

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"We like to celebrate Black Joy at every meeting. We might have a 90-second dance party, and sometimes I will bring a bottle of wine. We just chartered a Black Arts Committee because the arts are a huge part of what we do. Detroit has a history and legacy of art and music, so that is something we wanted to honor. This is a key pillar for us moving forward, and a pillar that allows us to incorporate and create more Black Joy."



EVELYN / Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"We are still trying to figure out how to organize and take care of ourselves. We have monthly socials like bowling and game nights, and we also have dinners with our team, some that are open to the community so we can be together. We do realize the importance of celebrating Black Joy, and we want to build out more space to hold our joy."



AISLINN / Chicago, Illinois

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"We celebrate Black resiliency and ingenuity, which have allowed our people to survive amidst state repression, terror, and violence. We reaffirm our children's right to play, to create and laugh free from state violence by hosting play-ins, in honor of children killed by the police—such as Tameir Ponce and Aiyana Stanley-Jones. Celebrating Black Joy is part of reaffirming our humanity against a system designed to deny our right to live."



NIMO / Minneapolis, Minnesota

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"Our chapter celebrates Black Joy by investing in one another. As we organize for Black Lives, we are harmed and subjected to trauma in a world that does not value or celebrate us. So, as we build together, we prioritize healing and caring for one another. One of the first things we did after the Fourth Precinct Occupation was to build out a healing justice fund for Black and POC organizers and community members to receive care such as body work, acupuncture, therapy, and more."



JONATHAN / Chicago, Illinois

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

"We celebrate Black Joy by reaffirming our humanity and the lives of those the state attempts to erase and silence. We celebrate the children left behind by state violence and police killings with birthday parties, BPOC, art, poetry, and song. We manifest Black Joy by being with each other and by being proud and righteous. It is not about ignoring the issues, but about finding joy and showing love to each other always."



"MAGIC!"

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

To get Black folks closer to liberation in the city of Atlanta. Atlanta needs a radical Black left politic and an autonomous space to develop that politic in order to advance collective fights for our liberation. We are doing this through developing strategies, tactics, and campaigns that reduce the amount of interactions that poor Black people in Atlanta have with police in our city.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

We spend time together sharing meals, raising our children together, taking road trips, even kickbacks and parties. It is often that we kick it for hours after our meetings just spending time with each other with no agenda, because we just really love each other.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

There is a long and deep history of resistance in Atlanta. Our chapter contributes by bringing an intersectional analysis that centers a Black Queer Feminist politic.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Baba Chokwe Lumumba.



"FIERCE CONJURERS"

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Black Lives Matter–Bay Area organizes because Black people are dying. The chapter began because while there was a lot of organizing happening in the Bay, the work wasn't centering Black people, didn't take direction for Black people, and didn't have Black leadership. Consequently, BLM–Bay Area was started as an intervention to center Black folks. The chapter operates as a hub, and almost everyone who is in the chapter is also a member and/or affiliated with other organizing groups. They see this as an opportunity to collaborate and further build out, execute, and organize for Black lives.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

BLM–Bay Area celebrates Black Joy by having a healing justice council, which helps the chapter to think through ways that they can be and remain spiritually grounded. In addition, they incorporated music, food, games, and get-to-know you activities into their meetings. To strengthen bonds within their chapter and to facilitate more opportunities for Black Joy, core leadership/members of the Bay Area chapter meet outside of the regular organizing spaces to be in community with one another. BLM–Bay Area creates a social aspect to their chapter that allows them to experience and center Black Joy. Last, direct action is another way that BLM–Bay Area believes that they experience Black Joy. Their chapter takes great joy and pride in planning and executing direct actions. They see it as an opportunity to challenge power and, at the same time, direct actions allow members to be creative and implement multiple mediums into their actions to reflect Black Joy such as music, art, dance, etc.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

BLM-Bay Area contributes to the legacy of building Black power in our cities by reflecting and building off the rich history and culture of organizing here. Their chapter is inspired by the work of the Black Panther Party that is ingrained into the fabric of the region, and the work of their chapter is centered around continuing that legacy. While many folks in our movement were activated by the murder of Michael Brown and the Ferguson uprising, still other members of BLM-Bay Area were activated by the murder of Oscar Grant. What BLM-Bay Area continues to contribute is the concept of state-sanctioned violence. They believe that there is no difference between a corrupt cop and a corrupt mayor. Through direct actions, they strive to be bold, to confront the state head-on, and to walk in the spirit of the Black Panthers. BLM-Bay Area also continues the legacy of building Black power by honoring and embodying intergenerational leadership. They even have an elders council. Last, BLM-Bay Area has helped their cities rethink what allyship means and has rebuilt relationships with Asian folks, Indigenous folks, Latinx folks, and some white folks, as well as re-centered Black folks in conversations around gentrification, which has been a major issue in their cities, which have disproportionately impacted Black people.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Ms. Jenetta at the Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex Justice Project.



“FLUID”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Using a grassroots model, we seek to restore, protect, and empower ALL BLACK LIVES. We will accurately address the social, political, and economic concerns of the Black community in a transformative way and create a legacy of Black unity, progression, and power.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Nothing but our minds can free ourselves. Liberation in the mind cannot be control by external factors. Black Joy is vital for the continuing battle of complete freedom. We celebrate Black Joy with food, fun, and fellowship. We strive to make our time together a source of joy.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

The chapter's work within its first year began with banking within the Black community, which empowers our banking intuitions to invest and give back to the Black community. Moreover, banking Black encourages banking institutions to lower their interest rate and add flexibility for giving loans to Black people. We have been the forefront of increasing minimum wage with the Fight for \$15, and ending predatory lending, which limits our power. Additionally, our political work grooms young people into leadership. We support young people to get involved and create their own platforms. We are working to dismantle mass incarceration by freeing incarcerated Black mothers and fathers in order to reconnect families and build legacies. Without the presence of Black mothers and fathers in homes, Black children are left without proper nourishment to build Black

power within their homes, which impacts the city. Birmingham is 75 percent Black and 49.6 percent impoverished. We are the majority whose needs must be met and voices heard.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Malcolm X, Octavia Butler, and Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

It unlocks opportunity for all oppressed people to experience the same.



“UNDERDOG”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

To liberate Black people.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

By being unapologetically Black, in community, and practicing collective care.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Listening, affirming, and loving our Blackness. We focus on the needs of our community and address them (whether it be trying to secure more affordable housing or books and breakfast).

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Assata, Janet Moses, Marcus Garvey, Steve Biko.



