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Members of LA CAN, the LA Food Policy Council, Hunger Action LA and others with Councilmember Jose Huizar after the unanimous LA City Council vote on a motion requiring that all farmers markets in Los Angeles accept CalFresh, also known as food stamps.

Victory! LA CAN led campaign results in city motion requiring all LA farmers markets to accept food stamps

Written by Ariana Alcaraz

In May the Los Angeles City Council passed a motion to require all 57 farmers markets in the city to accept CalFresh (also known as food stamps) through EBT machines. Soon all low-income residents who have CalFresh will be able to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at any farmers market. Until recently less than 50% of markets citywide accepted EBT. This victory for poor, primarily communities of color is three years in the making and is the result of a long, hard-fought campaign of LA CAN’s Team Food Committee.

In 2013, LA CAN members began trying to get EBT/CalFresh access in all the farmers markets in Downtown LA. The reason was clear: Nowhere in the Skid Row community is there a full service grocery store, which leaves many residents to shop for food at local corner stores. These stores mostly offer packaged food that is high in sodium, sugar and fat and low in nutrients. 

City of LA ordered by federal judge to stop illegally seizing and destroying property of homeless residents

Written by Eric Ares

In April, the City of Los Angeles was ordered to stop the seizure and destruction of homeless people’s property. The preliminary injunction from a U.S. District Judge stems from a lawsuit, Mitchell v. City of Los Angeles, that was filed in mid-March by Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, The Law Office of Carol A. Sobel, and Schonbrun Seplow Harris & Hoffman LLP on behalf of homeless individuals, the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), and the Los Angeles Catholic Worker, also known as the Hippie Kitchen.

“The Court’s ruling is clear — the United States Constitution protects homeless individuals’ property, and the city violates the constitution when it seizes and immediately destroys belongings that are not an immediate threat to public health and safety,” said Shayla Myers, an attorney with the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. “The city cannot keep putting homeless people’s lives in jeopardy by throwing away their tents, blankets, medications and other items they need to survive. It is sad that our clients needed a Court to yet again issue an injunction to that effect, but the city’s actions have made it clear they did, and the Court agreed.”

The Los Angeles Police Department and other city agencies have a longstanding practice of seizing and destroying homeless people’s property, despite the fact that it violates their constitutional rights. Even items critical for survival like medication, wheelchairs, tents and tarps, have been subject to this draconian seizure policy. Plaintiffs put forth evidence showing the Bureau of Sanitation clearly slicing apart a tent with a 2½ year process LA CAN has been granted Consultative Status with the United Nations. In short, Consultative Status gives LA CAN the ability to engage the United Nations and its various committees and bodies in an official capacity. More concretely, and this is an abbreviated list, Consultative Status allows LA CAN to 1) Attend meetings and have access to the United Nations; 2) Submit written statements to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); 3) Present oral presentations to the ECOSOC; and, 4) Consult with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies in a variety of ways, including on special reports, in investigations, meetings with the Secretaries, special studies at the request of the Secretary-General or an NGO.

But our timeline of actually achieving Consultative Status extends quite a while back and charts our deliberate engagement with the United Nations.

United Nations grants LA CAN Consultative Status

Written by Pete White

The Los Angeles Community Action Network proudly announces that after a nearly 2½ year process LA CAN has been granted Consultative Status with the United Nations. In short, Consultative Status gives LA CAN the ability to engage the United Nations and its various committees and bodies in an official capacity. More concretely, and this is an abbreviated list, Consultative Status allows LA CAN to 1) Attend meetings and have access to the United Nations; 2) Submit written statements to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); 3) Present oral presentations to the ECOSOC; and, 4) Consult with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies in a variety of ways, including on special reports, in investigations, meetings with the Secretaries, special studies at the request of the Secretary-General or an NGO.

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Renters’ Day LA - Another successful year!

Written by Thelmy Perez
April 20, 2016 was the second anniversary of Renters’ Day, which was launched on April 23, 2014 as a celebration of tenants’ contributions to Los Angeles and as an annual call to action to City Council to implement our community based solutions to the housing crisis.

The City of Los Angeles owes a great deal to tenants in LA. We make up over 60% of the population and contribute significantly to the economy and to the fabric of our City. However, over the last decade, tenants have suffered as rents have shot through the roof and housing that is affordable to low and moderate income tenants has disappeared in order to make way for the never ending development of luxury housing for the rich. In the process, over half of all renter households have become rent-burdened (paying unaffordable rents) with 8/10 of the poorest housed families paying over HALF of household incomes to rent (extremely poor tenants) with 8/10 of the poorest housed families paying over HALF of household incomes to rent (extremely poor tenants) with 8/10 of the poorest housed families paying over HALF of household incomes to rent (extremely poor tenants). This unsustainable housing economy has resulted in exponential increases in homelessness.

The Renters’ Day LA coalition was formed out of a need to unify housing organizations, tenants and advocates around one agreed upon platform that benefits all Los Angeles tenants by ensuring that the housing needs of the lowest income Angelenos are prioritized by our City Council. In 2015, on the first anniversary of Renters’ Day, we challenged City Council to move forward some of the policy recommendations on our platform and succeeded in moving Housing Committee Chair, Councilmember Gil Cedillo, to introduce two of our priority motions: 1) a Quality Repairs Program; and 2) a Rent Registry Ordinance. This is why we think these motions are important:

Quality Repairs
Both the Housing and Community Investment Department’s (HCID) Systematic Code Inspection Program (SCIP) and complaint based inspection program require that a landlord be given advance notice of an impending code inspection by the department. This unintentional loophole incentivizes negligent landlords to mask potential housing and health code violations with low quality cosmetic fixes that may hold up to HCID’s visual inspection without actually addressing problems caused by deferred maintenance, whether large or small. This requirement weakens the inspection process by removing the inspector’s ability to observe the severity of the problem that a tenant complained about and accurately assess the structural integrity of a rental unit. Further, it can be a waste of time and resources for the tenant and the City to schedule such an inspection after giving the landlord the opportunity to respond with merely cosmetic, or “Mickey Mouse,” repairs. The ongoing impact of this loophole could have significant negative health impacts on residents caused by poor housing conditions such as poor ventilation, inadequate heating, mold and moisture related conditions, failing electrical and plumbing systems and more.

On February 17, they City Council’s Housing Committee (Cedillo, Price, Harris-Dawson, Fuentez, Huizar) heard HCID’s recommendation that the City establish a pilot program that would (for certain sections of the City) eliminate the 15 day advance notice to landlords when tenants file a complaint with the department; establish a pre-repairs conference for landlords, with the department, when multiple or reoccurring violations are found during and inspection; and amend LA Municipal Code to require lead safe work practices for maintenance work in pre-1978 buildings. The Committee voted unanimously to move this ordinance forward to full council where on March 22, the landlords tried to sneak in a behind-the-scenes move to kill it. That did not happen. Instead, it was unanimously moved approved and will become a one year pilot project in upcoming months pending one last revision by HCID and the Tenant-Landlord Working Group. This is a significant victory for tenants!

