



# 250 YEARS

WE WERE ALWAYS HERE

**Freedom Now 2026  
Gala & Concert**



**ART HAS  
NO  
ADDRESS**

# **Freedom Now 2026 Gala & Concert**

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## Event Program

**6:30PM** Reception

**7:00PM** Opening

Theatrical piece + Violinist (Lila Hood)

Choir/Freedom Singers

Piano solo (Lorenzo)

Welcome & Intro

What We've Been Doing (Video)

Awards - Honorees

Black Student Union Anthem: Featuring Ife Jie & BluJ

Gala Closing

**9:00PM** Concert

*Performances By:*

Adam Smith

On Notice

Atzlan Underground

Gyasi Ross

Buffalo Nichols

Ducci

Seti X

Medusa

Vic Mensa

Dead Prez

DJ Chunk



# 250 YEARS

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**America is not a finished story.  
It never was.**

The United States is preparing to mark 250 years. What will be celebrated is unity, progress, and greatness. What will be erased — again — are the people whose survival, resistance, and labor made this country possible.

**We reject** commemorations that require amnesia and patriotism that depends on forgetting. This project exists to tell the truth.

**We honor** enslaved people who built the economy and resisted captivity, indigenous nations who continue to defend land, water, and sovereignty, immigrants who labor without recognition and live under threat, workers who organized under violence and repression, women, queer and trans people, disabled people, and poor people who made care a practice when the state refused.



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## **Freedom Now 2026. We Were Always Here.**

This is not nostalgia.  
This is counter-memory.

We believe culture is not decoration — it is infrastructure. Songs, poems, images, and gatherings are how people remember themselves, how movements are sustained, and how power is contested.

This is not a centralized campaign. It does not ask permission. It does not crown a single voice.

Instead, it lives everywhere: in streets and schools, in kitchens and churches, in basements, parks, sidewalks, and phones.

If you are telling the truth where you live — you are part of this.

250 Years — We Were Always Here

Because history didn't start with them.  
And it doesn't end with lies.



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Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles proudly partners with the Los Angeles Community Action Network to advance housing justice, defend civil rights, and **get free.**

Congratulations to honorees **Nana Gyamfi, Fran Jemmott, Angie Junck,** and the **Mahdesian Family.**



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Justice • Equity • Hope

## Partner Honorees



**Fran Jemmott** is a South Los Angeles leader and principal and CEO of Jemmott/Rollins Group. Often called “the godmother of Black philanthropy,” she has spent decades helping direct philanthropic and public resources to underserved communities, strengthening nonprofits, expanding opportunity, and advancing community-driven solutions. Her experience spans program development, large-scale training, fund development, and grantmaking at the federal, state, and local levels. Today, she advises private, corporate, and community foundations on impact, strategic partnerships, cultural competence, and nonprofit capacity building. Fran has been recognized as an Unsung Hero by the California Legislature, a social justice champion by Liberty Hill Foundation, Peace Over Violence, and Community Coalition, and a Woman Who Dared by the California Black Women’s Health Project.

**Angie Junck** is the inaugural director of the Human Rights program at the Heising-Simons Foundation where she advances grantmaking to challenge mass criminalization by building the power of system impacted people and advancing reimagined approaches to justice and safety. Previously, Angie was a national movement lawyer and advocate working at the intersection of the criminal legal, youth justice, and immigration systems. In that role, she incubated and led multi-issue collaboratives and campaigns engaging a variety of partners, which resulted in innovative state and local models and policies to address the intersection of criminalization, incarceration, and deportation.

As the country embarks on its 250th anniversary and navigates massive shifts, LA CAN has been my compass — a source of visionary thinking and genuine hope for what we can reimagine and build. To be recognized by the very organization that fuels my belief in liberation and justice is an honor beyond words.



**BUILDING POWER. FUNDING FREEDOM.**  
**CELEBRATING THE MOVEMENT TOGETHER.**



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**Black Freedom Fund is proud to sponsor LA CAN's Freedom Now Gala & Concert and this year's Juneteenth celebration of culture, community power, and the ongoing struggle for racial and economic justice.**

**APT. 3-G** By Alex Kotzky



**THE LAW OFFICES OF CAROL SOBEL CELEBRATES THE FREEDOM NOW 2026 HONOREES AND THE 250TH COUNTER CULTURAL COMMEMORATION.**

## Partner Honorees



**Nana Gyamfi** is an award-winning human rights attorney, movement strategist, and the Executive Director of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), the nation's foremost Black-led immigrant rights and racial justice organization. With over 30 years at the forefront of legal, political, and cultural movements, she has shaped landmark campaigns for Black liberation, immigrant justice, and abolition. A sought-after voice on state violence, international human rights, and Black Diasporic organizing, Gyamfi has appeared across national and global media and served as a legal and political advisor to community-based and transnational coalitions. She is the former President of the National Conference of Black Lawyers and a former associate professor of Pan African Studies at California State University, Los Angeles. A graduate of Cornell University and UCLA School of Law, Gyamfi's work is rooted in a radical tradition of legal resistance and visionary Black organizing.

**The Mahdesian family** has been guided by a belief that meaningful change begins with people for three generations. Rooted in values of compassion, inclusion, dignity, and service, the Mahdesians' commitment to strengthening communities and creating opportunities inspired the creation of ServiconCares.

ServiconCares invests in bolstering the efforts of community leaders who are closest to the challenges and opportunities they address every day. The Mahdesians' support nonprofits in focusing their time and resources on fighting for social justice, housing insecurity, and homelessness prevention throughout Los Angeles.

Their approach recognizes that lasting solutions require patience, collaboration, and trust in the organizations leading change on the ground. Overwhelmingly, they believe in the potential and power of the people.





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the important work of



For 50 years, Liberty Hill has served as L.A.'s  
social justice foundation.

*Thank you for being part of the movement.*

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# THE SIDEWALK PROJECT

**CELEBRATES THE FREEDOM NOW 2026 HONOREES AND THE  
250TH COUNTER CULTURAL COMMEMORATION.**

**We would like to extend our thanks to the sponsors who make our work possible.**

**Natalie Mahdesian  
Nigel Burns  
Dan Stormer  
Carol Sobel  
Deborah Baker  
Allison Thomas  
Alberto Retana  
Timothy Disney  
Cathleen Williams**

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