

# COMMUNITY COALITION'S IMPACT REPORT



2022- 2023



## THE YEAR OF THE PEOPLE

# The 2022 People. Power. Progress. Awards

For the 2022 People Progress Awards, Community Coalition gathered over 500 guests to celebrate and honor "The People'sHeroes" with our Charlotta Bass and Bert Corona Awards. Named after distinguished individuals committed to social change in South Los Angeles, CoCo honored two incredible vanguard of change whose work has moved the needle to create access to opportunities and possibilities for a post-pandemic world: April Verrett and Dr. Barbara Ferrer.

The Bert Corona Award was presented to April Verrett, the President of SEIU, Local 2015, California's most prominent local union and the nation's largest long-term care union and is a leader who shares so many of CoCo's social justice values. Representing more than 400,000 long-term care providers; SEIU Local 2015 fosters deep partnerships with racial equity, disability, age-in-place, and other justice organizations in California and nationally.

Dr. Barbara Ferrer received the Charlotta Bass Award as the current director of the L.A. County Department of Public Health, is a nationally-known public health leader with over 30 years of professional experience as a philanthropic strategist, public health director, educational leader, researcher, and community advocate, whose efforts around curbing the spread of COVID-19 in L.A. County has saved countless lives. In addition to acknowledging the work of these two women, we were thrilled to welcome our founder, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass delivered special remarks.

Held at the historic Wilshire Ebell Theatre/Ebell of Los Angeles, the 2022 Gala event was a unique, interactive cultural experience meant to inspire joy, hope, and enthusiasm about CoCo's organizing and change-making efforts. Visual installations showcased present-day political realities that Community Coalition works to address, such as houselessness and reproductive justice. The dress code was "California Chic," allowing guests to express their unique, personal style. Attendees also experienced a Garden Reception with live performances, installations, and fantastic food & drink.

**IMPACT:** \$500,000 was raised via the gala, providing an infusion of unrestricted funds to help support Community Coalition's mission and programs across the organization.



CoCo is recognized as a community institution with an exemplary track record of empowering local residents to seek tangible changes in education, child welfare, and public safety with the goal of creating a safer, healthier South LA for all. The People, Power, Progress Awards help us raise much-needed funds to support our work to transform South LA.

# Community Coalition Receives Transformational \$6MM Investment from The California Endowment



Rendering of Community Coalition's future Center for Community Organizing

Community Coalition (CoCo) was thrilled to announce a significant philanthropic investment from the California Endowment that will support the construction of the Center for Community Organizing (CCO) home. The California Endowment Board of Trustees approved a grant award of \$6MM – the most significant one-time award in CoCo's 30-year history.

"On behalf of our Board of Directors at The California Endowment, we congratulate the Community Coalition for their vision, passion, and strategic foresight in conceiving the new Center for Community Organizing," said Dr. Robert Ross, President and CEO of The California Endowment. "This nation finds itself at a pivotal crossroads about racial justice and the future of our democracy, and infrastructure support for community organizers and activists is the single best answer."

In the Spring of 2022, CoCo officially acquired a second site at 7514 S. Vermont Avenue, within walking distance from CoCo's headquarters. The building will continue to support South Los Angeles residents, further amplifying CoCo's footprint along the historic Vermont Corridor. This area has long suffered from years of divestment and under-resourcing. The Center for Community Organizing will be a game-changing national school for community organizers, civic leadership training center, a cross-city learning lab, an inside/outside strategy think tank and an arts and culture activism hub. In addition, the space will be a People's Center to harness the power of community and support activists across the nation in multiracial organizing toward our collective freedom.

**IMPACT:** At its core, the purpose of the CCO is to:

- Establish an apparatus that expresses different forms of power,
- Advance local power building across the country, and produce a pipeline of movement leaders in various cities,
- Build the physical space to house key movement institutions and activities, and
- Commit to making the social justice movement stronger.

# CoCo Partners with The Carpenters

Jobs in the building trades and construction are not just great jobs but generation defining. The issue of access to these jobs has been overlooked for decades. These are well-paying leadership positions in labor that whites historically filled. Many people of color, particularly in the Black community, have faced barriers entering these fields, apprenticeship training programs, and benefits that allow union members to retire with dignity and respect.