Rent Registry
The Rent Registry ordinance has a different focus than quality repairs as it is an administrative tool that will help us track rents across all Rent Stabilized (aka RSO or rent-controlled) apartments in the City. For many years, the City has estimated that there are 650,000 RSO apartments comprising 2/3 of all rental housing in the City. Today, that number has fallen to below 624,000. This is significant, especially since more and more units are demolished every month as big developers buy up RSO units, demolish them and create luxury housing in their place. It is estimated that we are losing 100 RSO units per month. Although a rent registry will not solve the problem, it will give us valuable data that can help us make wiser decisions as a City. The creation of a rent registry will:

1. Ensure protections offered by the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO): The best way to keep RSO housing affordable is to prevent illegal rent increases from occurring in the first place. Tracking rent increases on an annual basis will help flag illegal increases.

2. Help identify “hot spot” areas: The collection of rent data will provide the City with a unique opportunity for analyzing rent data to identify areas of rapidly declining RSO housing and/or fluctuations in rents by neighborhood.

Madison Hotel lawsuit update: Judge rules in favor of tenants in pushback on management!

Written by Ariana Alcaraz
As reported in the last edition of the Community Connection, Madison Hotel tenants are in a continuing battle with their current landlord, William Holdings LLC. The lawsuit focuses on Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) violations and the treatment tenants have endured by William Holdings. While the lawsuit is still in its early stages, tenants are celebrating a recent court order that prohibits William Holdings from imposing a rule onto tenants that they enforced when they took over the building in the summer of last year. The rule being that tenants were not allowed any guests to visit them. Even tenant organizers were banned from entering the building.

Lawyers from Inner City Law Center and Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, (LAFLA), who are representing 15 Madison tenants and LACAN, filed for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) against William Holdings if they tried to ban visiting organizers into the building. The judge granted it immediately. This is not the first time the same judge has granted a TRO against William Holdings for Madison tenants. Early this year, a TRO was granted because management was not keeping the heat on during cold temperatures. The judge ruled in favor of tenants then, and again for their unlawful guest policy.

Madison tenants and LACAN’s Housing Committee have continued to organize outside the lawsuit, which was filed last November. Meeting regularly, tenants and organizers discuss other avenues in which we can achieve what we came together to do: protect tenants from being displaced and create a home for people where dignity and respect can be seen and felt. While the lawsuit is in the works and regular tenants meetings are being held, information about meetings is critical and needs to make its way to every tenant in the building. Prior to the TRO being granted, it was difficult for LACAN organizers to enter the building to provide support to other tenants who would try to disseminate this critical information and often times were met with hostile managers and staff for their organizing efforts.

Today, Madison Hotel residents are able to welcome their guests and fellow organizers into the building. This is a huge step forward for tenants who are organizing to bring a sense of peace that the building once had and push back against owners who thought it would be easy to violate the rights of tenants.

They thought it would be easy to pick on elders and disabled people. But residents are united and committed to seeing this campaign through - and they will organize and fight to keep and improve their homes!
Día de los inquilinos: otro año de éxito!

El 20 de abril de 2016 fue el segundo aniversario del Día de los Inquilinos, que fue lanzado el 23 de abril, 2014 como una celebración lanzado el 23 de abril, 2014 como una celebración de prensa en las escalinatas del Ayuntamiento, con la intención de unificar las organizaciones de vivienda, los inquilinos y los defensores alrededor de una plataforma común que beneficie a todos los inquilinos de los aumentos de rentas, asegurando que las necesidades de vivienda de los residentes más pobres sean priorizadas por nuestro Consejo Municipal. En 2015, en el primer aniversario del Día de los inquilinos, retamos a los concejales a acabar con los aumentos de rentas excesivos y a prohibir los aumentos de rentas sin justificación, y en 2016, los concejales han tomado conciencia de que es vital para la ciudad y para los inquilinos.

El registro de los aumentos de rentas cada año nos proporciona una oportunidad única para analizar el registro de inquilinos. Por las siguientes razones, es crucial que continúe.

1. Garantizará las protecciones ofrecidas por la Ordenanza de Estabilización de Rentas (RSO/Control de Rentas): La mejor manera de mantener la vivienda económica es evitar los aumentos de rentas ilegales en el primer lugar. El registro de los aumentos de rentas cada año ayudará a identificar los aumentos ilegales.

2. Ayudará a identificar las áreas “calientes”. La recogida de los datos de las rentas daría a la ciudad una oportunidad única para analizar los datos de las rentas para identificar las áreas de desviación de la renta y la vivienda RSO y las fluctuaciones en las rentas por vecindario.

3. Apoyará el desarrollo de las políticas “no-net loss” (ninguna pérdida): Las políticas de ninguna pérdida ayudan a establecer las condiciones de vivienda basadas en las condiciones de vivienda para los residentes de vecindarios bajo riesgo. Los datos de renta pueden ayudar a simplificar el desarrollo y la implementación de dichas políticas.

4. Suministrará los reglamentos nuevos y existentes de uso del suelo: los datos de las rentas darán a los planificadores y los legisladores una nueva herramienta con la que regular de manera más eficaz el uso del suelo y planes para comunidades saludables.

5. Apoyará a los esfuerzos para informar y organizar a los inquilinos: El acceso público a los datos recién capturados será una herramienta clave para promover la sensibilización de los inquilinos sobre las protecciones ofrecidas por el control de rentas. Estos datos pueden ayudar a organizar a los inquilinos tanto por el Ayuntamiento como por los organizadores de inquilinos.

La ordenanza de Registro de Rentas también pasó a través de la Junta de Vivienda y el Consejo Municipal, y la Junta de Vivienda y el Consejo Municipal. En 2015, en el primer aniversario del Día de los inquilinos, los miembros de la Coalición llenaron el Salón del Consejo Municipal y sus delegados seleccionados compusieron el panel de expertos de inquilinos que declararon a la Comisión de Vivienda de la gravedad y los efectos del sobrecoste de renta durante una audiencia especial que se centró en la crisis de la vivienda. Antes de la audiencia especial, más de 150 miembros se reunieron para una conferencia de prensa en las escalinatas del Ayuntamiento, donde se les unió el Concejal Cedillo en desafiar el statu quo en la vivienda y presionar para hacer frente a la creciente crisis de la vivienda.