“DEDICATED”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

It is needed in the community and nationally. A lot of activist organizations on campus, none focused on Black people or led by Black people. There was an opening and opportunity with high rates of incarceration of Black people. We are so grateful for each and every person who has been involved. We exist and have done what we have done because of all of those people throughout this time. This community is special and the work is needed. We are thankful for those that have looked out and gotten involved.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Still trying to figure out how to organize and take care of ourselves. We have monthly socials like bowling and game nights. We will have dinners with our team; some are open to the community. We realize the importance of celebrating Black Joy.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

There has been resistance to BLM from other Black organizations, especially Christian organizations. People have decided this is what they want to do. We are supported by the national backdrop of BLM and have a stake in our community. We are acknowledged by authority and stakeholders. We have built power and inspired work, and we have seen things change. We are a good example to other Black people, especially youth as young as five and six years old. They are becoming braver and more courageous as we engage with them in the community and through our pilot Freedom School.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Tupac, who was like Richard Pryor and Paul Mooney, who make people uncomfortable when they open their mouths. Afeni Shakur even more so. Angela Davis. Assata Shakur. Malcolm X. Martin Luther King, Jr. James Baldwin. The Black kid down the street. All the brilliant Black people I meet. We are dope as hell.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE: "WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE..."

How magnificent that will be. Everything will open up. We have been so constricted by laws and norms, but our freedom will open the world in a different way. We will experience life in a different way. We will always have different issues, but to be rid of incarceration will be new, unlike anything we've experienced. Joyous and magnificent.



"RADICAL"

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

To get us free.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

We play all day. We laugh a lot, no matter how much stress we're under.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Pushing non-reformist reforms, challenging state power, collaborating, focusing on those most directly affected.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Kwame Ture, Thomas Sankara, Che Guevara, Harriet Tubman, Fannie Lou Hamer, Assata Shakur, Malcolm X, Queen Nanny, Ella Baker, Claudia Jones, Nat Turner, Maurice Bishop, Ida B Wells, Lucy Parsons.



"FAMILY. WE BUILD COMMUNITY. WE RIDE HARD, WE FIGHT HARD."

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

We saw no other choice. After we saw and were part of things moving in other parts of the country, we wanted to protect Black people in Cleveland. I was connected with the big cousin of Tamir, and our chapter started from there in the heat of this crisis when a neighborhood boy was shot by police in the park across the street from his house. We are in a state of constantly being gaslighted. Our mayor is Black, our police chief is Black. We go in the face of white supremacy, and white supremacy responds with "These systems were made for you."

Tanesha had been killed the week before Tamir, and we started this work by building community with families. Family members have lost their loved ones, and we all feel loss and grief, but they are the most directly impacted. This type of tragedy is isolating because the rest of your family are still convinced that there is some kind of security in white supremacy. Cleveland had no sustained history of resistance. A lot of firsts, like first Black mayor.

Revolutionary resistance is culture shock to both white and Black folks. Much like folks across the country, we find ourselves in these intersections and centering those who are most impacted, like the family of Brandy Bledsoe, a Black trans woman who was killed on Cleveland's west side. Like communicating with Samaria Rice and being by her side and being clear that the officer who killed Tamir would not have been fired had we not persisted. Telling the city and the mayor and his team that we are not letting this get swept under the rug. We are the memory for Black people, which is powerful in a place like Cleveland. The norm is for people like Timothy Russell and Melissa Williams, who were shot 137 times on TV when I was still in high school, to be forgotten. We are the historical record keepers and the preservers of Black history and how we create new spaces and new ways to build community with each other outside of the state.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

This is a struggle right now. We are planning a retreat, but the Midwest is a resource desert. We need access to resources, something as simple as colored candles. Preserving self. The only chance we get to live this life we love. Incorporating Black Joy in healing. We had a team dinner yesterday. Black Joy looks like us taking care of ourselves and our families, who are targeted because of the work we do.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

We dug up the baton out of the grave. We are looking for the history to make the connections. We look to elders like Barbara Smith. So many sold out and were bought out. We are the legacy filling a huge gap. The new iteration is shifting culture to an abolitionist framework to divest from police. The task of getting them defunded will take longer, but for now, we want to make Black people think twice before they call the police. Anti-Blackness is internalized. We are starting at the core of how Black people are in relationship with the police.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Assata Shakur and the politics of love. Ella Baker and the unrest of revolutionaries. Samaria Rice is our modern-day Mamie Till, stepping into her power and self-organizing. Daily inspired by team

most present with me. Once we get a glimpse of freedom, it is an insatiable thirst. Who I look to has shifted over the years as a result of growth and sharpening of my politic. I would have said Martin or Malcolm. Now I am clear this is spiritual warfare, so I look to our ancestral mothers. They are the ultimate revolutionaries fighting through me every day.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE: "WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE..."

It's lit. Hella lit.



"RESILIENT"

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Expose and address and eradicate anti-Black systems of oppression. Space where Black love can thrive. Black love, Black power, Black inclusion. Founded by three Black women. Created out of a need for Black liberation and problematic issues of patriarchy in activist circles. Others have come and helped get us to this place. Where we are now would not be possible without the foundation of economic justice platform created by Jonathan Bartholomew. Burnout can easily happen, so doing the work to combat burnout. Being active and sharing the work because it needs to be sustainable. Lessons learned and due diligence to center wellness, Black women, and LBGTQ.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

With each other. Take time to celebrate each other and small successes. Being proud and carefree. Not ignoring the issues but finding joy and showing love to each other. Celebrate victories. We uplift students graduating, people organizing on an issue, whenever Black people are fighting for liberation. Being happy and joyful in the face of oppression.

The work can be depressing and all the negativity presses in from all sides, so finding joy in spite of that.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Black education, Black economic justice, Black wellness, rapid response. Education—how Black power is represented, who is leading, how is Black power taught. Economic justice—spending money in our community and teaching others to do the same. Wellness—taking care of each other; wellness is the center of it all. Making sure we take care of self before we can take care of others. Building power, network, camaraderie, and like minds.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Black Panthers, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Assata Shakur, Eldridge Cleaver, James Baldwin, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

There will be no more BLM 5280. We do this work to end the need for Black liberation. There will be people in positions of power. Black people will be thriving in Colorado, the U.S., and internationally. Black women will be at the center of liberation, accolades, and appreciation.



