

# THE MOVEMENT

PEOPLE. POWER. PROGRESS.



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## ***Community Coalition's Founder Makes History***

On December 12, 2022, Community Coalition members and staff joined several thousand Angelenos from across the city as Community Coalition's founder, Karen Bass, was sworn in as the 43rd mayor of Los Angeles. Mayor Bass becomes the first woman and second Black person to lead the city. Due to weather constraints, the inauguration took place at the Microsoft Theater instead of City Hall (another first). Topping off the "herstoric" event, Mayor Bass was sworn in by United States Vice President Kamala Harris.

Through her leadership at Community Coalition, Mayor Bass taught generations of leaders how to build power and solidarity within our Black and Brown communities. The legacy she created remains the backbone of our work today. Because of the work she pioneered 30 years ago, CoCo has been a leader in driving equity-focused policy, winning groundbreaking campaigns, and establishing a permanent institution for social change.

There is no doubt the last two years have been challenging for us all, in particular for people of color. No one could have foretold the physical, emotional, and economic impact that this terrible pandemic unleashed upon Black and Brown communities. Our communities are still reeling from the chaos. Mayor Bass assumes office during a time when the city is facing an unprecedented housing crisis.

When Mayor Bass founded Community Coalition in 1990, it was in response to the crack cocaine and gang violence crisis gripping Los Angeles. She engaged community residents in addressing the "root causes" of injustice. She took that same approach to Sacramento in 2004 when she represented the 47th District in the California State Assembly. As Assemblymember, she served as Speaker during California's most significant economic crisis since the Great Depression. Her tenacity and advocacy helped to close a \$42 billion budget shortfall while protecting the social safety net for the people of California.

Additionally, then-Speaker Bass negotiated a historic water agreement to increase the state's water supply reliability and quality while improving the fragile Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the source of drinking water for two-thirds of California. For her leadership, she was awarded the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award. During the last two decades, as a member of Congress, she has fought for Los Angeles--passing federal legislation that continues to protect children, foster youth, CA's safety net, and access to healthcare.

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to the subject line.*

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# SCYEA's Youth Leaders Are Taking Care of Business

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South Central Youth Empowered thru Action (SCYEA—pronounced “say-yeah”) is developing the next generation of activists capable of leading their peers and impacting public policy in their schools and community. Founded in 1991, this group of African-American and Latino youth work together to improve the conditions of South Los Angeles schools. By hosting chapters on high school campuses across South LA, SCYEA aims to promote academic success and amplify the voices of students in education policy decision-making.

Empowered by our community organizing model, SCYEA youth have had some impressive policy wins in the past, including holding LAUSD accountable for making sure all students have access to A-G course requirements, which is the course sequence necessary for entrance into California UC and Cal State systems. They also pressured the school district to repair and build new schools with a \$2.4 billion school bond, and added \$153 million dollars for additional school repairs previously overlooked in their community.

After two years of community organizing virtually due to COVID-19, SCYEA launched its first-person meeting in October 2022. The group has held weekly meetings on Thursdays, with as many as 90 youth providing uplifting stories and experiences. During these base meetings, our youth have learned about past SCYEA campaigns, discussed school and community safety issues, and voiced their desire for police-free schools.

Six of our youth leaders also represent CoCo in the Brothers Sons Selves coalition space, which is working to develop and launch the Youth Bill of Rights campaign to combat the criminalization of young people in Los Angeles. We want to introduce you to a couple of our extraordinary SCYEA leaders focused on transforming conditions in South Los Angeles.

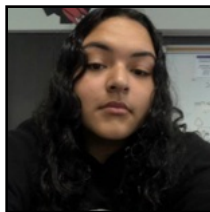
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## FREMONT HIGH SCHOOL

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### Jenny

Jenny was born and raised in South Central Los Angeles. She started her involvement in SCYEA because she needed to see her community transform into a better place and see her peers get a better chance at an equitable education. Jenny knows she is making her parents proud through her involvement and activism in the community. Part of her work is working to



improve mental health systems at her school by supporting other students impacted by the lack of social-emotional resources in learning healthy coping mechanisms. Jenny's dream college is UCLA, with her ultimate goal to pursue a Law degree that will provide her with the tools to continue to help improve the lives of people in her community.

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## CRENSHAW HIGH SCHOOL

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### Jayden

Jayden is a sophomore at Crenshaw High School who first came to CoCo through the Summer Leadership Program. Born and raised in the Crenshaw District, Jayden's dream is to open more parks in his neighborhood and bring people together through sports. In SCYEA, Jayden serves on the Leadership Council and helps co-create weekly base meetings for his peers. He also helps create the political education curriculum.



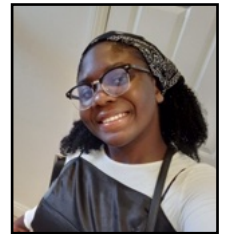
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## WASHINGTON PREP HIGH SCHOOL

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### Divine

Divine Oludimu is a Washington High School senior and SCYEA member. Divine was born in Nigeria and grew up in South Central Los Angeles. She first became involved in the program last summer, and this semester she is becoming more involved and speaking out for what she believes. Divine is motivated to see her community thrive and improve as she walks through the streets every day. Overall, Divine is a bright young woman who is working hard to attend her dream college, UC Berkeley. She is excited to pursue her major in criminal justice, and with God's help, she will be able to do so.