Este año, la construcción de poder a través de nuestras comunidades está dando frutos. El 20 de abril, el segundo aniversario del Día de los Inquilinos, la ciudad ha perdido 100 unidades RSO al mes. A pesar de que un registro de rentas no va a resolver el problema, nos dará datos valiosos que podemos ayudar a tomar decisiones más sabias como ciudad.

La creación de un registro de rentas hará lo siguiente:

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Community led campaign helps free Trishawn Carey
Written by General Dogon

Trishawn Carey is free. This would have not been the case if the Los Angeles Police Department and District Attorney’s Office had their way. But since LA CAN intervened, Trishawn Carey is free.

But who exactly is Trishawn Carey?

On March 1, 2015 the LAPD killed Charly “Afrika” Keunang in broad daylight while scores of bystanders watched and filmed. His killing witnessed what many called, “cold – blooded murder,” one woman actually attempted to intervene and save Africa’s life – she is Trishawn Carey.

In the video she is seen picking up one of two batons dropped by LA’s finest and screaming for the officers to stop brutalizing her friend. In the end her screams went unheard as the LAPD mercilessly killed Brother Africa. But his death was the beginning of her nightmare. Immediately knocked to the ground, with no resistance, Trishawn was charged with multiple felony counts including, “assaulting a police officer” and “felony resisting arrest.” Those charges would net Trishawn an over $1 million dollar bail and potentially life in prison if convicted.

LA CAN members quickly launched a “Free Trishawn” Campaign to liberate her from jail. This included getting her legal representation, (The Law Office of Milton Grimes stepped right in); court support for all of her appearances; and, bailing her out of jail and into a program so that she could get the help she needed while awaiting her trial. As an aside, a big shout out to Susan Burton, A New Way of Life, for stepping up and in immediately to provide housing and services for Trishawn.

The ultimate outcome of the case is very different from what the state proposed for Trishawn. The state was hell bent on giving her decades of incarceration or life imprisonment. The people, the only question that remains is: are you ready to join?

So today Trishawn is free. Our community will do what it always does, continue supporting her road to recovery from state violence. But we will also stay vigilant because we know that Trishawn Carey represents a well-spring of Black women that will face similar circumstances, or worse. We are reminded that our job is far from over and we need you to join the fight to end state sanctioned violence.

The only question that remains is: are you ready to join?

The unsHELTERED HOMELESS CRISIS: WORDS VERSUS ACTIONS

Written by Craig Roberts

Since the beginning of the year, the Los Angeles City Council has been pushing forward a “Comprehensive Homeless Strategy (CHS).” This is a policy document from the Joint City Administrative Officer (CAO) Miguel Santana, the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), and Policy Advisor Sharon Tso. They seem to believe that along with the newly created Homeless and Poverty Committee and a list of guiding principles that this signals a transformation in the city’s approach to homelessness.

But it is not comprehensive, nor really strategic, but rather a few dozen more suggestions for possible ideas that might lead to some action, some of which might do some good and none of which will happen without significant increases in financial resources. In addition, this plan in no way deals with the ongoing criminalization and victimization of the unsHELTERED HOMELESS population by LAPD and their smash and grab tactics.

One cannot help but notice these often illegal policies that only make it harder for someone to get off the streets are not addressed at all in this plan. This makes clear the councilmembers’ indifference to the real struggles and misery of homeless folks on the streets. A misery that won’t fit into a 60 gallon trash bin, as the recently passed LAMC 56.11 ordinance dictates. This law requires that people on the streets will be restricted to having no more than would fit in a 60 gallon trash can. It was passed by council and signed by the Mayor and can now be enforced.

So after reviewing the CHS, one is left with questions: Do they know they give $87 million to LAPD a year to cite and arrest homeless-ness? Do they know that if they take money away from LAPD and give it to permanent supportive housing they can actually get people off the streets instead of renting them jail cells? Do they understand the nexus of race (the homeless population is disproportionately Black in LA) and poverty and the lack of housing units throughout LA as pointed out in the recent position paper from 8th District Councilmember Marqueece Harris Dawson? Do they get the need for immediate action on mobile restrooms and showers, voluntary storage facilities and urgently activating unused public buildings? That all new money should go to infrastructure?

Do they not understand that the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice have both taken positions against criminalizing home-lessee people? Do they not understand that the lawsuits they despise only result from passing illegal laws that not only punish people for being poor, but violate the constitution as well?

Must they be told, again, that a key to dealing effectively with this crisis is allowing those directly impacted by homelessness to be seated at the decision-making table? Are you listening, Mayor Garcetti and Homeless and Poverty Committee?

Put simply, as LA CAN always says, when it comes to the solution to the unsHELTERED “homeless emergency” the only solution is “House Keys Not Handcuffs!”

To get involved in the fight to create real solutions to the homeless crisis, join the LA CAN Civil Rights/Human Rights Committee Meetings every Monday at 12:30 pm.
Appreciation for LA CAN’s most loyal Pop-Up Organic Produce Market customer

Written by Ariana Alcaraz

For those of you who may not have heard the exciting news, LA CAN recently launched an organic pop-up market in Skid Row! Very similar to our market in Pueblo Del Rio, it offers a variety of organic produce to our community at a low cost every week. Organic simply means that while it is being grown and harvested no pesticides or chemicals were used on the product. Studies have shown that the pesticides and chemicals used in our foods can cause serious health problems later in life so the option of having an organic alternative is crucial to our health and our lives.

Our community suffers from the lack of fresh foods and their availability in our neighborhood markets. This is part of the reason why our neighborhoods and others like ours suffer disproportionately from chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease. So, like our name implies, we took ACTION! If the local corner stores don’t want to sell fresh foods, then we are going to have to do it ourselves.

Skid Row community member Wendy Gaitor has been a customer with us since we started earlier this year. Every week she is taking home bags of our produce and comes back the following week for more. Wendy suffers from a variety of health problems including diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and inflammation. Because of the high use of pesticides and chemicals, she has to choose organic produce because she can feel the difference with organic vs. conventional (non-organic) and organic feels so much better.

“There are hardly any grocery stores and even the stores we do have in Skid Row offer nothing in terms of produce,” said Wendy. “LACAN’s market is bringing the availability to our community. Not to mention the low prices and the great selection!”

Wendy has been on and off of Skid Row for 20 years and as of three years ago she moved away but still copes with the same mental and physical health issues. And she still comes back to the community for her supportive services. “In the future I anticipate returning and helping people who are dealing with the same issues I dealt with.” We thank Wendy for your continued support and for being our most consistent market customer, and we appreciate your presence in our spaces.

We encourage all our residents - housed and unhoused - to go with the affordable and healthy route when buying your produce, the LA CAN Pop Up Market! We accept EBT and take orders every week! Buy your bag TODAY!

