

Community Coalition Celebrates 30 Years!

Stepping Up for South Los Angeles for Three Decades

For 30 years, Community Coalition (CoCo) has provided a platform from which the voices of everyday residents have been raised, and heard, to impact the material conditions of Black and Brown people living in South Los Angeles.

CoCo has continuously worked to reduce crime, poverty, and substance abuse through resident organizing, direct advocacy, and community support services. The social justice organization cultivates leadership and connection to build safe neighborhoods, quality schools, and a robust social safety net in areas of Los Angeles that have suffered from generations of disinvestment.

"As CoCo celebrates our 30th anniversary, I think back to 1989 when quite frankly the conditions in South Central were dismal, hopelessness was rampant, and our communities were not as organized. But Congressmember Karen Bass, and the original members of CoCo, amidst the despair of the crack cocaine epidemic—they stepped up. They did not let the power of the right undermine the power of the people," says Community Coalition President and CEO Alberto Retana. "It's because of these determined people that I am reminded of CoCo's purpose. Regardless of who's in office and regardless of the conditions that oppress us, we too must step up for South LA and keep fighting!"

In 1990, a group of community activists huddled together in a living room. Gathered by CoCo founder and now Congressmember Karen Bass (37th District), the group was haunted by the raging health crisis that had enveloped their community. Every day the devastating impacts of the crack-cocaine epidemic were felt in neighborhoods of color throughout Los Angeles and seen on the nightly news. The activists knew that criminalizing addiction would only make matters worse. They believed the South L.A. residents most affected by the crisis should be included in creating real



solutions for their community. It was from this vision that the idea of a community-driven organization was born.

Under Bass's leadership, Community Coalition stepped up and prevented over 150 liquor stores from being rebuilt after the 1992 Civil Unrest. Mixed-use businesses that are an asset to the community (i.e., affordable housing, grocery stores, and laundromats) replaced the liquor stores. The South Los Angeles Kinship in Action Center was established, and relative caregivers secured resources for their families via Assembly Bill 863, helping children stay with their families rather than being forced into foster care. CoCo moved into its current building, a key first step in establishing a permanent institution for community organizing in South Los Angeles. It also implemented the Summer of Success (SOS), which served as a model for the City's "Summer Night Lights" program.

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"I think back to 1989 when quite frankly the conditions in South Central were dismal, hopelessness was rampant, and our communities were not as organized. But Congressmember Karen Bass, and the original members of CoCo, amidst the despair of the crack cocaine epidemic—they stepped up. They did not let the power of the right undermine the power of the people. It's because of these determined people that I am reminded of CoCo's purpose. Regardless of who's in office and regardless of the conditions that oppress us, we too must step up for South LA and keep fighting!"—Alberto Retana, President & CEO of Community Coalition

Passing the baton to then community organizer and current Los Angeles City Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson

Under Marqueece Harris-Dawson's leadership, CoCo student and parent leaders fought for and won A-G college prep classes for all students and schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, making college access a civil right. CoCo was also integral to winning \$350M in QEIA funds to reduce class sizes and improve academic performance. The Prop 30 campaign CoCo mounted was successful in delivering \$6.8B in new state revenue for education and Medi-Cal. During Harris-Dawson's tenure, Community Coalition began its partnership with the Children's Defense Fund's Freedom Schools program. This national literacy program's goal is to end the cradle-to-prison pipeline. Community Coalition has now facilitated 10 summers of Freedom Schools for over 100 South LA youth annually, introducing them to social justice oriented children's and youth adult fiction stories by authors of color.

When Harris-Dawson transitioned to city governance, community organizer and champion for educational justice Alberto Retana was tapped to lead the fight against racial and economic injustice for the marginalized communities of South LA.

As President and CEO, Retana has developed initiatives to build Community Coalition into a mass-based community organization that involves thousands of residents in the practice of creating change. During his tenure, CoCo has created the People First Platform, a comprehensive policy agenda to equitably move resources to the highest-need communities, re-imagine our criminal justice system by launching a 15-organization coalition called PUSH LA (Promoting Unity Safety & Health), and positively transform the built environment through the South Central by South Central campaign, which promotes economic development by us and for us.

"This is our calling at Community Coalition to step up. It's why we have stepped up to hold the LAPD accountable for racial profiling. We have demanded a stop to the stops, and we have been heard with the LAPD announcing that its Metro Division will significantly scale back random stops and searches," Retana



Community Coalition's Headquarters at the Corner of 81st & Vermont

continued. "It's why we have stepped up from hosting dinner conversations on race to now developing a proposal to establish an Office of Racial Equity in the City of Los Angeles to proactively address structural racism."