Southwest Mountain States Carpenters' South Los Angeles Local 323 Union learned about redlining during one of the Fellowship sessions led by Community Coalition organizers.

Understanding the importance of building equitable access and wealth within Black communities, Community Coalition formed an exciting partnership with the Southwest Mountain States Carpenters Union and its South Los Angeles Local 323 Union. The goal is to support the successful enrollment of African Americans into the Southwest Carpenters job training programs through a multifaceted effort. A partnership component includes the development of a Leadership Fellowship offered by CoCo to union members that concludes with a graduation ceremony on June 3rd, 2023.

As part of the partnership, an assessment was conducted. In the feedback from this assessment, workers shared that the building trades path has created opportunity and dignity around employment pathways for marginalized individuals, particularly system-impacted individuals. Fellows were trained in outreach strategies and community engagement practices for recruitment among community and non-union carpenters. They also learned tools to support and enhance recruitment, outreach, and engagement practices with other union members. These sessions were grounded in the historic and place-based context of race relations in trade unions.

The Carpenter's Fellowship graduation ceremony acknowledged the hard work of Andre Moore; Martin Mapps; Lee Whyms; Donald Manuel; Bruno Williams; James Carter; Jesus Camargo; Donald Bell; Jesus Marroquin; David Ramirez; Michael Lobos; Diocelina St. Anne; Anthony Ruano; Alex Perez; Keishell Smith; Ronisha Roberson.

**IMPACT:** The program took 19 members from Local 323 on a deep dive to develop skills and practices towards:

- Enhancing their outreach capacity through specialized training anchored in a solid racial and social justice lens;
- Bolstering and strengthening union members' leadership in both the trades profession and their communities;
- Building rapport and camaraderie between stalwart labor and social justice organizations

# Welcome to The People's School



The People's School is a community organizing training program where Black and Brown residents can build community with others, become civic leaders, and help transform the social and economic conditions impacting South LA. Pictured above is the very first graduating class of Community Coalition's People's School. The event was filled with lots of warmth, joy, and inspiration. These South LA community grassroots leaders will continue to make a positive impact in our communities.

The People's School is a community organizing training program where Black and Brown residents build community with others, become civic leaders, and help transform South LA's social and economic conditions. Members participated in seven trainings, including City Hall 101, The City Budget 101, and The History of Housing/Houselessness in LA. They also volunteered for five activities, such as phone banking or sharing public testimony during the program.

After eight weeks of training, People's School participants were celebrated and honored via CoCo's very first graduating class of the People's School. It was an incredible event filled with warmth, joy, and inspiration.

## **IMPACT:**

- Participants understand the current institutional, positional, and relational power to utilize people power and win campaigns,
- They learned the importance of L.A.'s city budget in creating positive community change.
- Participants received a historical overview of the housing crisis in Los Angeles and how it is connected to the current housing/houselessness issue in South Los Angeles.

# The People's Assembly



Pictured above, Robert Collins, Community Organizer for CoCo, opens the People's Assembly meeting by addressing a full house of resident leaders who are dedicated to making positive change in South Los Angeles.

Community Coalition's People's Assemblies helps everyday residents strengthen their understanding of the current issues impacting our communities while informing solutions and gaining the skills necessary to organize youth and adult residents to make positive and transformative changes that will improve our conditions. Community members come together to share their opinions about what they want to see happen in the city. There are social investigation polls where community members are asked about the most pressing issues. We also break into small group conversations so everyone can share and hear from each other. After the small group share, members report to everyone what was expressed, and that information is captured to help shape CoCo activation and campaigns.

Initiated by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, PAs are where community members make their voices heard. CoCo's PAs allow residents to become familiar with the organization amidst a community of like-minded, powerful resident leaders fighting for change in South Central. With shared values and politics, participants get a deeper understanding of the current issue, like houselessness and homelessness, and their implications for Black and Brown people.

The housing and homelessness crisis is disproportionately impacting BIPOC community members in South Central. Due to the cost of living increasing, corporate landlords targeting our community through exploitative practices, and inadequate resources to keep people housed in our community, the People's Assemblies aims to teach participants to navigate structural barriers and give them the ability and confidence to talk about these current issues with media, elected officials and most importantly other residents.