Call (213) 228-0024 to add your name to our pre-order list and we’ll call you weekly to take your order. You can also help join our market team by attending the LA CAN Team Food meeting every first and third Thursday of the month at the LA CAN offices located at 838 E. 6th St.

Do you have a low-level, non-violent felony on your record? Under Prop 47, you may be able change that felony to a misdemeanor.

(Individuals with certain previous convictions, such as, rape, murder or child molestation, or who are in the sex offender registry will not be eligible to get these felonies reclassified.)

Simple drug possession | Petty theft under $950 | Shoplifting under $950 | Forging or writing a bad check under $950 | Receipt of stolen property under $950.

No matter how old the conviction, if you have any of the crimes listed above on your record, most people can apply through a simple process to have it changed from a felony to a misdemeanor (if the conviction was in a California court). You will need a copy of your record, rap sheet, and/or court docket to apply.

To learn more or to apply to have your felony record changed to a misdemeanor, come to the LA CAN Legal Clinic every Wednesday at 6pm at 838 E. 6th St. 90021.

To Your Health:
Roasted Sweet Potatoes

Written by Sean Gregory

Greetings, everyone. Self-proclaimed Honorary Master Chef Sean Gregory here serving up a sweet recipe for y’all to use at your next Sunday barbecue (or whenever you’d like to use it). And remember that you can purchase all your organic vegetables and fruits from the weekly LA CAN Pop-Up Organic Produce Market.*

It’s simple to make and is sure to impress. You will need an oven and 45 minutes total Prep Time.

What you’ll need: 4 Sweet Potatoes (Available at our *Pop-Up Market) ¼ Cup extra-virgin olive oil (plus more to drizzle the potatoes after cooking them) ¼ Cup Honey 2 Teaspoons Ground Cinnamon Fresh Cracked Sea Salt and Ground Pepper

What to do: Preheat oven to 375 degrees Peel and cut sweet potatoes into one inch cubes and lay them out in a single layer on a roasting tray and drizzle with the oil, honey, cinnamon, salt and pepper. Roast for 25 to 30 minutes or until tender. Take them out and transfer to a bowl or serving platter of your choice. Drizzle with more extra virgin olive oil. These delicious potatoes are now ready to be served!

*All produce is certified Organic. EBT ACCEPTED. To Place an order contact Ari or Sean Gregory at 213-228-0024 or ari@cangress.org.
Victory!

nourishment. They also offer very little produce. And what they do offer is very poor in quality. This contributes greatly to the poor health of Skid Row residents, many of whom suffer disproportionately from diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure.

But there are numerous farmers markets in the area that offer fresh, organic produce. The problem was that not all of them had EBT machines, the technology needed to accept CalFresh. So the Team Food committee kicked into action and started approaching the markets that didn’t have EBT - like the Wednesday Pershing Square farmer’s market. Members provided information on how to acquire a machine, the process for setting up a program, spoke with vendors, etc. But after almost a year and a half of what should have been a fairly easy process, the Pershing Square market still was not accepting EBT.

While the team was trying to strategize on how to move forward, one of our members asked a simple question: Why isn’t this mandatory of all farmers markets? Many of these markets operate on city land and benefit from public space. Why shouldn’t be a requirement that they make their services more accessible to LA’s poorest residents? Team Food immediately started researching city ordinances and codes, meeting with Councilmember Jose Huizar’s office, and reaching out to partners and other groups that work on food access and justice issues about the possibility of creating such a policy.

After receiving commitment from Councilmember Huizar to run a motion proposing an EBT requirement at all farmers markets, LA CAN began working with the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC), an organization at the forefront of the food justice and access movement in Los Angeles. LAFPC staff and organizational members like Hunger Action LA and Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA) quickly partnered with LA CAN to build a campaign to make this policy a reality. Together the coalition started collecting data and research on the feasibility of the policy, meeting with departments and elected officials, and recruiting others to help our cause.

This all culminated in a May 13 City Council vote in which councilmembers unanimously moved forward a Councilmember Huizar motion that will result in a policy requiring that all farmers markets in LA accept CalFresh - thereby increasing healthy fruits and vegetables access to thousands of poor residents throughout Los Angeles. This is a major victory not only for LA CAN and all the residents of Skid Row, but for all low-income people. It is an example of how those who face extreme poverty can and should be at the forefront of the efforts to create solutions to address and change their impoverished conditions.

For more information or to get involved please join our team food committee the first and third Thursday of the month at 10:30am at LA CAN.

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Destroying property of homeless

The court also addressed the storage of property the city seizes and does not immediately destroy. The preliminary injunction orders the city to stop failing to provide notice where the property is being stored, storing property in a facility that does not operate during normal business hours, and storing property without cataloguing and segregating property by owner. The court also ordered the city to make critical property like tents, blankets, and medication available within 24 hours of the seizure or immediately when a person is released from custody, whichever is later.

“The City’s current procedures also do not appear to afford the homeless a meaningful way to recover confiscated property,” wrote U.S. District Judge James Otero in the order. “Although a preliminary injunction will place additional burdens on the City to keep Los Angeles safe, Plaintiffs risk greater harm if the preliminary injunction is not granted,” Judge Otero added. “To put it bluntly, Plaintiffs may not survive without some of the essential property that has been confiscated.”

The order comes on the heels of the City Council passing and Mayor Eric Garcetti signing an updated version of Los Angeles Municipal Code 56.11 that gives LAPD and other agencies the power to confiscate and destroy the property of homeless people.

Continued from page 1

Get Ready for the Freshness Coming Your Way

ORDER YOUR BAG OF ORGANIC PRODUCE TODAY!

LA CAN’S Skid Row Produce Pop Up Market brings fresh, organic fruits and vegetables at low-cost prices to the DLTA Community as we continue to strive for a healthy community for all.

There are 2 options to get a bag:

1. Choose individual items from our price list each week

2. Purchase a $10 variety bag that also helps sponsor a bag for a low-income resident

Orders taken Tuesday and Wednesday can be picked up or dropped off on Thursday and Friday! Free delivery for Skid row Residents!

We accept EBT, CASH, or CREDIT CARD!

