

LUMIEN

The

The Mutual Aid Issue

Issue

ISSUE
141

VOLUME
32

NUMBER
01

FALL
2023



Lumpen
Magazine

Operating a
front for
the left
in the arts
since 1991

960
W. 31st St
Chicago IL
60608

Lumpen.com

Part of the
Buddy
System

Issue
141

Volume
32

Number
01

FALL
2023



FAITH RINGGOLD

NOV 18, 2023–FEB 25, 2024



AMERICAN PEOPLE

MCA MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

Faith Ringgold, *American People Series #16: Women Looking in a Mirror*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 36 x 32 inches (91.4 x 81.3 cm). Baz Family Collection. © 2023 Faith Ringgold / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy ACA Galleries, New York.

Published by

Public Media Institute

Editor

Ed Marszewski

Editorial Support

Mairead Case
Nick Wylie

Advertising and Underwriting

Kimberly Kim
kim@publicmediainstitute.com

Stephanie Manriquez
stephanie@publicmediainstitute.com

Contributions by

Nicole Garneau
Nance Klehm
Alex Priest
Joseph Judd
Catherine Schwalbe
Mike Evans
Ed Marszewski
Matt Meacham
Casey Larkin Mazer Carsel
Jeffrey Dorchen
Gabby Schulz
Grant Reynolds
Leif Goldberg
Amy Lockhart

Public Media Institute

Ahniya Butler
Mairead Case
Jeremiah Chiu
S.Y. Lim
Ed Marszewski
Nick Wylie
John Cronan
Noah Karapanagiotidou
Kimberly Kim
Sara Prado
Seiya Abe-Bell
S J Lee
Janelle Miller
Steph Krim
Lumpen Radio + TV
Stephanie Manriquez
Charly Garcia
Jamie Trecker
Shanna Van Volt
Ariandy Luna

Nyki Duda
Julie Wu
A. Nemic
Cole Eisenberg
Mario Smith
Todd Carter

Creative Direction & Design

Cover:
Hal Sagan

Inside Cover:
Hal Sagan

Online

Publicmediainstitute.com
lumpenmagazine.org
lumpenradio.com
hi-buddy.org
The-buddy-system.com

Generous Support

PMI Patreon Members
+ Individual Donors

The Arts Work Fund

The Andy Warhol
Foundation for the
Visual Arts

The Builders Initiative

The Chicago
Department of Cultural
Affairs

The Dean Allen Olson
Foundation

Good Chaos

The Richard M
Driehaus Foundation

The Reva and David
Logan Foundation

The MacArthur
Foundation

The Field Foundation

The Joyce Foundation

The Gaylord and
Dorothy Donnelly
Foundation

Illinois Arts Council
Agency

Illinois Humanities

The National
Endowment for the
Arts

Table of Contents

06 What's Mutual Aid?
By Sub.media

12 'Solidarity, Not Charity':
A Visual History of Mutual Aid
By Ariel Aberg-Riger

31 13 Point Program
by Living Lords Organization

34 Interview with Andy
Robledo
By Edmar

42 Interview with Chris Walsh
and Andrew Mausert-
Mooney
By Nick Wylie

48 Interview with Maira
Khwaja and Hannah Nyhart
By Erin Drain

54 Cooperative Housing: A
Form of Mutual Aid?
By Casey Larkin Mazer Carsel

58 Lumpen Radio Schedule

08 Kropotkin and His Theory
of Mutual Aid
By Moya K. Mason

30 What We Want
Black Panther Party

32 Interview with Lucy Angel
Camarena & Jorge
Saldarriaga
By Stephanie Manriquez

52 CARE IN CRISIS: On the
pandemic art of Alicia
Grullón
By Daniel Tucker

44 Interview with Eric Von
Haynes
By Emily Green

52 Chicago Land
Mutual Aid Groups

58 Comic Skandal!

the buddy system

Hello! We're an ecosystem of businesses,
non-profits, publications, products
and people working together towards
a community-driven future.