The year 2020 not only marks CoCo's influence and 30-year track record of developing youth and adult leaders in South LA, but it will also bear witness to the beginning of a new national program, The Center for Community Organizing (CCO). The program will be based in Los Angeles and serve as a national hub for community organizing training and racial justice activism.

"In 2020, Community Coalition is once again stepping up by establishing an 8-week organizing fellowship which will train organizers from all over the country to continue building a pipeline of change-makers," Retana concluded.

For more information on Community Coalition's 30th Anniversary Calendar of



Events or the Center for Community Organizing, contact Marsha Mitchell at marsha@cocosouthla.org.

Congressmember Karen Bass

#StepUpForSouthCentral

#StepUpForFamilies #StepUpForCommunity

In 1990, while working as a Physician Assistant and clinical instructor at the USC Keck School of Medicine, Congressmember Karen Bass (37th District) convened a group of community activists in the living room of a friend. The group was haunted by the raging health crisis that had enveloped their community. Every day the devastating impacts of the crack-cocaine epidemic were felt in neighborhoods of color throughout Los Angeles and seen on the nightly news. The activists knew that criminalizing addiction would only make matters worse. They believed the South L.A. residents most affected by the crisis should be included in creating real solutions for their community. It was from this vision that the idea of a community-driven organization was born.

Under Bass' leadership (1990-2004), Community Coalition stepped up and prevented over 150 liquor stores from being rebuilt after the 1992 Civil Unrest. Mix-use businesses that are an asset to the community (i.e., affordable homes, grocery stores, and laundromats) replaced the liquor stores. The South Los Angeles Kinship in Action Center was established, and Assembly Bill 863 secured resources for relative caregivers helping children stay with their families rather than forced into foster care. CoCo moved into its current building, establishing a permanent institution for community organizing in South Los Angeles. It also implemented the Summer of Success (SOS), which served as the model for the City's Summer Night Lights program.

In 2004, she represented the 47th district in the California State Assembly. At the time, there were no African American women serving in the state legislature. Assemblymember Bass was re-elected in 2006 and 2008. During her tenure, she served as the 67th Speaker of the California Assembly (2008-2010), and was the second woman and the third African American to be Speaker.

Congressmember Bass served as Speaker during California's greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. In addition to helping to navigate the state through a very difficult time, she also championed efforts to



CONGRESSMEMBER KAREN BASS

improve foster care and quality healthcare for Californians. For her leadership during the worst recession California had faced since the Great Depression, she, along with the three legislative leaders that she worked alongside, was awarded the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award in 2010.

On February 18, 2010, Congressmember Bass confirmed her candidacy to succeed retiring Congressmember Diane Watson in California's 33rd congressional district. Congressmember Bass was most recently re-elected to her fifth term representing the 37th Congressional District in November 2018. She serves on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs as Chair of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations and the House Judiciary Committee as Chair of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. Congressmember Bass also serves as the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.



Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson

#StepUpForSouthCentral
#StepUpForFamilies #StepUpForCommunity

The Eighth District is home to over 248,000 people. Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson proudly represents the district with the highest concentration of African Americans in the city. Never afraid to discuss issues of race and equity, Councilmember Harris-Dawson understands how decades of systematic disinvestment have harmed our communities and believes the people of South LA are its most excellent resource. As a long-time community organizer in South LA, Harris-Dawson relies on his deep roots and relationships to build public trust and collaborative solutions.

Graduating from Morehouse College in 1995, Councilmember Harris-Dawson joined Community Coalition (CoCo) that same year as a community organizer. Beginning in 2004, he succeeded US Congresswoman Karen Bass as President and CEO of Community Coalition—one of the most progressive non-profits in the city. Passing the baton to the community organizer, Community Coalition stepped up to form "Communities for Educational Equity." This alliance fought for and won A-G college prep classes for all students and schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Councilmember Harris-Dawson and CoCo were also integral to helping to win \$350M in QEIA funds to reduce class sizes and improve academic performance. The Prop 30 campaign CoCo mounted was successful in delivering \$6.8B in new state revenue for education and Medi-Cal. During his tenure, Community Coalition began its partnership with the Children's Defense Fund's Freedom Schools program. This national literacy program's goal is to end the cradle-to-prison pipeline.

Re-elected to the Los Angeles City Council on March 3, 2020, Councilmember Harris-Dawson is the current chair



COUNCILMEMBER MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON

of the city's Planning Land Use and Management (PLUM) committee. He has introduced policies that combat homelessness, create quality jobs, clean streets, and encourage community policing. Within his first 18 months as a Councilmember, he authored Proposition HHH, a \$1.2 billion bond for permanent supportive housing, the most significant investment towards ending homelessness in the nation. He has also authorized more affordable housing than anywhere in the city in his first two years in office.