“PASSIONATE”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

We were at an event for Black History Month with fourth and fifth graders talking about systemic oppression. One kid said he was afraid watching the news. I asked how many are afraid from watching the news, and every single one of them raised their hand. I saw they were visibly afraid from watching the news. I told them that I do what I do to make sure they don't have to be afraid anymore.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

We like to celebrate Black Joy daily at every meeting. We might have 90-second dance parties, and sometimes I will bring a bottle of wine. We just chartered a Black Arts committee. Arts are a huge part of what we do, and Detroit has a history and legacy of art and music, so that is something we wanted to honor. It will be a key pillar moving forward. The history of activism in our community has always tied into arts, whether it was with Harry Belafonte or Nina Simone or so on. Many artists stood in the gap. Without Dr. Maya Angelou, I don't know how many young women of color would have grown up with a level of self-empowerment or respect, or how many young Black men would have learned to respect women in the same way. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is really a revolutionary piece of art, and you could put James Baldwin in that same way. I would say, and people might object...but I think you can put Tupac into that same category where artists have consistently spoken truth to power. That is a legacy that goes all the way back not just to our history of oppression in this country, but to our roots and our ancestry, and how we as a people have continued to use music and the arts not just as a tool of communication but catharsis and revolution.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

To truly understand Detroit and not just the headlines is to understand Black power, but also the illusion and facade of power and the threat and the temptation of power and of that corruption. Ours is a unique city, being an 80-plus percent Black city; we don't have some of the same obvious conflicts that other cities might have. A large chunk of our police force and city council is Black. In other cities you might be able to say, “Look at all those white police over there and look at those Black people”; it draws a clear line in people's minds. Our path is in deconstructing and dissecting the system itself. In many ways, while that is more difficult, I think it is more sustainable. Many journalists and community members can get bogged down in the white versus Black that is one white cop and one Black kid, and once that case is resolved, move on. You can have a Black cop do racist and oppressive shit to Black people because the system of policing in and of itself is racist and oppressive.

You have an entire construct that is designed for one primary purpose and it is not equality. I don't care how good of a person you are—if you are operating in a system that is designed for one thing and you are working to that end, then you are not working to balance out any sort of equity. We try not to set ourselves apart from the community in a patronizing kind of way and say, “We are over here and we are over here and we are going to lead you and you just sit over there.” We are trying utilize whatever resources we have to empower our community. That is shown by the diversity of our leadership team: a trans man, a trans woman, and me, a hetero cis Black male. We have queer members on our leadership. We don't choose to embody one specific thing and that diversity is reflected not just in identity, but in experience, in process and pattern. I may have blind spots in my experience where I am not going to see certain prejudice, and having Ray, Kezia, Ia, or Bia next to me helps that make sense. Our goal is to make sure every person in metro Detroit can be their own vision of Black power and Black leadership.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

My grandfather, a Tuskegee airman, graduated from college in Kentucky in the 30s, and so did my grandmother. Harry Belafonte. I've identified more with X than with King. If you hit me, I am going to hit back. Farrakhan is interesting; even though I don't

agree with a lot of what he says or how he says it, I appreciate how impactful his presence has been. I don't know if I hold him up as an icon but definitely someone I learn from both in what to do and what not to do. I have been rediscovering James Baldwin. I have always been a huge Toni Morrison fan but had not realized what a revolutionary writer she was. I am also intrigued by nonfamous Black people who did so much, like George Shirley, a tenor from Detroit who won two Grammys and was the first Black tenor to sing live at the Met. Simon Este. Black classical musicians. Leontyne Price and Jesse Norman, who are divas on any level and should be held up and aren't. Classical music is the epitome of an old white boys club. Heavy, oppressive racism. Moses Hogan...it blows my mind how no one knows who he is as a composer. The work he did as a composer taking Negro spirituals and reinventing them in a way that is powerful, impactful, edgy, and still paying homage to their original construction. I don't want to be famous, I want to work. That in and of itself is protest. Not having to be Will Smith or Michael Jordan famous but being able to plug away every day with your art and your craft, just being able to make a difference with your existence.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

I will cry. It's hard, because in so many ways that seems so far away and I don't even know if I know what it will look like. There is a really bad musical from 1972 called Flora the Red Menace and there is a song called “The Quiet Thing.” The lyrics are, “When it all comes true just the way you planned, it's funny but the bells don't ring, it's a quiet thing.” When I think about Black people getting free, part of me wants to imagine this big moment when this big bill gets passed, this big thing that happens, this explosion, this huge party—but that's not going to be what it is. We had a rights bill that passed an amendment. We had moments, but in many ways, those moments end up getting co-opted by white liberalism that wants to pat itself on the back: “Yay, we did that thing for you, congratulations.”

Black freedom is incremental. It is day by day, moment by moment, person by person. It's deconstructing and decentralizing these endemic systems and social structures that are designed for the purposes of oppression. Differentiating between what people might call democracy or the virtue of living in a republic and disassociating from the mandated influences. It will just be turning around one day and realizing we got here, and then I'll cry.



“I GOT YOUR BACK”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Joined after initially organized by founders after murder of pre-teen young man in Gary. Shot by police while running away. Police violence is at city, county, and state. Three neighboring towns are policing Gary. Gary has sold rights to other law enforcement agencies to ticket. We have seven primary demands, with three immediate: 1) Stop warrant sweeps; 2) Stop predatory funds, penalties in 100's and 1000's of fines. All LEOs will ticket for the same infraction. Poverty-related violence due to the economic status and fines for infractions such as overgrown grass; 3) Establish independent review board. Mayor has tried to appropriate. Black mayor and Black chief, all-Black city council except for one. Work against the interests of working Black people. Systemic racism, racial, class, and gender targeting. Full of churches, mostly inactive, some who are implicit co-conspirators. We meet at the most outspoken church. Being done to Black people by Black people. Elitism, sexism, and white supremacy working together. Racism is often used to describe ways institutions impact people of Gary. Totally inaccurate not to talk about far-reaching effects of racism of the system.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Continuing to fight institutionally from employment to education, keeping the conversation alive. That's what unites us. Live life and understand our lives are not separate from the work. To have a measure of sanity to continue to do the work.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Gary is site of the first Black political convention. History of class struggle and fight back. Excellence, proud working class. Many groups have recognized there is something here. Power structure recognizes it, too. Chapter is intergenerational and there are struggles, issues. Pull in as many folks as possible. Sexism is a problem in the movement. Especially where there are a lot of Black churches and people are used to a certain type of leadership structure. Acknowledging that people of all ages have something to contribute. Holding people accountable for contributing in a productive way that doesn't undermine or is dominated by male leadership. Forceful push not to replicate these structures. Everyone benefits from the structure of BLM-Gary being Black-led. The movement has to be led by those most affected even though poor white kids go to the same terrible schools, and we need everyone to fight. We are led by Black working-class folks. Working with other BLM groups in Indiana. What unites us is not the title, but the work. Our past governor is now the vice president of the U.S. We have built a support system of those working on the same goals and umbrella. We have learned what to do and what not to do. There are multiple right ways.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Nina Simone, Harry Haywood, Claudia Jones, Angela Davis, Assata Shakur.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

Any system based off of profit or exploitation is smashed and everybody else will be free, too.