Our Projects



Made in the Community of the Future
Bridgeport, Chicago

60608
IL

WHAT IS MUTUAL AID? [AN ANARCHIST PERSPECTIVE]

Mutual Aid is a guiding factor behind anarchist practice and an essential framework for understanding anarchist views on social organization more broadly. So... what is it, exactly?

Well... in its simplest form, mutual aid is the motivation at play any time two or more people work together to solve a problem for the shared benefit of everyone involved. In other words, it means co-operation for the sake of the common good.

Understood in this way, mutual aid is obviously not a new idea, nor is it exclusive to anarchists. In fact, the very earliest human societies practised mutual aid as a matter of survival, and to this day there are countless examples of its logic found within the plant and animal kingdoms.

To understand anarchists' specific embrace of mutual aid, we need to go back over 100 years, to the writings of the famous Russian anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin, who in addition to sporting one of the most prolific beards of all time, just so happened to also be an accomplished zoologist and evolutionary biologist.

Back in Kropotkin's day, the field of evolutionary biology was heavily dominated by the ideas of Social Darwinists such as Thomas H. Huxley. By ruthlessly applying Charles Darwin's famous dictum "survival of the fittest" to human societies, Huxley and his peers had concluded that existing social hierarchies were the result of natural selection, or competition between free sovereign individuals, and were thus an important and inevitable factor in human evolution.

Not so surprisingly, these ideas were

particularly popular among rich and politically powerful white men, as it offered them a pseudo-scientific justification for their privileged positions in society, in addition to providing a racist rationalization of the European colonization of Asia, Africa and the Americas.

Kropotkin attacked this conventional wisdom, when in 1902 he published a book called *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*, in which he proved that there was something beyond blind, individual competition at work in evolution.

Kropotkin demonstrated that species that were able to work together, or who formed symbiotic arrangements with other species based on mutual benefit, were able to better adapt to their environment, and were granted a competitive edge over those species who didn't, or couldn't.

In today's metropolitan societies, people are socialized to see themselves as independent, self-sufficient individuals, equipped with our own condos, bank accounts, smartphones and facebook profiles. However, this notion of human independence is a myth, promoted by corporations and states seeking to mould us into atomized, and easily controlled consumers, concerned primarily with our own short-term well-being. The truth is that human beings are incredibly interdependent. In fact, that's the key to our success as a species.

Do you ever spend time thinking about where the food you eat, or the clothes you wear come from? What about the labour and materials that went into building your house, or your car? Left to fend for ourselves without the comforts of civilization, few among us would survive a week, let alone be able to produce a fraction of the myriad commodities we consume every day.

From the great pyramids commissioned by the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, to today's globe-spanning production and supply chains, the primary function of the ruling class has always been to organize human activity. And everywhere that they have done so, they have relied on coercion. Under capitalism, this activity is organized through either direct violence, or the internalized threat of starvation created by a system based on private ownership of wealth and property.

Capitalism can inspire people to do many amazing things, as long as there is a profit to be made. But in the absence of a profit motive, there are many important tasks that it will not and cannot ever accomplish, from eradicating global poverty and preventable diseases, to removing toxic plastics from the oceans. In order to carry out these monumental tasks, we require a change in the ethos that connects us to one another, and to the world that sustains us. A shift away from capitalism... towards mutual aid.

Glimpses of the Anarchist ideal of mutual aid can be seen today in communities of open source software developers, and in programmers coming up with new forms of encryption to thwart NSA surveillance. They can be seen in neighbours coming together to organize a daycare collective, and in the aftermath of disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, when in the absence of state institutions, perfect strangers rush to one another's aid. It can be seen in the bravery of the white helmets of Aleppo, who risk their lives to pull children from the collapsed ruins of buildings hit by Assad's barrel bombs.