The Councilman grew up in South Los Angeles and proudly resides there with his wife, Karrie. He strongly believes in the community's power to create a better tomorrow by organizing and working together.



Alberto Retana President & CEO

#StepUpAndExpressYourself

#StepUpForTheCulture #StepUpAndOrganize

As President and CEO of Community Coalition (CoCo), Alberto Retana has developed initiatives to build CoCo into a mass-based membership community organization that involves thousands of South Los Angeles residents in the practice of creating change. Alberto was introduced to organizing at UCLA, where he graduated with a degree in Political Science. As a student activist, he led campaigns to defend affirmative action, lower student fees, and advance racial justice. Alberto joined Community Coalition in 1998 as a youth organizer and played various leadership roles within the organization for more than a decade.

From 2009 to 2011, Alberto worked for the Obama administration in the U.S. Department of Education as Director of Community Outreach. During his time in D.C., he organized the Department's first National Youth Summit. He worked with thousands of community leaders across the country to address the nation's "push-out" crisis. Defined as the over-reliance on law enforcement to solve behavior problems in schools, "push out" uses zero tolerance discipline practices and punitive policies that push students out of school, ultimately fueling the school-to-prison pipeline.

Returning to Community Coalition in 2015, Alberto created the People First Platform, a comprehensive policy agenda informed by over 4200 adults and youth to equitably move resources to the highest-need communities, re-imagine the criminal justice system, and transform the built environment in South Los Angeles. His leadership has also broken new ground for Community Coalition by developing an "artivism" cultural arm which includes:

- PowerFest—South LA's premier political concert drawing thousands of residents;
- The People Power Convention—an annual convening that engages residents through plenary sessions and workshops, and



ALBERTO RETANA

- Re-Imagine Justice—a living art and people's exhibit marking the 25th anniversary of the 1992 LA Uprising—featured in the New York Times and Los Angeles Weekly.

In 2018, Community Coalition was selected by the City of Los Angeles to organize the embRACE LA inaugural dinner series. It successfully mobilized over 1200 Angelenos across the city to discuss race and equity in Los Angeles. These dialogues have culminated in a strategy to create an Office of Racial Equity (ORE) in Los Angeles. This office will be tasked with proactively defining the city's roles in achieving racial equity for those who are most marginalized when citywide and regional policy decisions are made. In 2020, Community Coalition is also working to build a new program, the Center for Community Organizing (CCO), that will serve as a national hub for community organizing training and racial justice activism.



Community Coalition Youth Leaders

**#StepUpForYouth #StepUpForSchools
#StepUpForTheFuture**

Graduating in June of 2020, Kawika Smith is a Community Coalition South Central Youth Empowered Through Action (SCYEA) member and high school senior who aspires to study the social sciences as a collegiate. He is a very active youth representative for his Neighborhood Council. His goal is to assist in mobilizing those voices that are not heard. As such, when Kawika's school administration instituted a policy regarding the length at which African American students had to keep their hair, Kawika filed a formal complaint with the school and enlisted the help of California Senator Holly Mitchell. Senator Mitchell is the author of Senate Bill 188 which is also known as The CROWN Act. The legislation was signed into law on July 3, 2019 by California Governor Gavin Newsom and ensures protection against discrimination based on hairstyles by extending statutory protection to hair texture and protective styles in the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and state Education Codes.

See Kawika's Ted Talk, "The Three-Inch Compromise," at

www.youtube.com/3Nqajr2AxBw

Kawika is a senior at Verbum Dei High School in Watts. He has a 3.56 GPA, and three associate degrees from L.A. Southwest College. Like many students looking to be accepted into a four-year college or university, he took advantage of the SAT training offered by his school and other nonprofits which he says just were not effective in teaching him key test-taking strategies. In December 2019, Kawika also became one of three lead plaintiffs in a coalition of students and advocacy groups that filed suit against the University of California system.



KAWIKA SMITH

The lawsuit, filed in December of 2019, seeks to stop the UC System from using standardized test scores in its admissions. The plaintiffs call out the fact that college entrance tests, like the SAT and ACT, are biased against poor Black and Brown students. The accomplished student leader took the SAT in December and was not surprised by his test scores.

"I knew my scores would not be competitive, but the SAT doesn't give a true account of my potential," Smith said.

The lawsuit asserts that by basing college admissions on standardized tests, applicants of color are discriminated against, and that the discriminatory tests have led to an enormous test prep industry which affords affluent students with opportunities and access to resources that allow them to perform well on college entrance exams.