Contact Ariana at (213) 973-4023 or arl@cangress.org to join our email/phone list and start ordering your fresh, organic fruits and vegetables today!
As a result of the federal court ruling, the City of LA, its agents, and employees are enjoined from:

1. Confiscating property in Skid Row or its surrounding areas, incident to an arrest or as part of a cleanup of an area where homeless people are located, absent an objectively reasonable belief that it is abandoned, presents an immediate threat to public health or safety, is evidence of a crime, or is contraband; and

2. Destroying property in Skid Row or its surrounding areas, absent an immediate threat to public health or safety, without maintaining the property in a secure location for a period of less than 90 days; and

3. Storing seized property from Skid Row or its surrounding areas in a facility not open during regular business hours; and

4. Failing to provide notice advising homeless individuals whose property is seized of the address where seized property is being stored; and

5. Storing seized property from Skid Row or its surrounding areas in a facility that does not clearly catalog and segregate property based on the names and identification, where available, of individuals from whom the property is taken; and

6. Storing seized property from Skid Row or its surrounding areas in a facility that is not accessible within 72 hours of seizure. Medication, medical equipment, uncontaminated tents, sleeping bags, and blankets must be accessible within 24 hours of seizure or an individual’s release from custody, whichever is later.

7. Additionally, where the City plans to engage in a mass cleanup of an area in Skid Row or its surrounding areas, the City must provide 24 hours advance notice advising homeless people of the cleanup and possible seizure of property and advising such individuals to remove essential property that they do not want confiscated.

LA CAN has pursued human rights, using the United Nations framework, for nearly a decade. We found that speaking about our issues using a “civil rights” only frame actually did not move the social justice marker forward in substantial ways. However, when lifting a human rights framework, buoyed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we immediately felt the power of connecting our issues to global struggles.

The opening paragraph of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights spoke to our organization in a powerful way and resonated with our struggles and desires for justice.

The Universal Declaration promises to all the economic, social, political, cultural and civic rights that underpin a life free from want and fear. They are not a reward for good behavior. They are not country-specific, or particular to a certain era or social group. They are the inalienable entitlements of all people, at all times, and in all places — people of every colour, from every race and ethnic group; whether or not they are introduced to United Nations human rights; United Nations disabled; citizens or migrants; no matter their sex, their class, their caste, their creed, their age or sexual orientation.

LA CAN has participated in a number of activities of the United Nations and has contributed to numerous areas of substantive UN concern:

- December 2007: LA CAN co-submitted a report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) focused on Racial Discrimination in Homelessness and Affordable Housing in the United States.

- May 19 to June 6, 2008: LA CAN participated in the official mission of Special Rapporteur Doudou Diene on the contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. The work of LA CAN to stop discriminatory policing which disproportionately impacts African Americans was highlighted in the CERD report.

- October 22 to November 8, 2009: LA CAN participated in the official mission of Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Raquel Rolnik. LA CAN coordinated the Los Angeles portion of the mission convening experts and impacted persons to inform the mission.

- March 2010: LA CAN participated in the UN Habitat’s World Urban Forum in Brazil, as part of a US delegation that worked closely with Raquel Rolnik and her colleagues, both before and during the World Urban Forum.

- November 2010: Deborah Burton, LA CAN went to Geneva to provide testimony in conjunction with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the U.S. before the UN Human Rights Council—the 2010 UPR was the first time the U.S. underwent this review. The process resulted in over 200 recommendations made to the U.S. to improve their human rights compliance, including several on improving access to affordable housing and protecting the rights of homeless persons, clearly indicating our advocacy there was heard.

- October 2011: Submitted an Urgent Appeal to the Special Rapporteurs on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders to assist in stopping the targeting of LA CAN Human Rights Organizers by LAPD.

- February 2012: Special Rapporteurs on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders initiates its investigation into the LA CAN Urgent Appeal.

These are just some of the examples of the human rights work that LA CAN has uplifted and placed on the international stage. Remember, when we talk about the rights of our people, we aren’t just talking civil rights. EVERYONE has the right to justice and equity. We are building a worldwide movement. Join us TODAY!
This land is your land not their land: A look at the newly passed LAMC 56.11  
Written by Eddie H.

We hold this truth to be self evident: That all men are created equal.

When we enter into a discourse concerning equality, fairness, righteousness and justice for ALL of humanity, the dialogue is inevitably framed in the lexicon of the haves and the have nots. This divide is interwoven into every fab- ric and fiber that defines us as a nation - from schools to jobs to law enforcement to housing to, yes, discussing the inhumanity of 56.11, a recently amended law that targets homeless in- dividuals and, specifically, their right to personal property.

For anyone who may not be aware of 56.11 and its ramifications, here is a brief synopsis of this ordinance:

On April 6 the LA City Council cast a final vote of 13-1 in favor of its implementation. This prim a facie (on the face of it) ordinance literally makes it a crime to be homeless and in the possession of property within the roughly 500 square miles that make up the City of Los Ange- les. There are some disturbing features to this ordi- nance. For instance, one’s life is reduced to what an individual can fit into a 60-gallon trash can. Secondly, your property can literally be confiscated at the discretion of LAPD officers or sanita- tion workers. But maybe the most disturbing as- pect of this ordinance is the criminal component, which can lead to the arrest of homeless people.

Under the guise of enforcing 56.11, the LAPD is allowed to be intrusive with the opportunity to question persons’ concerning issues that are not directly related to their property. This is the same pretext that has led to individuals being arrested for unrelated and, often times, minor offenses such as non-payment of a jawwalking ticket. The reality is that we are dealing with a system that is extremely comfortable with the status quo of criminalizing and incarcerating of the homeless. Without a clear articulation of a comprehensive strategy as it relates to homeles- sness, the city has locked itself into the prism of criminalization at any cost.

Let’s look at what is currently happening on the streets of Skid Row daily: When police officers tag a person’s property for destruction, they normally put crime scene tape around it. This is very ironic for it is only a crime the more marginalized, discriminated against, and arse-busness owners and the wealthy first, not your other constituents. How ironic is it that a super-visor from Beverly Hills understands the prob- lem and solution better than a committee the represents so many poor communities?

Philanthropy: Warren Buffet did a good thing when he started a worldwide effort in recruit- ing billionaires to give of their wealth away to charity - either now or at the time of their death. So far at least 140 billionaires have made this pledge. If only a few of them would give their money to eradicate homelessness in our cities we’d all benefit. Mr. Buffet, I realize giving $2.4 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was a good thing, but charity starts at home and our inner cities need your help!

It’s only my opinion, but...  
Written by Al Sabo

Ending Homelessness: Recently the City and County decided to join forces in hopes of ending this county wide crisis. This is an important first step in addressing an intractable problem.

Though both claimed to be working together and coordinating plans, the City and County aren’t taking the same approach. While both are calling for more comprehensive approaches and increased resources, it is the County plan, largely led by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, that is the best eliminating this outrageous and unsightly situa- tion.

The County’s plan calls for building, rehabbing, and encouraging more property owners to ac- cept section 8 vouchers to house low-income and homeless individuals. Kuehl and County have also already identified and allocated the initial $100 million for their plan, and the Supervisors rightfully believe that this money should go to housing for the homeless and only secondly for providing services. Finally, someone gets it right. Kuehl has also been outspoken about the need for Housing First. Yes! The only way to end homelessness is to house the homeless.