“DETERMINED”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

BLM-Hudson Valley began as BLM-Rockland-Orange in December 2015. Expanding the territory from Kingston to Westchester (Hudson Valley region) did not change the mission to stand in the gap for communities by providing leadership and support for Black folks on issues that are impacting their communities. While following the guiding principles of Black Lives Matter, BLM-Hudson Valley' goals are committed to and informed by local community needs. Community organizing informs the goals of BLM-Hudson Valley with collaboration from individual residents and community organizations. BLM-Hudson Valley leads actions and advocates to address police accountability, reversing the Tenant's Responsibility Act in the City of Newburgh including actions regarding water contamination, feeding those in need, educational accountability, and the support of Black Trans Women.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

We get together on a regular basis to chill and wine. Black-only space, no work talk. Some of us read poetry or give updates on books we have read. We dance, listen to music, or just chill in the quiet space we have set aside.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

BLM-Hudson Valley is organizing residents in the City of Newburgh to secure a tenants association and collecting renters' stories, including information about their living conditions, to take to the city council, county executive, and then Albany. BLM-Hudson Valley has retained a civil rights attorney to aid the parents of school districts in

Rockland. Additionally, the East Ramapo Central School District is actively fighting systematic decimation of services for students; budget cuts have resulted in overcrowded classrooms, experienced teachers' release, cuts to curriculum, and basic and enrichment programs termination. Standing with residents and grassroots organizations in this community, BLM-Hudson Valley has organized community protests, voter registration drives, candidate forums, and programs to offset deficits.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Fred Hampton, Marcus Garvey, Assata Shakur, Malcolm X before Mecca, Stokeley Carmichael, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Steve Biko, Marsha P. Johnson, James Baldwin...my grandmother and mother, who fought the mofo system every day of their lives while above ground. I feel their spirit every day as I continue their fight for liberation of my people.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE: “WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

The love of ourselves that has been stomped down will truly come shining through. We will soar to heights that have always been in us to another level of consciousness. That no one can ever



“UNDERGROUND”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Inland Empire organizes because the areas that their chapter focuses on do not get as much visibility as other areas in California and outside of California yet. The communities within Inland Empire still experience violence and police brutality. The organizers of BLM-IE believe that there was a need and still is a need to uplift Black people in the areas in which they reside. Even though they

are a small community, they organize to elevate the voices and experiences of Black people in Inland Empire.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Inland Empire celebrates Black Joy by being in relationship with the community of Inland Empire and making the events that they organize accessible and in direct service of the community. Inland Empire prioritizes just being with one another. One of the ways that they allow themselves to be is by organizing events where they come together, talk, laugh, break bread, and share space. For example, like their Kwanzaa event, which of course, uplifted the purpose and principles of Kwanzaa, but was also an opportunity to be in community and just have fun! Additionally, IE celebrates Black Joy by celebrating the diversity of Blackness fully and every Black person in their community. They never lose sight of how Black community and family create unity that is needed for the struggle.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Inland Empire works to contribute to the legacy of building Black power in their city by educating, supporting, and bolstering a sense of Black pride. They do this by engaging all kinds of communities where their people are, such as churches, colleges, at vigils, etc. Last, they let every Black person know that they are needed and that each and every one of them has something to contribute to make the world and planet a better place for all of us.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Fannie Lou Hammer, Kwame Ture, Marsha P. Johnson, the Black Panther Party, Marcus Garvey, Fidel Castro, Ida B. Wells, Fred Hampton, Ella Baker, Assata Shakur, Malcolm X, John Brown, Martin Luther King, Jr., Amilcar Cabral, Haile Selassie, Nelson Mandela, Winnie Mandela, Harriet Tubman, Elaine Brown, Angela Davis, Jamil Abdulla Al-Amin, Bunchy Carter, and all political prisoners.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

Black Joy all the time and every day.



“GAME-CHANGER”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Our chapter was formed in the summer of 2015, following our participation in the National Gathering in Ohio. Coy Kindred, David Hayes, Amelia Parker, and Charice Starr carpooled to the convening, meeting there with Knoxville-based Highlander staff Elandria Williams and Andre Canty. In the car on the way back, we decided to form a chapter to pull the issues together that we had been working on. We were already engaged in efforts to Stop School Pushout, strengthen Black arts and culture in the city, as well as mentoring projects. However, often when organizing around these issues, our turnout produced a larger white audience than Black. We wanted to form an all-Black chapter that would allow us space to organize without white folk with more political experience and capital driving the conversation, regardless of good intentions. Our chapter remained active through 2016. We hosted community forums about community policing and how to stop gentrification, and we had large turnout at all events and actions. However, that large turnout included police, so we decided in December of that year to focus our energy on local elections and getting folks elected who would implement the changes we sought.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Many divisions in our chapter have prevented these moments.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

The founders of the BLM–Knox chapter are working directly with those in the community who built the local Black Power Movement. We are building on each other's strengths and working to prevent the city from continuing to allocate power and access to a few token leaders.



“EVOLVING. INTERSECTIONAL.”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Because, like everywhere in the U.S., there are Black people being murdered. We are doing what many chapters are doing, which is bringing a voice and uplifting a story that for too long was on mute. We will stop when Black lives actually do matter. We organize because we realize that the violence we see translates to every city, to every community, and we see the trends in our city in terms of political violence, corruption...having a climate that was anti-Black in many ways that was built upon the foundation of white supremacy.

As we see the forces in our own city, what can we do to impact this because there is only so much we can do at the national level. What it means to be a chapter is the beauty of the struggle. The beauty of failure. Coming together to create something new that never existed before. It is okay to stumble, to crawl and not be afraid to fail, because failure leads to innovation. Failure is what is leading to our liberation. Those moments led to the most beautiful creations. We are a phoenix not afraid to go up in flames, because we come back stronger with more knowledge. Perfection is a construct created by white supremacy and patriarchy to keep us from trying. It is not real and does not set up accountability. Building the adapting, evolving generation of Blackness is messy and hard. People get hurt, and so do feelings and relationships. Accountability is what BLM has taught me. If we really want liberation and freedom, it means sitting with the old paradigm within us and being willing to heal. Accounting for trauma and parts of me that need to heal. A manual of BLM would include a chapter on accountability and trauma. We will not throw you away.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Within meetings, gathering every other week. Taking space to intentionally be with one another. To witness, listening and affirming. This is space not often given. Heavy work and celebrating together. Taking time to celebrate Blackness and achievements.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Before BLM–Kalamazoo, Black power had been segmented. We are adding to the narrative because we are evolving, adapting, restructuring power dynamics between individuals.