Community Coalition Youth Leaders

#StepUpForYouth #StepUpForSchools
#StepUpForTheFuture

On November 12, 2019, John C. Fremont High School called the police to its campus. According to media reports, there were multiple fights on campus involving "unruly" students attacking police officers. The media did not cover the escalated police response, which included LAPD showing up to campus in riot gear—armed with rifles, pepper spray, and batons. Two of Community Coalition's South Central Youth Empowered Through Action (SCYEA) youth activists, Rebecca Gonzalez and Sandy Willaims, who currently attend Fremont, wrote the following Op-Ed:

Why is Pepper Spray Banned in Detention Halls, But Okay to Use at Fremont?

On Tuesday, November 12th, fights broke out at Fremont High School. The school announced we were on lockdown, but then told students to go to their fourth-period classes. Administrators and campus police put students in danger by calling LAPD. More than 50 cops showed up. They used pepper spray on several students. The fact that pepper spray is illegal in juvenile centers, but utilized in South Los Angeles community schools shows a lack of control or concern for our safety.

We are upset that LAPD officers pepper-sprayed our classmates. There are other ways to stop simple fights, which also happen at tons of other schools. Students did ask the policemen to use less force on students as they tried to contain the situation. We were livid to see kids following instructions, and going to class being pepper-sprayed.

It makes us very scared to think that the people who are supposed to protect us (the police and Fremont admin) thought this was the best way to handle the situation or treat students. Fremont's faculty expected us to go back to class while dealing with symptoms of being pepper-sprayed or witnessing classmates who had been pepper-sprayed. These symptoms included hyperventilation, anxiety, and panic. Despite everything we'd seen and experienced, faculty expected students to continue with the school day.

The fact that we are kids does not mean we don't know anything. We could feel our teacher's tension and anxiety through their body language too. Students were upset and



SANDY WILLIAMS AND REBECCA GONZALEZ

emotional. We should not have to ignore our trauma or be expected to casually walk past officers after they've harmed us.

We feel betrayed that our school would even think about calling law enforcement on its student body for a conflict that could have been prevented by them. They knew about the events leading up to the fight for more than a week. Instead of de-escalating the situation between the students involved, they put everybody at risk and through a very traumatic experience because they did not take action to resolve the issue.

Fremont's teachers and school police need training in restorative justice practices. They need to be able to provide mental health and wellness resources to support students involved in a conflict. Campus police need training on how to de-escalate situations, without weapons. Most importantly, when something like this happens, students deserve clear instructions, so people do not get hurt. And, for the record, it is NOT okay to use pepper spray on kids at Fremont.

Hear the girls talk more about their experience at

www.instagram.com/p/B5ELFpdg1JS/



Community Leader

#StepUpForSouthCentral
#StepUpForHealthyNeighborhoods

For 30 years, Community Coalition has known that land use and economic development are inextricably linked processes that expose the layered realities and complexities of political, social and economic decision-making within local economies. These processes are guided by multiple stakeholders with varying interests in owning, leasing, regulating, and ultimately profiting off of land use within a local economy. In the best-case scenario, the local community has the ability to weigh in on how local economies are constructed close to their homes, schools and within their neighborhoods. However, more often than not, these local economies are guided by business plans that seek to maximize profit, with a mere afterthought to community impact.

In communities of color, this is more likely to lead to the commercialization and development of land that does not take into account the unique and distinctive needs of the residents during any phase of the development process. There is a current narrative surrounding investment that suggests that low-income communities of color, do not have the wherewithal to decide for themselves the type of community they would like to live in, and that investors will not commit to our community without “gentrification” because “good” businesses such as healthy grocery stores require more “affluent” residents. Community Coalition’s South Central by South Central campaign proves that this is a false narrative.

Jairi Sanchez is a native Angeleno who has lived in South LA for the past year and a half, but worked in the neighborhood for the past two years. She and her fiancé, who has lived in the area for 29 years, recently purchased a home. Wanting to become an active member of her new community, Jairi attended a meeting on police reform at Community Coalition. After the meeting, she met CoCo organizer Oscar Alvarez, who told her about the People's Lot campaign. In April of 2019, Jairi joined the campaign—which was renamed South Central by South Central (SCxSC).

“This work is important to me because I believe communities should be planned with community residents at the center of land use development decisions. I hope our campaign builds



JAIRI SANCHEZ

community leadership and empowerment to ensure equitable development for South Central that will benefit long-time residents and the future of our youth,” says Sanchez.

Like others involved in the SCxSC campaign, her vision for South LA is for local businesses to thrive and community residents to prosper from the new investment happening in the community. In fact, South Central by South Central’s goals are simple:

- For community members to be involved in the decision-making process when it comes to land use in South L.A.
- For residents to be afforded the opportunity to participate in local hire on large development projects which produce quality jobs and good wages.
- And, that new development projects contribute

to the overall aesthetic of the area and improve the quality of life such that South L.A. is transformed into the safe, healthy community our members deserve.