*Interested in joining SCYEA?*

*SCYEA's Base Meetings*

*Every Thursday @ 3 p.m.*

*8101 S. Vermont*

*Los Angeles, CA. 90044*

*For more info:*

*email Benjamin@cocosouthla*

*@scyea\_coco*



Photo Credit: Leroy Hamilton

## *Mayor Karen Bass after being sworn in by U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris*

Ironically, 30 years later Los Angeles' social safety net has once again been shredded by the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented drought has left our water resources in a precarious predicament and more than 42K Angelenos sleep on the streets at night.

*During her Mayor inauguration speech, our new Mayor said she would focus on building affordable housing. And on her first day on the job, Mayor Bass visited the city's emergency operations center to formally declare a state of emergency regarding homelessness.*

## **How Karen Bass Beat \$109M to Win**

**BY JOANNE KIM, ORGANIZING DIRECTOR  
BASS CAMPAIGN**

Karen Bass is an authentic community organizer who has built relationships based on a set of progressive values her entire life. She made community organizing central in her campaign, recruiting an army of organizers, who in turn recruited an ARMY of volunteers. We had a historic ground game.

- 3.3 million phone calls.
- 140,000 door knocks.
- 135,000 one-on-one conversations.
- 20,000 voters who signed up to join our movement.

We campaigned in every corner of Los Angeles. Volunteers from 125 zip codes organized 168 meet and greets in their homes, small businesses, and churches. We had a Culture Director and team dedicated to integrating it into every aspect of our campaign.

Anyone interested in galvanizing large numbers of everyday people should amplify culture in an authentic way. You cannot buy cultural capital. It is earned. We recruited people around a set of values, not a paycheck. 72% of door knocks were by VOLUNTEERS! 101,209 doors in 2,343 shifts!

We recruited people to walk their OWN voting precincts and neighborhoods. Volunteers ran canvassing operations from 49 homes and businesses all over the City. In addition to canvassing (+ millions of calls, texts and personalized postcards), 14,000 people invested in our movement to raise \$10M. They were from every corner of our city. Campaigns that rely on direct mail, endorsements, and political consultants who cater only to "always voters," do not serve our democracy. Kudos to the change agents who won their elections by centering community organizing, young people and underrepresented communities.

# Views from the Corner of 81st & Vermont

**BY ALBERTO RETANA  
PRESIDENT & CEO, COMMUNITY COALITION**

As we look to the New Year, I find myself thankful for serving as the CEO and Executive Director for Community Coalition. Whether it's working with the board, staff, community members, partners, or supporters, I am fortunate to be in the company of such compassionate leaders dedicated to transforming the social and economic conditions of South Los Angeles.

What inspires me is the positive energy and enthusiasm each of our members and supporters continues to give in the face of many of our current political and social challenges. I saw firsthand as our allies, friends, and community leaders united in solidarity to push back against the hate and racist comments in the leaked recordings that revealed how city council and local labor leaders colluded for power as they tried to pit Black and brown communities against each other.

For more than 30 years, Community Coalition has been organizing solidarity between Black and Brown communities, from the devastating crack cocaine epidemic to the recent pandemic. These issues have threatened the lives and dreams of Black and Brown residents. Yet despite forces that would divide us, Black and Brown allies have struggled together against structural racism and inequality and worked hard to unite for change. It is through these coalitions that we have seen hard fought, and won, victories for our communities.

I am wholeheartedly encouraged by the prospects that 2023 will bring for the Community Coalition and the communities we serve. My passion is strengthened by the transformational work our CoCo members do day in and day out. And I would like to take this opportunity to highlight Community Coalition's significant accomplishments and achievements of this past year and share a snapshot of what we did together:

## **Wellness Wednesdays**

Community Coalition got involved in the fight for vaccine equity because our community members were initially excluded due to

the lack of technology, poor communication from the state, city, and county, ineffective registration processes, and unfair eligibility criteria. In 2022, CoCo's Wellness Wednesday Hub (WW HUB) celebrated its first anniversary of providing COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, and resources. The WW Hub has held over 52 clinics, administered 997 vaccinations and 3,201 PCR tests, and helped 8,000 families in the community.

## **Measure ULA**

CoCo is proud to have been part of United to House LA, a citywide coalition focused on passing Measure ULA. CoCo organized 'Solidarity Saturdays' with key partners and stakeholders to phone-bank and canvas residents to vote YES. Countless hours making calls and knocking on doors delivered the win. Measure ULA will implement a new tax on the sale of properties in the City of \$5M or more. Measure ULA will help reduce homelessness and protect seniors from losing their homes.

## **People Progress Awards**

For the first time since the start of the pandemic, CoCo held a major in-person event. The People, Power, Progress Awards brought together over 500 people from the non-profit, government, corporate, philanthropy and entertainment sectors. We honored two incredible vanguards of change whose work has moved the needle to create access to opportunities for a post-pandemic world: April Verrett, national labor leader, and Dr. Barbara Ferrer, current director of the LA County Department of Public Health.

## **Center for Community Organizing**

On April 4th CoCo officially acquired a new site located at 7514 S. Vermont Avenue. The property will serve as the future home of CoCo's Center for Community Organizing (CCO). The CCO will be a trailblazing national school for organizers, civic leadership training center, a cross-city learning lab, an inside/outside strategy think tank, and arts & cultural activism hub.

## **2022 National Fellows**

In July, CoCo launched the Center for Community Organizing's inaugural National Organizing Fellowship. The 14-week program provided 12 fellows with intensive training in the theory of social change, social movement history, and the art and science of community organizing through hands-on application in a policy action campaign.

We look forward to seeing significant progress on our city's most pressing issues, including homelessness, affordable and low-income housing, public safety, health disparities, and COVID economic recovery.

In Solidarity,  
Alberto

