



Oakland Peace Center

August 2016-July 2017 Annual Report

The Oakland Peace Center is a community of artists, activists, cultural workers, educators and non-profits collaborating to bring about a city of hope, justice, nonviolence and compassion. We provide physical space and opportunities for collaboration for 40+ nonprofits and work to decrease burnout of those partners.

Letter from the Director

I won't lie. I have had as many moments of disappointment, heartbreak and despair as has anyone this year who cares about peace and justice. The thing is, though, that because I spend my days interacting with the partners who make up the Oakland Peace Center, I have had a lot of moments of profound hope and inspiration.

Here are just a few:

- Having a conversation at our post-election resource fair with a school teacher from Danville who said, "I came here because I thought that by watching public television and paying attention to the news, that was enough, that I was helping create a good world. At the age of 55, I now realize I need to be actively engaged in creating inclusion and love and justice." And then watching her sign up with an environmental justice organization to play her part in the work.
- Welcoming a roomful of over 700 young White people attending a meeting of the organization Showing Up for Racial Justice on a cold winter night; they asked me to bring the welcome because they wanted to honor the OPC's practice of beginning every gathering by acknowledging the sacredness of the land on which we gather and the sacredness of its original inhabitants, the Ohlone people who still live and work in our midst for healing and justice.
- Learning about how our partners offering nonviolent direct-action trainings are being invited to train people in every part of this country, urban, suburban and rural, so that people know how to bring nonviolent discipline into actions where they stand with Black, Latinx, queer-identified, disabled, refugee, and indigenous people.

This is certainly a frightening time. The threat of nuclear war hovers. Many human rights are under threat. Services for people facing disasters are under-resourced. Cities are rolling back minimum wages that helped the poorest people in their communities have a chance at a better life.

But over and over I have watched us showing up for each other, supporting each other, creating plans to protect and care for each other. I wish we did not need to, but against all odds, we are doing remarkable things for the sake of peace and justice.

It took fifty years of intentional organizing from the grassroots up for hate-filled forces to take leadership. We are at the beginning of a fifty-year movement to create a country of peace, equity, and justice. And although our steps are small at first and feel like they may not add up to much, they are exactly the right steps to lead us into building what Dr. King called the Beloved Community. We are doing it consistently and with love.

It makes me proud to continue to serve with you in the work of peace and the Oakland Peace Center. Thank you.

with gratitude,

Sandhya Jha, director
The Oakland Peace Center

Operations Update

In discussions with the OPC board, First Christian board and trustees, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, and Disciples Home Missions, research continues on the next steps for the transfer of building ownership to OPC. A pro bono building inspection by Moe Wright of BBI construction found the roof to be in good shape, but there are urgent safety issues regarding fire exits. Fire safety training was provided for all partners, followed by two workdays. OPC staff developed new space-sharing contracts. Search continues for pro bono legal assistance with expertise in CA trust law.



Program highlights '16-17

- Sharing their stories in art workshops, partners designed and installed a peace mural at the Oakland Peace Center.
- A three-day retreat included peer coaching and facilitated activities on revitalization, community building and visioning.
- In partnership with POOR Magazine, the Oakland Peace Center provided training on justice-based conflict resolution and crisis management.
- The OPC offered partners an original resource guide on avoiding burnout.



Public Programming

- On International Peace Day, OPC co-sponsored an event with St. Mary's Senior Center, youth and activists with homeless senior citizens, for a diverse offering of song, spoken word, guided meditation and dance.
- A peace-building block party celebrated the unveiling of the Peace Mural.
- In partnership with Project Darreis, OPC provided a safe "trunk or treat" Halloween celebration for local children.
- OPC co-hosted a four-part series on economic justice with Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy.
- At two resource fairs attended by more than 1600 people, over fifty organizations hosted tables and trainings where participants learned about many opportunities to work on building a better world – to ensure that the earth is respected, where all people are treated with dignity, have access to healthcare, a decent home and liberty to pursue their dreams.
- OPC sponsored a Faith-Rooted Organizing training in March for clergy, lay leaders and spiritually-motivated change agents.