Disparities in income, resources. Seems on the surface liberal and equal, but it is not. Organizers on social climate in nonprofits. Black political power in elected officials. Disconnected. Trying to figure out what that means. BLM came in to collaborate with all of Black Kalamazoo and bridge the gap. Chapter working toward not silo-ing ourselves. Pockets of power. Allow each individual to feed in where they already have roots and bringing Blackness to the forefront. Similar to men creating space for feminists. Taking what we are learning back into Black spaces. Haven't been as visible in those spaces like the new radical groups. We are making sure we are taking up space in all of these groups now that they know Trump is racist. As they rise up, Black power is already there.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Dad. Octavia Butler, who did not want to be the only Black woman writing science fiction. Assata Shakur in Cuba still holding it down. Trans women. Movement leans toward cis hetero men. Black trans Marsha P. Johnson, but her Blackness is often erased. Black trans women in BLM are creatively pushing work while navigating survival. Those role models have helped me persevere when I couldn't unless I could pass. Honoring one another's humanity and Blackness rather than tolerance and acceptance. Revolutionary even within the revolution. BLM is a safe space for people that are trans and queer.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

We are going to heal the Earth. We've been separated from the motherland and seeking freedom away from where our roots began. We

will connect with all aspects of our humanity and with our ancestors. We will be closer to everyone getting free. We are directly tied to the struggles of the Earth and Indigenous people. When freedom is attained, we will be that much closer to global healing. We are one tree with interconnected roots. We look like a forest, but we are one tree. When we are finally free, we will be our own individual Black selves without stereotypical images of Blackness affirmed by other Black people. All Blackness will be affirmed and connected. Varied and different, and still legitimate.



“MIGHTY”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

To engage with our community and fight for justice and progress. We do it because it is the only way to build power. To smile and see others smile and create safe and healing spaces. To dismantle structures that perpetuate anti-Blackness and oppression.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

With food and libations. We turn up as appropriate. Music and singing.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Through collaboration with over 35 organizations and having a clear hold of local elections with our Election 20XX campaign. We had over 20 candidates show up for our first city leadership forum for the offices of mayor, city clerk, and city council to respond to questions related to issues of Black safety, racial equity, and the needs of Black youth. We have worked diligently to educate

regional law enforcement and the community on excessive force and the factors that produce mistrust. We initiated a divest-invest campaign that resulted in an investment in community programs for youth of color. We have engaged clergy and faith leaders, as well as many white organizations and individuals to advocate for Black power and Black leadership. We have ongoing requests for orientation to the BLM principles and conduct these sessions on a regular basis.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Frances Cress Welsing, Maya Angelou, Audre Lorde, Huey P. Newton, W. E. B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Charlene Sinclair, Octavia Butler, Nelson Mandela, Michelle Alexander, Ava Duvernay, Ta-Nehisi Coates, John Lewis, Auntie Maxine, Kamala Harris, Angela Rye, bell hooks, Black Jesus.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

Everybody gets free. The world breathes.



“RESILIENT”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Black Lives Matter–Long Beach organizes because they care about all Black people and feel that Black people are under attack and marginalized. They organize in LBC because Black people are a minority but still disproportionately experience violence. Their chapter was motivated to organize their people after the murder of Trayvon Martin. Many people in their chapter have personally had a violent experience with the police, have had a family member who has had a violent experience with the police and/or who has been murdered

by the police, or know someone who has had a violent experience with the police.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

BLM–LBC celebrates Black Joy by having community get-togethers in the park, having art for the kids, and doing get-to-know-you activities. In addition, they support other organizations and people doing Black Joy work and encourage their leadership, membership, and community at large to participate. A lot of these events are around art due to the huge art scene in the area.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

BLM–LBC contributes to the legacy of building Black power in the city by being proactive rather than reactive, and are focused on state violence as a point of their activism.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Ella Baker, Malcolm X, and Fred Hampton.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

We will no longer have to fear for our lives when we encounter the police, and we will no longer be a peculiar institution that no one knows what to do with outside of treating us like a commodity.



“STEADFAST”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Black Lives Matter–Los Angeles organizes so that they can win freedom for their people and because they refuse to submit to oppression. BLM–LA is the first chapter of Black Lives Matter. When they first started their chapter, they started from a place of disruption, and while they're still interested in disruption, they're also interested in building models. Some disruptions that they have done include shutting down freeways, city councils, black dinners, etc. Finally, some ways that they are beginning to build models is by creating freedom schools; direct work with families who have had loved ones murdered by the state; building different models on what the family is supposed to be and look like; and bringing a womanist and Black nationalist, queer, and trans lens to their work.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

BLM–LA celebrates Black Joy by doing work that includes Black youth. They practice loving and protecting one another, as well as the families of those whose lives were stolen by the state. Another way that BLM–LA celebrates Black Joy in their chapter is by implementing arts and culture (for example, street dance, art, and music) in everything that they do. They try to lift up beauty in the struggle.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

By being directly connected with the Black Power Movement. They actually have former members of the Black Panther Party who are in their chapter and are active members. They consider themselves one point on the Black Power movement,

committed to transformation and empowering folks as opposed to reform.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

They wouldn't necessarily call them idols, but they have people and spirits who have done the work and whom they are inspired by, including members of their own chapter, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, and the Black Panthers. In addition, their chapter likes to call on the energy and spirit of those lost and stolen by the police who inspire them. They call on them as they do libations at every meeting and ask those spirits to guide their work and honor them, genuinely.



“PETTY & POSITIVE”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

BLM-Louisville sits in a historic hot mess of white supremacy erasure. We cannot let future generations grow up without knowing their history.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

We have never had a serious meeting (unless rapid response). We always have a lil' something something on birthdays, etc. Meme wars in the chat group, now gifs. Passive-aggressive posts and articles. We go to the movies, hang out at the pool, basically take field trips.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

We are holding down an M4BL contingency. We also are for the transformative future of Black Louisville instead of sustaining current structures.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Louis Coleman, Jr., Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, Patrice Luumba, Roy Wilkins, Mattie Jones, Mae Street Kidd, Prince Hall, Solange, so many more.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

Money-G.



“LIT. BEAUTIFUL.”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

To fight for Black liberation while building a world where Black people can live beautiful, full lives.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

We sing, dance, laugh, cry, and dream.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

We contribute by working from a Black feminist framework, and in that, centering cash-poor, women, queer, and trans folks in our analysis and struggle.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Fred Hampton, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Miss Major, Harriet Tubman, Audre Lorde, Kwame Toure.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

Everybody gets free, including the land and every other being that inhabits the land.