Imagine a world in which human activity was not organized on the basis of ceaseless competition over artificially scarce resources, but the pursuit of the satisfaction of human needs... and you will understand a vision of the world that anarchists seek to create. ♦

What is Mutual Aid reprinted from Sub.media, The Anarchist Library

Capitalism Is a Pyramid Scheme

The labor of those lower on the pyramid enriches the ones towards the top. To stay stable, the economy has to consume more and more resources, organizing new continents, workforces, and aspects of daily life. The resulting inequalities can only be maintained by ever-escalating force.

We're encouraged to compete against each other to improve our positions on an individual basis. But there's not enough space at the top for all of us, no matter how hard we work. No pyramid scheme can keep expanding forever. Sooner or later it's bound to crash: global warming and recession are just the first warning signs. In the event of going down with the Pharaohs, let's join forces to establish another way of life.



KROPOTKIN AND HIS THEORY OF MUTUAL AID

BY MOYA K. MASON

Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) was a Russian prince, geographer, and self-proclaimed anarchist who gave up wealth and a privileged lifestyle in exchange for one of scientific discovery and political activism. It was his desire to help emancipate his fellow Russians from economic and political exploitation, and did so by writing propagandistic pamphlets, books, and essays. If they could shed off their hopelessness, Kropotkin believed it would bring about a rejuvenation of the human spirit. He wrote that:

Nine-tenths of the whole population of grain-exporting countries like Russia, one-half of it in countries like France which live on home grown food, work upon the land - most of them in the same way as the slaves of antiquity did, only to obtain a meagre crop from a soil, and with a machinery which they cannot improve, because taxation, rent and usury keep them always as near as possible to the margin of starvation (Kropotkin 1912, 412).

Nine-tenths of the whole population of grain-exporting countries like Russia, one-half of it in countries like France which live on home grown food, work upon the land - most of them in the same way as the slaves of antiquity did, only to obtain a meagre crop from a soil, and with a machinery which they cannot improve, because taxation, rent and usury keep them always as near as possible to the margin of starvation (Kropotkin 1912, 412).

Kropotkin's most famous book, *Mutual Aid*, maintains that cooperation within a species has been an historical factor in the development of social institutions, and in fact, that the avoidance of competition greatly increases the chances of survival and raises the quality of life. He contended that mutual aid is a factor that is both biological and voluntary in nature, and is an enabler of progressive evolution. Without it, life as we know it could not exist. This can be also seen

in the animal kingdom. Horses and deer unite to protect each from their foe, wolves and lions gather to hunt, while bees and ants work together in many different ways. Kropotkin said that mutual support is an established fact within the feathered world, with eagles, pelicans, vultures, sparrows, and other fowl, collectively searching for and sharing food. Some species of birds even gather together at the end of the day to sleep.

Kropotkin also believed that we have a predisposition to help one another, and we do so without governmental coercion. A centralized government is not necessarily needed to set an example or to make people do the right thing. People were doing so before the rise of the State. In fact, Kropotkin maintained that it is government that represses our natural tendency for cooperation. He accused historians of giving little attention to the lives of the masses and their inclination to help each other, offering up instead, a distorted view of civilization through a series of "epic poems, the inscriptions on monuments, the treaties of peace - nearly all historical documents bear the same character; they deal with breaches of peace, not with peace itself" (Kropotkin 1989, 117).

Kropotkin strongly objected to the Hobbesian notion that defined humanity as no more than an indifferent alliance of individuals who prefer to battle with one another rather than make peace, only prevented from doing so by some outside authoritarian force. He said:

The leaders of contemporary thought are still inclined to maintain that the masses had little concern in the evolution of the sociable institutions of man, and that all the progress made in this direction was due to the intellectual, political, and military leaders of the inert masses (Kropotkin 1989, preface).