Welcome to Our New Partners

In our last fiscal year, we welcomed two great new organizations to our network of partners:

[Better Birth Foundation](#) provides services to the Oakland East Bay Community services and opportunities which will reduce the infant and maternal mortality rates in our community.

[Sunflower Alliance](#) brings together individuals and organizations committed to environmental justice and the health and safety of all Bay Area communities threatened by toxic pollution and climate change. They fight against the poisoning of our communities and the destruction of our planet, and for an equitable and sustainable economy fueled by renewable energy sources—wind, water and solar.

Financials

We are so grateful that our donors have helped us grow so quickly, from a \$31,000 annual budget three years ago to \$63,000 two years ago to almost \$82,000 this past year. Over half of that came from individual donors with the rest coming from foundations, businesses and faith communities. Thank you for your trust in us and your willingness to invest in building what Dr. King called Beloved Community, a community where all no one need turn to violence because all needs are met and all gifts are received with gratitude. We invested for the first time ever in a full-time staff person, and we received grants that allowed us to engage in the community programs that helped connect us with neighbors both new and old at a time that we recognized we need each other more than ever to build community grounded in peace and hope. Thank you for helping to build that community.

Foundations who supported the Oakland Peace Center in FY '16-17 included the Akonadi Foundation, Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation, The Gay Chemists Fund of the Horizons Foundation, and the National Benevolent Association. We are proud that the foundations supporting the OPC have such deep justice commitments and share our vision of building the Beloved Community.

Goals for 2017-18

The Oakland Peace Center's fifth anniversary was a big one for us because we brought Sandhya on as full-time staff; it was the first time we had full-time staff in our five years! This year we also made significant headway in helping First Christian Church of Oakland move towards transferring the building to their denomination who will in turn give us long-term lease of the building and land. We are in conversations with a nonprofit developer to raise funds to rehab the building once we have the lease in hand.

All of that means that we needed an operations manager, and in September of this year we hired Aja Minor as part-time operations manager! Aja has worked with the OPC since its beginnings, so it's been a great fit already.

This means Sandhya is back to part-time, but she is thrilled to be able to focus on program, partner relationships, development and fundraising, and letting Aja take the lead in developing our business plan and develop structures and systems that will help us and our partners be more effective and efficient in the days to come.

In addition, the Oakland Peace Center finds itself playing a more and more significant role in preserving culture in the midst of the displacement crisis and creating space for newer Oaklanders to learn about the community into which they are entering. We believe this will be critical for creating a peace borne of justice in the days to come, and we continue to explore how to do that alongside the other nonviolence and justice work in which we engage.

Our intern this year, Tia-Lynn Rounsoville, from St. Louis, MO, has been representing us in some phenomenal work to address the homelessness crisis convened by our partners at St. Mary's Center, and we are proud to be part of that work.

We look forward to another building-wide Work Day this spring spearheaded by our Facilities Coordinator, Clidell "Franceyez" Jackson III, who has been helping shape a culture of collaboration among our in-house partners as well as making sure building use by hundreds of people every week runs smoothly.

Special thanks to OPC volunteers Inverleith Fruci and JoAnne Kagiwada for all their work in producing this year's annual report. They are among many volunteers who help the OPC run! We also want to acknowledge the great work done by last year's interns, Virginia White and Caleb Greydanus, who invested deeply in us and who helped us do work we could never have done otherwise.

OPC Board and Staff

Sandhya Jha, Executive director
Clidell Jackson, Facilities coordinator
Virginia White, Intern
Caleb Greydanus, Intern

Karen Barrett
Peggy Bristol
Patricia Contreras-Flores
Aimee Fields
Phil Lawson
EJ Pavia
Angela Urata

Oakland Peace Center Expenses
August 2016-July 2017