“DOPE”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

We organize because we want to live in a world where all of our identities are validated and celebrated.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

We celebrate Black Joy by being our authentic selves with each other.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Living in Minnesota, we know and experience a blatant polarization in how Black folks are treated. We strive to create an avenue for Black folks to actually take back and advocate for ourselves.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Angela Davis, Marsha P. Johnson, Bayard Rustin, Assata Shakur, Octavia Butler, Oluchi Omeoga...you know, the usual. All of our ancestors who have set the stage for who we are.



**“SQUADDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDD!
IN TUNE.”**

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

To fight for the liberation of Black folks in Nashville. Because before we can talk about liberation, we have to talk about survival. We organize to survive the onslaught of state violence and anti-Blackness. Organizing is a way to create spaces where we can thrive to collectively envision what liberation looks like and build towards it. There is nothing like the undeniable spirit of liberation that flows in the spaces we create. It reminds us of how it should be. That a newer world is possible. We organize because we know that when we are silent about our pain, they will kill us and say we enjoyed it. Collective power is how we tap into who we really are as the village. When we assert our rights to existence and self-determination, we reclaim our dignity.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

By engaging with each other, building community, and practicing self-care at all levels of engagement, whether that be within leadership, membership, or the general community. It is a practice. We are learning to live into our joy. Find revolution in living our lives and being happy. Dreaming, loving, and transforming is the work. Grappling with and pushing our thresholds for pleasure as we unlearn to only receive pain and suffering. We turn up together. We laugh until it hurts...on a boat...in the middle of a lake...in the middle of nowhere. We jump naked into the ocean during a thunderstorm. We play and dance to drums. We laugh at inside jokes in signal. Watching children dance and play. The joy is found in one another. In our people. The celebration is just being able to witness joy flow infectiously between people.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Our chapter is extremely grateful to all the pioneers of Nashville that came before us, from Callie House to Diane Nash. Nashville has a deep history of Black power movements and a long record of generations passing down wisdom. We've taken the writings, trainings, and relationships built with our elders and used them to build something more expansive and inclusive. We take this and pass it on to our folks in the hope that they will continue to build something beautiful. We say all the time, "This is just the beginning, and we can't wait to see what we create for years to come." We are a chapter in the story of our fight, and that's humbling.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Angela Davis, Ella Baker, Gloria Richardson, Barbara Jordan, Brunetta (Tyler) Fowler, Assata Shakur, Vernon Johns.

"WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE..."

Our ancestors can be at peace, and we'll all be free.



"LUMPEN"

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Because if we don't do it, we'll die. We all we got.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

By hosting community days.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Our chapter focuses on the youth and the needs of

the community, therefore building Black love. Black love = Black power.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Malcolm X, Assata, Bunchy Carter, Afeni Shakur, Huey Newton, Bobby Seale.



"PERSEVERING"

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

It is our duty.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Come together as a chapter. Black healing circles, safe space for healing, meditation, food open to community, park spaces.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Black liberation for all Black lives. The oppressor doesn't only use one method to oppress, so we should use multiple methods to free ourselves. Direct action and community building. Self-determining methods of resource acquisition.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Move Organisation.



"UNAPOLOGETIC"

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Black Lives Matter-Portland organizes because we want to organize against colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, and all intersections of oppression therein. We organize so that our people can be free. We organize because being Black is hard. We organize to be in community with other Black people. We organize to learn and teach each other skills.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Our chapter celebrates Black Joy through our Black Joy survival programs such as Self Care Saturdays for Black Girls, Women, and Femmes; Black Joy Care Packages for our members; Member Retreats; Blackentines Day (on Valentine's Day, for Black people and those that they love), etc.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

By demanding that folks pay attention to Black folks, organizing our Black communities (especially considering Portland's anti-Black history and present), as well as providing political education for our communities to engage in.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Sojourner Truth, Malcolm X, Zora Neal Hurston, Harriet Tubman, Kwame Nkrumah, Kwame Ture, Bayard Rustin, Miss Major, Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, Black Panther Party, Nanny of the Maroons, Frantz Fanon, our grandmothers and othermothers, youth, Chancellor Williams, Jack Jonson, Muhammad Ali, June Jordan.

"WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE..."

We will have envisioned a new world and will have control of our narrative.



"FAMILY"

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Black Lives Matter-Sacramento organizes because they want to mobilize Black folks in their city. They want to hold their city accountable, and there aren't many other organizations in their city doing Black liberation work. They have had a lot of police violence recently in their city, and they're also organizing against that.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

BLM-Sacramento celebrates Black Joy by having family nights every month or every other month. Since their chapter is multiracial, sometimes they have family nights that are for everyone, and sometimes ones that are just for Black folks. In addition, they try to incorporate joy into their meetings by making them fun! Last, they have also hosted Black Love block parties for those who have been murdered by the police.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER'S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

BLM-Sacramento contributes to the legacy of building Black power in their city by fighting for those who were killed by the police. They are also interested in building community and replacing structures that are already in place, as well as building alternatives to the police more specifically.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, Black Panthers, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Cat Brooks.



“GROWING”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

For the liberation of all Black folx.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

We celebrate Black Joy with self-care.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER’S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

By continuing the good fight with county commissioners to remove the Confederate statue, working on fundraising that allows activists and organizers to buy books. These things will allow us to have some type of budget to organize our fight against the county commissioners’ decision.



“VISIONARY”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Black Lives Matter Toronto organizes because they understand that the specific needs of Black people have not been met and that the quality of life for Black people has not yet been met. They organize

because Black people’s lives depend on it. They organize because Black people are the folks who are always and consistently showing up for other Black folks.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

BLM–Toronto celebrates Black Joy by implementing elements of Black Joy in everything that they do. BLM–Toronto articulated that Black people are often taken from us too soon, and it can be challenging to experience joy in those moments of violence against black people. However, it is the victories that restore hope and promise. They believe that the work can be dehumanizing: The first thing to go is the Black imagination and then Black Joy, but the Toronto chapter works diligently to find Black Joy and implement in into their programming, such as forums, actions, parties, etc.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER’S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

BLM–Toronto contributes to the legacy of building Black power in their city by going beyond their city. Toronto was the first international chapter of Black Lives Matter that was established. We believe in pan-Africanism. We see beyond the national identity and organize for Black life and liberation all over. Canada had a racial myth of being a great haven for Black people. Consequently, the organizing work of their chapter has had national implications that expand beyond just Toronto. The work that their chapter has done has given birth to chapters and cities all across Canada. An example of their work is shutting down the Pride Parade and demanding that police be removed—and requiring if they’re present , that they be there without their uniforms and without weapons. This action helped to destabilize the idea of Canada as a racial haven, forced the media/folks to contend with that myth, and impacted the ways people imagine resistance.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Ella Baker, Assata Shakur, and we are also inspired by the people we’re in community with and who are in our chapter.