#SteppingUpForSouthLA

Community Coalition's Organizing Timeline

1990

- Congressmember Karen Bass, who at that time was an emergency-room physician assistant, gathered a group of South L.A. activists together to find viable solutions to the public health crises that enveloped their community as a result of the crack-cocaine epidemic.

1991

- Community Coalition pioneers its youth program, South Central Youth Empowered Through Action (SCYEA, pronounced "Say Yeah!"), now a nationally recognized model for youth organizing and leadership development.
- CoCo conducts its first Community Survey through which residents identified liquor stores as the main culprits in fostering crime and violence in their neighborhoods.

1992

- CoCo's starts the "Rebuild South LA Without Liquor Stores" Campaign.

1997

- Community Coalition moves into its headquarters at 8101 S. Vermont from its original location on Broadway and 83rd Street.
- SCYEA enacts its first direct-action campaign to ensure South Los Angeles schools received an equitable share of funds from Proposition B.B. This school bond measure authorized \$2.4 billion in bonds for the construction of new schools and the repair and modernization of existing schools. As a result, the Tax Bond Oversight Committee reopened the repair contracts and allocated an additional \$153 million for repairs in overcrowded South L.A. schools.
- SCYEA youth protest Prop 21 which sought to incarcerate minors with adults.

1999

- CoCo's Prevention Network, made up of service providers who focus on strengthening the social safety net, conducts a significant study and review of the needs and gaps in human services in South Los Angeles.
- Community Coalition introduces its "Family Care Not Foster Care" campaign to stop the breakup of South L.A. families and challenge the inequity in the foster care system.

2001

- Fremont 911/Godinez vs. Davis lawsuit challenges the state's allocation of the 1998 Proposition 1A school bond funds by showing

the disparities in the system that allocates school construction funds. The campaign won \$1 billion for new school construction

2003

- CoCo pilots the "Summer of Success" (SOS) Program, violence-reduction effort that brought late-night recreational activities to Jim Gilliam Park. During the Summer of Success, there was not one homicide in the community surrounding the park. SOS was the model for LA's city-wide "Summer Night Lights" program.

2004

- CoCo organizes the "Alliance For Better Communities" and establishes Communities for Educational Equity (CEE)
- South L.A.'s relative caregivers help CoCo establish the Kinship In Action Center, the first of its kind to combine services, advocacy & organizing/direct action.
- CoCo forms the "Communities for Educational Equity" alliance to fight for college prep courses for all students throughout LAUSD.
- CoCo organizes service providers to end barriers to employment for individuals returning home from prison by creating the Ex-Offender Task Force.
- Residents win the 10-year struggle with notorious Oakwood Inn Motel, replacing it with affordable homes.

2005

- Student activists win A-G college prep classes for ALL students and schools in the LAUSD.

2006

- Relative caregiver leaders work with then California Assemblymember, Karen Bass to win \$82 million in the state budget to strengthen and improve foster care, including \$36 million for kinship care. They organize kinship rallies in Sacramento and meet with lawmakers to urge them to expand programs that support kinship-care families.



2007

- SCYEA youth win \$350M in Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) funds to reduce class sizes and improve academic performance in South Los Angeles schools.

2008

- CoCo helps to establish ACE Academy at Locke High School to prepare youth for both college and high wage union jobs with benefits.
- The Los Angeles City Council passes the citywide Nuisance Abatement Ordinance. Coalition members helped author the ordinance to increase accountability for nuisance businesses.

2009

- "Summer Night Lights" program is created at Martin Luther King Jr. Park. The organizing effort created new basketball and tennis courts, a soccer field, and removed toxic mold from the rec center.

2010

- CoCo purchases its building, creating a permanent institution in South LA.

2011

- Community Coalition partners with the **Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools** to begin a program in South L.A. The national program's goal is to end the school-to-prison pipeline by diminishing summer learning loss.

2012

- CoCo members engage with the Blue Ribbon Commission in support of the unprecedented overhaul of L.A. County's child welfare system with kinship as a priority.
- Community Coalition's "Families Helping Families" campaign wins one of seven federal demonstration grants to operate a kinship navigator program.
- CoCo organizes community support for Prop 30—bringing \$6.8B in new state revenue for education and Medi-Cal.

2013

- SCYEA's involvement leads to the passage of the School Climate Bill of Rights which requires LAUSD schools to use proven and effective discipline approaches to address student misbehavior, such as restorative justice.