Why is it that a County Supervisor that repre- sents Beverly Hills gets it right while those repre- senting South LA, Skid Row, Hollywood, and other homeless populations throughout mostly impoverished areas get it wrong?

In contrast to the County’s plan, the City’s home- less plan is not as aggressive on calling for new housing, commits more resources to the police, and does nothing to address the face that an- nually the LAPD gets up to $87 million of the $100 million spent on homelessness out of the general fund.

Haven’t we been there before? You can’t police your way out of homelessness.

Councilmembers Huizar, Harris-Dawson, Ce- dillo and the rest of the council committee on homelessness, it seems as though you represent

spected in our city are treated. Once that proper- ty is tagged a call is placed to the Department of Sanitation, whose job it is to further administer the hardship to individuals by discarding their property.

As the LAPD officers are waiting for Sanitation to arrive, which in some cases can take hours, the officers are entrusted to baby sit this property, which is done at the taxpayers’ expense. This is a miscarriage and a reckless use of taxpayer- ers’ money. We say that those funds could and should be used in a more progressive fashion - like housing people. For it is housing, not crimi- nalization, it’s house keys, not handcuffs, that will address homelessness in a real way.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, and so eloquently I might add, “An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his own individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”

So at the end of the day the question should not be if I help the homeless what will happen to me? No, the question should undoubtedly be if I don’t help the homeless what will happen to them?

They cannot take away your rights to public space or property. This isn’t their land. This is our land. Your land.

Only a woman has the right to decide what to do with her body.

As for me, I’m sorry that I was not strong enough to overcome the feelings of shame and humiliation. I can only hope that if there is a God - He or She - that can forgive me for making this horrendous mistake.

Of the People, By the People, and for the People: These were these words of our founding fathers. But they really were meant to be an illu- sion. When everything is considered, I’ve come to the conclusion that this idea was created as a trick to protect the ruling class and wealthy.

First, let us look at the political process. Super- delegates can steal to people’s choice. How can any party give a candidate who re- ceived 80% and 20% less delegates than the candidate who only received 10%? Very simple. It’s because the wealthy donors are the puppet masters who control their puppets with unlimited campaign funding. The vote of the people is only secondary to the money.

Secondly if this government is for all people why do states regulate who can or cannot vote? Sup- pressing the vote of all is not a government of the people, and certainly not all of the people.

Lastly, do you really believe that you, by voting, elect our president in November? If you do you are wrong again. It’s not you but members of the electoral college who later vote to decide who will be president.

All of these party rules and regulations are designed to protect the wealthy ruling class from the voice of the people. Oh, and of course I must add the Supreme Court who stole the election from Al Gore awarding the Presidency to George W. Bush back in 2000.

Today’s youth appear to be on the right path to overcome this illusion - voting in large numbers for a socialist, Bernie Sanders appears to be the way of our future. The country may not be ready for socialism, but the youth of the country are and they are our future. Socialism will eventu- ally win out over capitalism and only then will this country become the voice of all the people, by the people, for the people.
The Urban Miner
Written by John Imani

Three o’clock in the morning and the protesting squeal of unsteady metal wheels over-coming friction, gravity, and a few thousand miles of heavy usage grows louder and then slows to a stop. This is followed by the squish of plastic bags being lifted, propped, probed, and opened. There is the clank of metal and the clash of glass. After a pause... the plaintive rattle of the wheels again picks up its solitary refrain and fades on into the night. It is Tuesday, trash pick-up day. Asleep before, the chickens and the roosters are now up, awaken as the Urban Miner is at work.

He punches no clock, but is obedient to the timeliness of necessity. His stem is wound tight by the dicta of the pitiful piecework wage he is paid. He goes off to no fac- tory, no shop, no store. Nor does he work at home. His “office” is the not-so-great- outdoors, which if he is “successful” - that is if he is to continue to scratch out a living - he will navigate with both the wary skill of a frontier scout and the fears and dread of a gold-rush prospector who is down to his last biscuit - his last can of beans and winter a coming on.

He belongs to no concern and is of no con-cern to any on-going concern. Corporation or company would be obligated to, at least, pay him the prevailing sub-subistence minimum wage, which would be mandated to pay him for legal holidays, vacation days, sick days; which would be required to com-pensate him should be injured while doing this dirty, dangerous job; would have to provide the pathetic pittance of the un-employment dole when he is “pink-slipped” by his own productivity and his services no longer needed.

He is naked. Exposed to and the victim of both the elements and an economic system whose coat-of-arms hails the virtue of man’s inhumanity to man. This “proletarian vaga-bond” is at once the nightmarish avatar of the working class’ painful birth and, per-haps, the ominous harbinger of its dismal fu-ture. Working classes are thus like sausages in that - heir makings are best left unseen.

The expulsion of the 17th and early 18th century English peasantry from the manors was a process expedited by the simultaneous increase in the productivity and diversity of agriculture and the consequent increase in population. These, alongside the rise of manufacturing - which demanded more and more wool from “sheep-walks” that once were piece-work cottages and subsistence farms, transformed the newly “freed” peas-ants into wage laborers and in doing so cre-ated a market for the products of such labor. Another person now produced that which the worker had formerly produced for him- self. And, if desired, this product now had to be bought.

As manufacturing grew not only in size but also in concentration, so was the newly born work force forced to transform itself from a proud rural diaspora into a debauched urban aggregation which bided its time with beg-gary, thievery, and prostitution; whilst fear-fully huddled outside the gates of the factory hoping to be invited in. Now, as Yogi Berra said, “It’s deja vu all over again.”

As the increase in the productivity of agri-culture “freed” the property-less peasant to tobravely into the new world of manufac-turing so now do mechanization, automa-tion and computerization “free” more and more of modern industry’s workers. These workers have, to the greater extent been ab-sorbed, albeit at generally lower wages, from a service sector that has, until now, expanded in inverse proportion to the manufacturing industry’s contraction as percent of the na-tion’s workforce.

This overblown giant, the service sector, numbers in its ranks not only the above along with health care, municipal and educa-tion workers, but also swells its ranks with stock brokers, insurance agents, advertising touts and lawyers. In short, blackguards of all ilk and stripes.

The service sector’s tremendous annual expansion rate of 3 per cent from 1975-1990 was predicted to drop to 1.6 per cent be-tween the years 1990-2005 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Service sector capital now emulates its predecessors and begins to grow leaner, meaner and trimmer. The era of “downsizing” has dawned, or rather, has begun to set the sun on this sec-tor’s day.