Lastly, the People's Assemblies provide people with organizing skills that effectively create lasting change through 30 years of movement work.

## **IMPACT:**

# Make Los Angeles Whole 2023

40,000 Angelenos are sleeping outside on the streets of our city every night. The Make L.A. Whole (MLAW) Coalition held a community rally and press conference on Wednesday, May 17th, demanding that the City Council pass a budget that reflects our values and prioritizes Angelenos' most pressing needs.

The Make L.A. Whole Coalition was created to respond to the exacerbated socio-economic inequities in a way that recognizes the need for meaningful budgetary investments to address houselessness, housing insecurity, the economic downturn, and the ongoing conditions created by decades of divestment in our communities.

The MLAW Coalition was built as a direct investment for women, children, and families, hardest hit during the pandemic, to respond to socioeconomic inequities in ways that recognize the need for meaningful budgetary investments. The Coalition came together to address houselessness, housing insecurity, the economic downturn, and the ongoing conditions created by decades of divestment in our communities. MLAW partners include Community Coalition, The Brotherhood Crusade, InnerCity Struggle, SEIU Local 2015, SEIU Local 99, Black Women for Wellness, and Catalyst California (formerly Advancement Project California).

"We applaud the mayor for stepping up to the moment by meeting the demands of everyday Angelenos through critical investments via the city's budget to help communities still experiencing the hardships and challenges of the pandemic," said Dr. Ryan Smith, Chief Strategy Officer at Community Coalition.

**IMPACT:** The City Council did move forward by approving the \$13-billion city budget proposed by Mayor Karen Bass. This historic budget moved Los Angeles in a new direction with unprecedented investments in housing efforts and a budget that reduces homelessness and keeps encampments from returning.

The majority of MLAW's demands were met in this year's budget including doubling the senior meals program budget, increased funding for childcare centers, decreased funding for LAPD, increased rental assistance and housing assistance, and improvements in equity and inclusion efforts. Also, programs like GRYD and Inside Safe were protected based on Make LA Whole's organizing and advocacy.



# South LA Is Still Home

Community Coalition (CoCo) curated THE SOUTH LA IS NOT FOR SALE exhibit at the Freedom Festival held in Leimert Park in January. The exhibit featured five (5) installations exploring the historical and contemporary multi-layered housing and homelessness crisis complexities. The installations illustrated how housing and homelessness disproportionately impacted Black and Brown communities, families, and students. Through this activation, CoCo focused on uplifting the stories of South LA residents who have suffered from decades of systemic oppression and empowered themselves to create material change for themselves and their communities.



Visitors to the exhibit started at The Timeline, an overarching look at over 200 years of disinvestment and structural policies that have contributed to systemic oppression for Black people and other communities of color. The second installation, South LA Is Not For Sale, walked visitors through a visualization of a South LA neighborhood targeted by predatory developers and the displacement happening to long-time Black and Brown residents due to their practices. Turning the corner, visitors entered the Living Room: At Risk gallery, which explored how families experience the external pressures of housing that can propel them toward housing instability and insecurity.

Exiting The Living Room, participants were transported into "The Idea Classroom?" This gallery explored the generational inequality and disinvestment that young people report experiencing at home and in their classrooms. It also documented that more than 20,000 students have been missing from Los Angeles Unified School District classrooms since schools reopened after the COVID-19 closure. And it asked the question, where did the students go? Why did they leave? Closing out the galleries was A Greenhouse of Action, which engaged participants in making their spaces greener and provided resources to community members.

In May, CoCo reconstructed the Living Room: At Risk portion of the activation and added an art exhibited to the space, which was experienced by almost 1,000 Angelenos.

**IMPACT:** Thousands of Angelenos who visited the South LA Is Still Home installation were engaged in dialogues that looked at the issue and moved them into action through surveys and social investigation. Additionally, the electronic and print media outlets reported on this unique art & culture exhibition--allowing CoCo to frame and lead the narrative regarding how homelessness, houselessness, push-out, and gentrification are affecting Black and Brown people living in South LA.