2014

- CoCo, as an anchor of the Equity Alliance for LA's Kids, forms the Equity Is Justice: Student Equity Needs Index (SENI) Campaign. The alliance wins unanimous support from the Los Angeles Unified School Districts Board members on a new formula for allocating fund based on highest needs schools.
- CoCo members canvass and rally around the passage of Prop 47. C.A. becomes the first state to end felony sentencing for simple drug possession and low-level, non-violent offenses.

2015

- Equity on A-G resolution is passed by LAUSD to recommit to college prep for ALL students.

- CoCo filed a lawsuit against LAUSD over the misallocation of LCFF funds.

- CoCo hosts its first People Power Convention. The mass organizing event, which has more than 500 attendees annually, is meant to build neighborhood unity and civic power.

2016

- CoCo partners with the city to organize embRACE L.A.'s inaugural dinner series—successfully mobilizing over 1200 Angelenos to discuss race and equity in Los Angeles.

2017

- "Re-Imagine Justice" debuts as a living art exhibit which marked the 25th anniversary of the civil unrest.

2018

- Groundbreaking \$150 million settlement reached with LAUSD, delivering new programs and supports to 50 of the highest need schools in Los Angeles over three years.
- People First Platform unveiled.
- Reform LA Jails coalition submitted more than 246,000 signatures to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk calling for criminal justice reform legislation to be placed on California's March 2020 Presidential Primary ballot (Reform L.A. Jails).

2019

- South Central by South Central Tour debuts.
- CoCo holds its first People First Assembly.
- PUSH LA successfully demands LAPD to "Stop the Stops" culminating in major shifts in law enforcement policies.
- embRACE L.A. dialogues lead to the L.A. City Council voting to create an Office of Racial Equity.

2020

- CoCo successful in revoking Monarch Liquor Store's liquor license
- Measure R passes, significantly strengthening civilian oversight of the Sheriff's Department and increasing and improving psychiatric care, drug treatment and other services to individuals impacted by incarceration.
- CoCo assists residents of South L.A., a historically undercounted Census area, with its Census kiosk.
- Community Coalition wins one of four \$500K LA City Great Streets Challenge grants to build the People's Plaza on Manchester and Vermont.
- The LA County Board of Supervisors voted to end the collection of criminal administrative fees. \$1.8 billion in previously assessed fees were discharged.
- CoCo announces its Center for Community Organizing, its first ever national Fellowship Program.





CoCo's Economic Impact Timeline

Nearly \$10 Billion and Counting!

The activism of Community Coalition's members and community residents has stimulated economic recovery in South LA for decades. In the last ten years, South LA voters have become a vital bloc for economic recovery by overwhelmingly supporting revenue-generating initiatives such as Proposition 30's "Temporary Taxes to Fund Education." At the same time, residents have rallied to support justice initiatives (Prop 47 & 57) that have reduced state spending on incarceration practices in favor of greater investments in public education, youth development, and health and human services.

1997

South Central Youth Empowered through Action (SCYEA) launched its first direct-action campaign to ensure South Los Angeles schools received an equitable share of funds from Proposition B.B. This school bond measure authorized \$2.4 billion in bonds for the construction of new schools and the repair and modernization of existing schools. As a result, the Tax Bond Oversight Committee reopened the repair contracts and allocated an additional \$153 million for repairs in South L.A. schools.

2001

Fremont 911/Godinez vs. Davis lawsuit challenged the state's allocation of the 1998 Proposition 1A school bond funds by showing the disparities in the system that allocates school construction funds. The campaign won \$1 billion for new school construction.

2006

Relative Caregivers and Community Coalition leaders worked with then California Assemblymember Karen Bass to win \$82 million in the state budget to strengthen and improve foster care, including \$36 million for kinship care.

2007

Won \$350M in QEIA funds to reduce class sizes and improve academic performance

2012

Prop 30 is passed, allocating \$6.8B in new state revenue for education and Medi-Cal.

2017

Groundbreaking \$150 million settlement reached with LAUSD, delivering new services to 50 of the highest need schools in Los Angeles over three years.

2018/19

LAUSD budgeted \$25 million in 2018 to distribute funding to schools based on their rank in L.A. Unified's Student Equity Needs Index (SENI 2.0). \$262 million was allotted in 2019-20.

Philanthropic Partners

#StepUpForSouthCentral

#StepUpForCapacity #StepUpForLeadership

Longtime South LA residents, Bernie and Fran are committed social justice advocates who focus on the growth and development of nonprofit organizations. They formed the Jemmott Rollins Group (JRG) to provide management assistance to nonprofits. They have been instrumental in channeling millions of philanthropic dollars to community efforts.

From her early volunteer work in community organizing with migrant workers in Eastern Long Island to her work with the National Council of Negro Women to erect a statue to Mary McLeod Bethune in Washington, D.C., Fran is recognized as a leader and change agent.