But growth in this sector has leveled off not only because of the increase in “productiv-ity” of its workers due to the modernization of equipment, but also because of this sec-tor’s very own derivative nature. A sub-stantial portion of the amount available to be spent on service is a direct function of the industrial workers declining purchasing power.

If the service sector can no longer absorb the worker who no longer “belongs” to industry and who no longer “belongs” to the land then where is he going to go? What is he to do?

There is a painting, “The Gleaners,” by Jean-Francois Millet. The picture shows peasants pouring over the remains of a grain harvest. Though there is no text to accompany, it is clear that the “gleaners” are engaged in “scavenging”. What is left of the harvest is not worth the wage that the owner would have to have paid hired help to salvage. The “gleaners” produce no profit.

However, this modern farcical recapitulation of yester-year’s tragedy, the “Urban Miner”, does produce profit. He is not a “gleaner”, he is an exo-industrial worker, a worker kicked out of the “normal” economy. He is not a “scaver”, he is a (secondary) ore producer. He does not forage at the point of production for “leavings” that have no economic value, but “mines” at the point of consumption. The Urban Miner is the new proletarian, the ex-industrial proletarian, the proletarian vagabond who has been “freed” from the company, “freed” from the job, from the clock and from the boss; but, simul-taneously, he has been “fenced” from the ben-efits and protections of a “civilized” society. He is the product of capitalism turned full circle and is its chicken come home to roost.

Capitalism: piecework at its beginning and piecework at its end.

Unionize Skid Row
Written by Gary Boatwright

Does the Union want some brawlers who will get right in the face of anybody who stands in the way of Union Progress?

Unionize the Homeless – who really, really, really want a effing job! Suggested name: Amalgamated Labor Potential Organization – because you can’t find any place with more unrealized potential than Skid Row.

We’ve been saving up our potential for years, sometimes decades. Until we really fucking need it.

Hire one person from Skid row to work on every job site! Give us a platform and we will be recognized!

We will be recognized as Human Beings! We will be recognized as children of God! All we are asking is give Skid Row a chance: A chance to rise up! A chance to live, work, and play! A chance to participate in life!
A thankful, unlikely Unsung Hero

Written by Wesley Walker

Hi, my name is Wesley Walker. Recently, I was nominated for and received the Unsung Award by the Californai Community Foundation. I was surprised I was nominated and even more surprised when I won it! There were over 100 people nominated from throughout Los Angeles County and there were only 30 who received the award, and I am grateful!

I am thankful to LA CAN for allowing me to grow, to organize, and to help all people in all communities, cities, and states to improve their living conditions. I’m thankful that LA CAN is in Skid Row inspiring people like me to take action and get involved to fight back for what is right in OUR communities. I also would like to give my thanks to Thelmy, Steve, Becky, Pete, Karl, Eric, General Dogon, Ariana, and all the other members here at LA CAN.

You see, it’s not just about any one person - it’s about all of us who are in the struggle for life, liberty, and justice for all our people! Therefore, to all of our members and staff, you are unsung heroes to me for helping me develop my leadership and working together. Anything I have been able to achieve can be achieved by any one of us if we give our commitment and passion to the work.

It all just starts by deciding to step up. That’s how I became a part of LA CAN. My story as an organizer and community leader began in 2005 when I moved into the Huntington Hotel. To my surprise, I was not expecting that I would have to move every 28 days. I didn’t know that it was forbidden by California Law. I didn’t know that in fact, 2004 LA CAN had lead a campaign to stop the 28-day shuffle.

After a neighbor named tiny told me about LA CAN, I went to housing committee because I was unsure where to pay my rent as the Huntington was in a program that punished them for violating tenant law. That’s where I met Steve Diaz, and he told me to how to pay. Right then I became a committed member. I started knocking on doors, passing out flyers, collecting information and helping to hold meetings at the Huntington.

The campaign at the Huntington ended, but I knew the work needed to continue and that I needed to continue to learn and do what I can to become a leader. I kept at it and was eventually asked to join the LA CAN Board of Directors.

I now volunteer any free time to meet and greet community members at the front desk and participate in as many actions and activities as I can, as well as recruit members to LA CAN.

I never thought my actions would have such a great impact - that I’d be able to take part in projects that have helped improve the lives of tens of thousands of residents. In 2013, my neighbors at the Huntington Hotel settled a lawsuit against the landlord for $1.5 million. I also worked on the Residential Hotel Ordinance, which effectively preserved thousands of residential hotels units for the poorest residents in Downtown LA. I now also serve on the Board of Directors for the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, a frontline law firm for poor and low-income people, which serves an estimated 65,000 Angelenos every year.

Most recently I helped pass Proposition 47 and worked very hard to overturn the lifetime ban on CalFresh (food stamps) for people with prior drug offenses. These victories were very important to me personally as I benefit directly from them.

I am a person who cares for others. Many in our communities are caring too. This is why we need folks to join us at LA CAN - so we can take our skills, passion, and good hearts and build our power to improve our lives. They had my back.

God had my back too. I will continue this work and never stop giving, as long as I can, God be with me. I hope I keep that heroic energy in and around me.

So let’s get inspired to do something good for our communities and for ourselves! Who knows? Maybe you too can be an unsung hero one day.

A Successful 2016 Downtown Women’s Needs Assessment

Written by Louise Mbella “Sinai” (Frenchy)

In March, more than 300 women in the area of Skid Row were surveyed by a over 100 volunteers from all walks of life as part of Downtown Women’s Action Coalition (DWAC) conducted the 2016 Downtown Women’s Needs Assessment. The assessment consists of survey questions around topics such as violence against women, homelessness, low-income permanent supportive housing, gender equality, safety, and conditions of homeless shelters. DWAC has conducted the Women’s Needs Assessment Survey every three years since 2001.

The 2016 DWAC Women’s Needs Assessment Survey is a tool to analyze the needs of homeless and/or low-income and offer ideas and strategies to bring in the resources best suited for addressing the issues identified in the survey results. It allows service providers and non-profit organizations to have real data and numbers and to be able to request the necessary provisions to assist those in needs.

The preparation of this survey questionnaire was very thorough and a group effort. DWAC members had to take into consideration the challenges many women are facing while homeless and in various vulnerable situations. The project planning team meticulously reviewed each question of the survey to ensure that each person being surveyed could provide the most important information about their needs. Often times, many homeless individuals, and low-income recipients are voiceless and unheard. Therefore, social programs offered by the government do not always reflect the special circumstances they are undergoing. The purpose of The assessment is to highlight the needs of those who are suffering in the shadow so they too can receive social services resources.