“WORKING ON BALANCE”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Community responses to local injustices such as unfair prison sentences, and support of families serving men murdered by police. In the future, we hope to organize more educational resources for families and community members in the area.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

TBD: still working on balance.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER’S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

Through individual projects, each founder member of BLM ensures that the leadership are seen and heard, and foster others to join in. The community is rebuilding.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Assata Shakur, Didi Delgado, SoulFire Farm.



“TRIBE”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

We organize to create a Black future with a purpose guided by our ancestors’ prayers, and in service to our community. We are committed to creating a safe space to recharge our community’s connection to radical Black history and explore black history and how it can guide a future we create together. We recognize healing as an integral part of our path forward. We organize to live authentically as Black people who love ourselves and each other.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

By creating a safe place for Black Joy to express itself. We keep it simple. Every month, we gather to share breakfast. Good food, good conversation, and good people—the basics of enjoying each other in the moment.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER’S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

We are reviving a liberation Black praxis. We actively and consciously share power. We are a small chapter, but as we grow, developing the trust and joy of sharing power will remain our core foundation.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

Harriet Tubman, Queen Nanny, Sojourner Truth, Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, and bell hooks.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

We will have created a future of justice.



“RESILIENT”

WHY DOES YOUR CHAPTER ORGANIZE?

Co-creating healing spaces is the epicenter of the work. From protests to healing circles, we bring folks together to move the conversation forward about race, power, justice, and freedom. “Freedom Circles” is a healing process using systemic family constellations, circle meeting practices, art, music, and education to talk about freedom in a new way.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER CELEBRATE BLACK JOY?

Through ancestral healing, we celebrate the long legacy of African Diasporic Peoples in our new homes. Through Freedom Circles, we offer Black folk a felt-sense experience of approach, crossing, and going beyond the Freedom Line. It is a powerful experience where people can really feel what freedom is, if even for a few moments.

HOW DOES YOUR CHAPTER’S WORK CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF BUILDING BLACK POWER IN YOUR CITY?

By contributing an intersectional perspective on the work.

WHO ARE YOUR BLACK LIBERATION IDOLS?

MLK, Malcolm X, whose genius is still unfurling on us now, and Fannie Lou Hamer.

“WHEN BLACK PEOPLE GET FREE...”

Then it will be made clear how the heavy fates of our ancestors, and their collective sacrifices, have opened up the sky and made a new world possible for us today. The children of enslaved people, of prisoners, absolutely have to get free.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS:



JOINING SOON:



UNOFFICIAL FORMATIONS:
BLM UK

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

BY SHANELLE MATTHEWS & MISKI NOOR

The work we have set out to do is hard and tedious. Each year brings its own challenges—and for many of us, each of them tests our resolve in unimaginable ways.

Despite that, we maximize opportunities to grow as a network, to sharpen our commitment to justice, and to share our varied aspirations for the liberation of Black people. While we don't always agree, what we know above all else is that each of us is organizing toward a world in which all Black people have the rights, resources, and recognition we need to thrive.

We also know that our dissent, demonstrations, demands, and tireless fight for dignity have revealed a ubiquitous white rage, resentment, and revenge. Coupled with economic insecurity and a rise in global conservatism, we are living in a more precarious political landscape than we were just one presidential election ago.

Despite that, our mandate has not changed: Organize and end all state-sanctioned violence until all Black Lives Matter.

In the four years since Black Lives Matter organized, we've called for more safety. Not less. We've demanded an end to anti-Black state violence. We've asked white people to organize their communities; to courageously help their loved ones understand the importance of solidarity; and to show up for us, themselves, and democracy.

Policymakers and white supremacists have promised more death, disenfranchisement, and deportations. We believe them. The violence they will continue to inflict, and the permission they give others to commit violence, is just beginning to emerge.

In the face of this, our commitment remains the same: to protect ourselves and our communities.

Here's what we know: We are obliged to earn the trust of future generations—to defend economic, social, and political power for all people. We are confident that we have the commitment, the people power, and the vision to organize our world into a safe place for Black people—one that leads with inclusivity and a commitment to justice, not intimidation and fear.

We also need and deserve an elaborate strategy to eradicate both white supremacy and implicit bias towards it. We must reckon with the anti-Blackness of America's history that led to this political moment.

We continue to operate from a place of love for our people and a deep yearning for real freedom. In our work, we center the most marginalized and look to them for leadership. We fight for our collective liberation because we are clear that until Black people are free, no one is free. We are committed to practicing empathy for one another in this struggle—but we do not and will not negotiate with racists, fascists, or anyone who demands we compromise our existence.

We affirm our existence. We affirm our right to not only live, but to thrive—to exist in a world where our humanity is seen and honored. We organize to realize a world in which our faiths are held in esteem, our identities are respected, and our families are prioritized. We deserve a world in which our children are protected, our Earth is sacred, and we are given a fair chance to decide our fates.

Because it is our duty to win, we will continue to fight. And today, like every day before it, we demand reparations, economic justice, a commitment to Black futures, and an end to the war on Black people around the world.

Despite all that we are up against given this new political landscape, we are uniquely positioned to build substantial power for Black people in 2017. We know this because we have been here before, and we have the wisdom of elders and the wherewithal to listen and strategize accordingly.

The work will be harder, but the work is the same.

About Shanelle:

Shanelle Matthews is an award-winning political communications strategist with a decade of experience in journalism, legislative, litigation, rapid response, and campaign communications. She serves as the Director of Communications for the Black Lives Matter Global Network, organizing to end state-sanctioned violence against Black people by building power and winning immediate improvements in our lives. She previously served as the Deputy Communications Director for the Sierra Club, where she led communications strategy for their flagship campaign, Beyond Coal. Before that, she worked as a strategist for the ACLU of Northern California on reproductive freedom and LGBTQ rights. In 2016, Shanelle

developed Channel Black, an immersive training program that prepares the next generation of Black millennial spokespeople to make critical, real-time interventions on race and racism in the United States through the media. She is also the founder of the Radical Communicators Network (RadComms), an online and offline community of people working within social change and public interest communications who are committed to taking a radical approach to winning. In the fall of 2017, Shanelle will join The New School as the inaugural Activist in Residence where she will work alongside faculty and students to research and develop strategies that significantly reduce anti-Black bias. As an alumna of Progressive Women's Voices, Shanelle has executed her training as a spokesperson in outlets like Al Jazeera and NPR. She serves on the board of directors for the National Network of Abortion Funds and holds a degree in Journalism and New and Online Media from the Manship School of Mass Communications at Louisiana State University. She lives and plays in Oakland.