Throughout her career, she has played many roles in the world of philanthropy including grant-maker, board member, executive director, policy advisor, donor and volunteer. Fran has always endeavored to achieve change from the bottom up. She is a founder of the California Black Women's Health Project and served as Program Director for Community and Women's Health at The California Wellness Foundation. She also served on the Board of the Liberty Hill Foundation and on their key committees including "Uplifting Change," a signature effort to generate funds for social justice issues.

Bernie is an acclaimed graphic artist, art director and writer and is well known for his pioneering efforts to break color barriers in the entertainment industry. He wrote for "The Nancy Wilson Show" and "Black Omnibus" as well as produced documentaries. Since expanding his career, he has focused his talents on helping nonprofits in the areas of image maximization, promotion, public relations, marketing and technological enhancement.

Together, Fran and Bernie provide management assistance and leadership strategies to private, corporate and community foundations through the Jemmott Rollins Group. The nonprofit they founded, Social Action Partners, continues their work of expanding organizational capacity and leadership development in low income communities of color. The Jemmott-Rollins backyard often serves as the site of fundraisers and political gatherings in South Los Angeles. Community Coalition has often been the recipient of their capacity building efforts.

"Every time we've worked with JRG over the past five years, CoCo has taken a leap in organizational development. JRG helped diversify our funding base, manage our growth and increased our capacity. Any organization at a crossroad or needing to move to



FRAN JEMMOTT AND BERNIE ROLLINS

the next level would be wise to call JRG," says Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, Community Coalition's Executive Vice President.

As CoCo celebrates its 30th Anniversary, it is the support of philanthropists like Fran Jemmott and Bernie Rollins that will allow our organization to continue to establish and implement practices, structures, programming and trainings to promote staff alignment and morale while elevating organizational priorities, and leadership of residents. These efforts also include positioning to scale up our leadership pipeline, strengthening our internal leadership councils, building management infrastructure, recruiting new personnel, and deepening relationships with national organizations.

It is partnerships like ours with JRG that facilitate CoCo's ability to develop and implement member-focused training curriculum that strengthens grassroots leadership programming in order to hone the political lenses of our members.



A Catalyst for Change

#StepUpForSouthCentral

#StepUpAgainstRacism #StepUpForChange

As CoCo celebrates 30 years, we honor and remember beloved Board Member, Gary Stewart. He was a passionate activist, donor, and fundraiser on social justice issues and progressive initiatives including living wages, progressive taxation, marriage equality, affirmative action and immigrant rights. Across his work in the movement, he was known to say, "What can I do?" and "Tell me how I can help."

He served as the Senior Vice President of Artists and Repertoire for Rhino Entertainment and worked at Apple's iTunes Music Store as head of Catalog Curation for Apple Music. He had more than 35-years of experience in the entertainment industry working at Rhino Entertainment where he transformed the organizational culture from volunteerism and non-traditional corporate giving to community organizing. He also worked at Apple's iTunes Music Store for seven years.

An active board member with the Liberty Hill Foundation since 1992, he served as Chair of the Liberty Hill Foundation board from 1999 - 2003. Gary also served on the board of the Social Venture Network, a nonprofit membership organization composed of socially responsible business leaders from 1997-2000. Additionally, he served on the Advisory Board of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE). He joined Community Coalition's Board of Directors in October of 2015.

"He had done a lot around social justice, economic justice and he wanted to figure out a way to tackle racism and race in the country, but most importantly in the city of Los Angeles," states CoCo President Alberto Retana.

After joining the CoCo Board, Gary immediately brought his network of relationships and friendships to our organization in his effort to raise awareness about South LA and structural racism in our city. As a CoCo board member, he chaired the Fundraising Committee where he elevated the importance of fundraising as a key social justice strategy. His vision challenged the staff to think big and raise fundraising standards—leading to the development of new fundraising strategies and unprecedented fundraising success from the Board under his leadership.

His lasting message to Community Coalition's staff was to "be more radical and express your power outward." After his untimely passing in September of 2019, Gary bequeathed a generous sum from his estate to Community Coalition. Through his generosity, CoCo will lead proactive and bold efforts to drive our momentum in 2020. In this historic year, marked by CoCo's 30th Anniversary and critical civic engagement opportunities, we will focus on leading and



GARY STEWART

winning policy campaigns, executing aggressive communications strategies, building grassroots leadership, coordinating cultural and political mobilizations that engage thousands, and launching membership strategies to increase engagement with community members.

Community Coalition will continue to advance Justice Reinvestment, Office of Racial Equity, and Schools and Communities First campaigns that will deliver equity, erode structural racism and secure resources for an improved quality of life for South LA residents. Additionally, Gary's gifts will help us leverage and strengthen CoCo's leadership in strategic coalitions to ensure the implementation of policies that demand transparency and accountability resulting in equitable reinvestment of public dollars for Black and Brown students and families.