It is important for us, as community members, to recognize the needs of all individuals not just some. Los Angeles is facing a homeless epidemic and housing crisis that affects everyone in some form or another; from the elected officials, business owners to the average person on the streets. We all see it and cannot avoid it even if we wanted to. Men, women and entire families sleeping on public sidewalks in tents and sleeping bags in a nation is rich as the United States is unacceptable.

But it’s not only about people living on the streets. Another important topic is the shelter system and the conditions in which homeless women are living inside their walls. In addition, there are many challenges very poor individuals receiving public assistance have in keeping their low-income permanent supportive housing units. They obviously need case management assistance and the landlord’s sensitivity to work with the government subsidies when rent is due. The objective here is to keep people housed rather than back on the streets.

Everyone that can get involved in helping the situation should; as one day, it might be you or someone you know in a crisis. You never know how life will unfold. There is the predictable and the unpredictable. But first we need to be able to really know what the conditions and needs are.

The DWAC Women’s Needs Assessment brought joy and a lot of tears to participants and volunteers. “Each survey conducted is humanizing,” one of our volunteers explained because she was able to learn firsthand the root cause of the struggles of extremely poor and/or homeless women in Downtown. For many, the assessment is a positive learning experience - worth more than words can express.

The DWAC Women’s Needs Assessment is a powerful tool in combating homelessness and poverty for women in our community. The surveys are currently being analyzed with the report to released in the coming months.

“Nothing to Blame”

Written by Carolyn Irene Schauggaard

No one to blame, not even the rain. So go away pain and let me refrain from the devil who has no name before I go insane.

So Calvin is no one to blame.
Rest in peace to our dear friend, Kit

On March 31, Kit Kollenberg passed away after an amazingly brave struggle through grave illnesses. Kit, a longtime friend and supporter of LA CAN as well as one of our Freedom Now honorees, was known to many as a freedom fighter, a justice champion, a mother, a child care innovator, and one of the truly happiest and warmest people on the planet. A wonderful remembrance ceremony was held in April, where family and friends told story after story of the joy and encouragement that Kit brought into all of our lives. Kit was a true human rights warrior, working for women’s rights, children’s rights, and so many other issues taken forcefully on through her personal and professional work. She also loved folk music, and the group assembled to celebrate her shared in singing some of her favorites.

LA CAN honored Kit and her husband, Gary Blasi, together in 2013 as a shining example of the shared leadership model in advancing social, racial and economic justice that LA CAN tries to embody each day. In keeping with that tradition, Kit and Gary thanked each other and let all of the attendees know about each other’s contributions and accomplishments. Kit, both individually and as part of the incredible partnership with Gary, inspired many of us at LA CAN. Though the entire LA CAN family may not have had the chance to get to know her personally, her financial, emotional, and other support is one of the key building blocks of our organization. And so through LA CAN, and so many other community organizations and individuals she deeply touched, her spirit lives on. Among so many treasures Kit leaves us, the thing most commonly remembered about her is her ever-present smile. Even in her deepest struggles, Kit shared love and compassion for all in her smiles. So give someone an unexpected smile today – or every day – in her honor.

Honoring and Remembering

Over the past few months, we have said goodbye to too many of beloved members of our community. Though they are no longer with us, we will carry with us their spirit and honor their memory as we continue to build a more just and equitable world - a world that each one of them envisioned and worked towards.

Our Lives in Systems

Written by Mariella Saba

On a daily basis
our bodies
our faces
are tracked traced and framed
[SUSPECT]
in the eyes of the state
watch us
how we work hard to survive
live with dignity
watch us
how they sexu-alize
cate-gorize
standard-a-dize
our bodies
white
supremacist lies
suffocate life
— dis-illusions —
systems are set-up
to crim-in-a-ize
our breath our existence
control our movement
lock up our resistance
outside & inside
laws imposed to privatize
our bodies our faces
our word our knowledge
our stories are taken
in exchange for our rights
up down technologies
steal from our lives
biometrics
data
points used to predict us as crimes
on the ground
break us into pieces
separate our families into parts
blame us for the harm
detain us to alarm
our mental health
put on the line
shuffle us like dimes
price us
hang us
number us
bank on us
while they use us
abuse us, refuse us
deep inside
systems, rotten at the root
systems, masking our truth
systems, enforcing by force
fully funded genocide
policing our humanity
dehumanized
to trash
us
murder us
in these streets, our homes, behind closed doors,
laugh at our pain
with disdain
sustain
structures of poverty
slavery still alive
upholding white supremacy
patriarchy
holding us all up hostage
get our whole world flipped
upside down
we get sick
ill with the isms and phobias
pumping the blood of these systems
that got a choke hold on me
choke hold on you

So we gather
to breathe
to take care of each other
we speak
to make sense through our stories
name our realities
work hard on our freedom
web the alternatives to the chains
heal our injuries
be the interconnections to
change the game
Reclaim
Our bodies
Our faces
Our traces
Our roots
Our seeds
Our fruit
Our needs
Our stories
Our trees
Our knowledge
Our past
Our present
Our process
Our future
Our values
Our safety
Our freedom
Our communities
Our lives
Our lives
Our lives

Join the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition as we fight for our lives. Meet with us every first Monday of the month at LA CAN to learn about and get involved in our Community Data Justice Project. For more information please reach us at stoplapdspacing@gmail.com or call us at (424) 209-7450.
The Community Connection is a street newspaper and a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers. The Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) is a membership organization comprised of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless residents living in Downtown and South Los Angeles, and surrounding communities. LA CAN’s staff and core members write many articles that appear in the Community Connection. Articles by contributors who are not LA CAN core members and/or personal opinion/experience articles receive a byline. These articles do not necessarily represent the views, opinions and perspectives of the Los Angeles Community Action Network.

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June/July 2016
Community Connection Team
Ariana Alcaraz
John Imani
Eric Ares
Steve Diaz
General Dogon
Sean Gregory
Ashleigh Hall
Eddie H.
Louise Mbella
Thelmy Perez
Craig Roberts
Mariella Saba
Al Sabo
Carolyn Irene
Schaugaard
Karl Scott
Wesley Walker
Pete White

LA CAN Meeting Schedule
Resident Organizing Committee Meetings
1st and 3rd Friday of Every Month at 6pm at LA CAN

Civil Rights Committee Meetings
Every Monday at 1pm at LA CAN

Housing Committee Meetings
Every Monday at 10:30am at LA CAN

Downtown Women’s Action Coalition Meetings
2nd Wednesday of every month at 2:30pm at LA CAN

Team Food and Garden Meetings
1st and 3rd Thursdays at 10am at LA CAN

Pueblo Del Rio Tenant Meetings
Every 2nd Thursday at 5pm at James Slauson Park Recreation Center

Editorial Policy:
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