WE FIGHT FOR OUR COLLECTIVE LIBERATION BECAUSE WE ARE CLEAR THAT UNTIL BLACK PEOPLE ARE FREE, NO ONE IS FREE. WE ARE COMMITTED TO PRACTICING EMPATHY FOR ONE ANOTHER IN THIS STRUGGLE— BUT WE DO NOT AND WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WITH RACISTS, FASCISTS, OR ANYONE WHO DEMANDS WE COMPROMISE OUR EXISTENCE.



WHY WE NEED BLM MORE THAN EVER

BY PATRISSE KHAN-CULLORS

“FOUR YEARS LATER, WE STILL DECLARE WITH CONVICTION THAT BLACK LIVES MATTER EVERYWHERE.”

Four years ago, #BlackLivesMatter resonated with millions as a hashtag created by myself, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Black youth Trayvon Martin. Innumerable marches, protests, sit-ins, interviews, presentations, speeches, and teach-ins later, BLM has developed into a national and international network of Black people and our allies committed to Black liberation and the struggle against white supremacist and patriarchal violence.

BLM has become a resistance movement that has garnered waves of support and wider participation throughout the United States and across the globe from Black people, our communities, and allies. There’s no denying the multifaceted and dynamic movement we’ve become.

BLM serves as a critical channel for Black organizing today and Black liberation struggles. We are the 21st-century call for Black liberation, and while based primarily across the United States, our vision and our work’s purpose has an international lens and reach. In recent years, we’ve organized with Black struggles in Canada, Brazil, and Colombia to demand justice and reparations. We’ve expressed ourselves in solidarity with Venezuela’s grassroots movement—specifically, the Afro-Venezuelan call for maroon-inspired organizing models. BLM is blurring the colonial borders established to divide us, and instead, is weaving together a global network dedicated to Black liberation and improving conditions for Black communities. In the United States, BLM has reinvigorated and reframed national conversations on systemic racism, the prison industrial complex, and

abolition in ways publicly unspoken prior to 2013. BLM has inspired cultural work from political art and philosophical reflection meant for envisioning our future with projects like the annual Black Futures Month.

BLM continues to respond with massive mobilizations and in mainstream media to state-sanctioned violence and the current Trump administration, which is a threat to Black lives everywhere and targets our very existence. We’ve evolved and transformed, and we continue to process our work every day. We recognize our achievements and our shortcomings in the struggles that have yet to materialize concrete systemic changes for Black people.

Undeniably, Black people face the harshest conditions domestically in the U.S. and globally. U.S. state-sanctioned violence continues to indiscriminately affect Black people, with skyrocketing cases of Black people murdered at the hands of police and other armed security forces. Black people are five times more likely than other groups to be incarcerated in U.S. state prisons. Our communities are underemployed. We overwhelmingly lack adequate, accessible, safe housing. We do not receive sufficient resources for education and other social services. Regarding our collective health, Black women have alarmingly high maternal mortality and morbidity rates. The Centers for Disease Control reports that Black women are four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women. Likewise, our communities continue to suffer from high rates of diabetes and other preventable diseases.

Recently, a BLM delegation traveled to accompany the 22-day civic strike in Buenaventura, Colombia. We broke bread with Black-led organizations and communities fighting for their right to dignity in an attempt to strengthen our movement beyond borders. It’s important to name the struggle our family is waging in the Global South, as well.

Buenaventura is a majority Black and Indigenous port city that suffers from some of the country’s highest unemployment rates, at 62 percent. Of the population, 80.5 percent live in poverty, and many communities have zero access to clean potable running water. The majority Black population of Buenaventura lives without sufficient resources, despite living in the country’s most profitable port city. Repression in Buenaventura during the peaceful civic strike harkens to the state terror tactics used in places like Ferguson and Milwaukee—with tear gas canisters labeled from manufacturers in Pennsylvania. Similar to Ferguson and Milwaukee, however, the Black Colombian resistance is inspiring and full of resilience.

Our struggle calls for the liberation of Black people. This means we continually fight against the denigration of our human rights and our dignity as Black people. In four years, we have built a Black queer, women, and youth-led movement. However, we have many more struggles to overcome and victories to win. We work to manifest a world where Black people are not constantly fighting to survive, but can thrive in safe and sustainable environments.

Four years later, we still declare with conviction that Black Lives Matter everywhere.

About Patrisse:

Patrisse Khan-Cullors is an artist, organizer, and freedom fighter. Internationally known as the co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Patrisse is also the founder and a board member of Los Angeles-based organization Dignity and Power Now, and the Director for Truth and Reinvestment at the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. She is also active in many other social justice organizations, including Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity. A self-described wife of Harriet Tubman, Patrisse has always traveled on the path to freedom. Growing up with several of her loved ones experiencing incarceration and brutality at the hands of the state, and coming out as queer at an early age, she has since worked to tirelessly promote law enforcement accountability across the world while focusing on addressing trauma and building the resilience and health of the communities most affected. She lives and plays in Los Angeles.





CALLS TO ACTION

DONATE:

1. SUPPORT THE WORK WE ARE MOVING BOTH NETWORK-WIDE AND LOCALLY BY BECOMING A DONOR. IF YOUR DONATION IS TO A SPECIFIC CHAPTER, PLEASE NOTE THAT ON THE DONATIONS PAGE.
2. YOU CAN ALSO CONTRIBUTE IN-KIND RESOURCES SUCH AS OFFICE SPACE, FOOD DONATIONS FOR MEETINGS OR ACTIONS, OR A PARTICULAR SKILL SET (LEGAL, COMMUNICATIONS, CULTURAL WORK) TO OUR CHAPTERS.

BECOME A POLITICAL SUPPORTER/ MEMBER OF BLACK LIVES MATTER:

1. AMPLIFY OUR MESSAGES BY RETWEETING AND SHARING OUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, INCLUDING THE BLACK LIVES MATTER GLOBAL NETWORK AND OUR CHAPTER ACCOUNTS.
2. SIGN UP FOR OUR ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT.
3. THROW DOWN WITH A LOCAL CHAPTER BY ATTENDING A MEETING OR AN ACTION. PLEASE CONTACT A LOCAL CHAPTER FOR MORE INFORMATION. EMAIL US AT ORGANIZING@BLACKLIVESMATTER.COM
4. BE A BLM "AMBASSADOR" BY PUSHING BACK AGAINST FALSE NARRATIVES AND TELLING THE TRUTH OF WHO WE ARE IN YOUR OWN CIRCLES. USE THE [#BLACKLIVESMATTER](https://twitter.com/BLACKLIVESMATTER) HASHTAG TO SHARE HOW YOU'RE ORGANIZING TO BUILD LOCAL POWER.



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BLACK LIVES MATTER

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