Gary pushed us to use more of our voice to win and challenge power. Utilizing CoCo's 30 year history of people-driven change—and building unity and solidarity to center our work to fight against white supremacy—we will honor him by doing just that.



Change Agents

#StepUpForSouthCentral
#StepUpForCommunity
#StepUpForJustice

Paula & Barry Litt are two rather conventional people who have led very unconventional lives. Born in 1945, they met in high school during times of great social and political upheaval and began to dedicate their lives to racial and economic justice.

Paula and Barry witnessed and participated in the Civil Rights, Anti-Vietnam War and Women's Movements.

In 1970, they co-founded the Bar Sinister Legal Collective with other radical lawyers and paralegals. The Collective worked on such high profile cases as the Pentagon Papers and the Chicago 8 Conspiracy cases. They also defended the Black Panthers, Brown Berets, and insurgent labor groups.

In the early 1980s, Barry founded a private civil rights/public interest law firm, and Paula became the office manager. Barry continues to practice civil rights law and currently is a partner in the firm of Kaye, McLane, Bednarski and Litt. Barry has litigated important cases such as Lawson v. LAPD—a \$3.4 million settlement for LAPD use of dogs to routinely attack and bite suspects; MIWON v. City of Los Angeles—a \$13.8 settlement on behalf of immigration protestors attacked by LAPD on May 1, 2007 and Nozzi v. HACLA – a case brought on behalf of 20,000 Section 8 recipients in which a Court of Appeals ruled that the Housing Authority violated their rights to due process before raising their rental contribution.

In 1992, Paula left the law firm to devote her time as a volunteer at the Liberty Hill Foundation. She used her expertise in office management to help build Liberty Hill's growing infrastructure, organized its donor advised program, and is continually involved in major gifts fundraising and philanthropic programs. Paula also



PAULA AND BARRY LITT

volunteers her time to Community Coalition helping us develop individual fundraising and organizational capacity programs. Paula and Barry began donating money in the 1980's. Their donations focus on community organizing and civil rights in Los Angeles.

Understanding the importance of institution building, the Litts one of the key early gifts that kicked off CoCo's successful \$5 million capital campaign to renovate its headquarters. Sharing its greatest lessons learned regarding developing leaders, winning policies, and building power for Black and Brown people, CoCo hopes to leverage its distinctive model and establish a national Center for Community Organizing. The need for trained, collaborative, and strategic organizers and activists has never been greater. CoCo's philanthropic partners help to ensure we can meet that need.



Freedom Schools Partners

#StepUpForSouthCentral
#StepUpForEducation
#StepUpForLiteracy

Freedom Schools is a nationally renowned summer education enrichment program founded by civil rights leader and Children's Defense Fund (CDF) founder Dr. Marian Wright Edelman. The purpose of the program is to nurture students' love of reading and improve their proficiency in it. Additionally, Freedom Schools connects kids to their culture, encourages them to participate in community service and inspires social action.

In 2011, Community Coalition (CoCo) began partnering with CDF after Los Angeles Unified School District eliminated 90% of summer school programs due to budget cuts. Since then, CDF Freedom Schools program has served more than 300 South L.A. elementary, middle and high school students. CoCo has garnered vital financial support for this program from married Hollywood philanthropists Katie McGrath and J.J. Abrams.

"Marian Wright Edelman was a true visionary when she created this program," said McGrath, who was a CDF board member. "J.J. and I are proud to see the power of Freedom Schools grow every year. And we are particularly honored to lock arms with Community Coalition to provide an enriching, culturally relevant and fun-filled summer for youth in South L.A."

During each day of the seven-week program, a special "Read Aloud" guest reads a selection from a book of their choosing. Past guests have included NBA champion Kobe Bryant, award-winning director Ava DuVernay, and Grammy-award winning musician Pharrell. Abrams was back again as one of those guests last year, choosing to read Malala's "The Magic Pencil."



J.J. ABRAMS AND KATIE MCGRATH

"It's a book about the power that someone—anyone—has through expression to change the world," Abrams said.

That sentiment directly aligns with CDF's Freedom Schools goal and mission to empower the next generation of Black and Brown scholars to change the world starting with the cultivation of their love of reading. Inspired by the 1964 Freedom Summer during the Civil Rights Movement, Freedom Schools were first developed by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to empower young people in Mississippi to discover their voices and learn ways to take social action.

The program continues to be extremely important today—helping to prevent the "summer slide," which happens when students forget what they learned during the school year. It also supplements resources in California, the country's richest state which ranks 44th in per-pupil spending in a public school system comprised mostly of children of color.