The naturalist, Thomas H. Huxley, championed the philosophy of Hobbes in Kropotkin's day, particularly in his 1888 essay, *Struggle for Existence*, which promoted an ideology that saw struggle, fighting, and competition as the most important tenets in the survival and evolution of human society. Kropotkin asserted that Huxley's interpretation of Darwinian theory was misconstrued and inaccurate, and viewed Huxley's school of Hobbesian arguments as "taking possession of Darwin's terminology rather than his leading ideas" (*Kropotkin 1989, 78*). The publication of Huxley's essay was the impetus for Kropotkin to begin writing *Mutual Aid* as a reply to Huxley, and the subsequent series of articles that eventually made up the book were originally published in the same journal, *Nineteenth Century*.

An interesting point that Kropotkin makes in the book concerns the guilds of the Middle Ages. He discusses temporary guilds of cooperative, just in time groups, formed by the union of like-minded individuals, who shared a common goal and space. These groups could be found aboard ships, at the building sites of large-scale public projects, such as cathedrals, and anywhere where "fishermen, hunters, travelling merchants, builders, or settled craftsmen came together for a common pursuit" (*Kropotkin 1989, 171*). These examples of temporary guilds can be seen as Smart Mobs, where cooperative groups are spontaneously formed in order to fulfill a common goal, the only difference being the loss of distance due to the rise of mobile communications. The formation of temporary guilds on board ships is a good example of dynamic cooperation in a mobile situation. After leaving port, the captain would gather the crew and passengers on deck, telling them they were all in this together, and that the success of the voyage was dependent upon all of them working as one. Everyone on board would then elect a "governor" and "enforcers," who would gather "taxes" from those who broke the rules. At the end of the voyage, the levies would be given to the poor in the port city (*Kropotkin 1989, 170*).

The emergence of these types of collaborative techniques made possible new forms of cooperation, and therefore, expanded the ways in which people could succeed and survive more efficiently and effectively. Self-sacrifice and loyalty to a common cause and concern for the well being of the whole,

were the norm within these on the fly cooperative communities. This could be seen not only in associations, societies, brotherhoods, and guilds, but also in neighborhoods, towns, villages, and cities, with mutual aid being a prerequisite for survival among the working classes throughout the evolution of civilization. Solidarity is central to mutual aid and remains strong, even when government control, power, and bureaucracy seem destined to pit one against the other with the hope that it can suppress initiative. Instead, strangers are seen helping each other. Peasant women of Russia gave bread and apples to German and Austrian prisoners of war during WWI, and tended to the wounded, regardless of their nationality (*Kropotkin 1989, preface*).

In *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, Kropotkin talked about his vision of a technological and scientific utopia, where people would be freed from toil, poverty, and struggle by the development of machinery and tools that would do at least some of the work for them and cut down on the time it takes to do the work. For Kropotkin, tools and techniques were a means to an end. He would probably view the emergence of mobile cooperation as a natural extension of the evolution of mutual aid  at another technology allowing us to come together for common causes in an independent and dynamic fashion to aid each other. Cooperation has always been at the heart of the creation of human society. As technology progresses, so do the ways and means that people have to help others for the well being of the species. Kropotkin would say that nothing has changed. ♦

Bibliography

Kropotkin, Peter. *Fields, Factories and Workshops*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1912.

Kropotkin, Peter. *Mutual Aid*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989.

Reprinted from www.moyak.com

It is not love to my neighbour — whom I often do not know at all — which induces me to seize a pail of water and to rush towards his house when I see it on fire; it is a far wider, even though more vague feeling or instinct of human solidarity and sociability which moves me. So it is also with animals. It is not love, and not even sympathy (understood in its proper sense) which induces a herd of ruminants or of horses to form a ring in order to resist an attack of wolves; not love which induces wolves to form a pack for hunting; not love which induces kittens or lambs to play, or a dozen of species of young birds to spend their days together in the winter; not love which induces life-bearing ants to share their food with those of their comrades which are hungry. The feeling of love, sympathy and like impulses evidently play an immense part in the development of sociable customs and social instincts; but it is not love which induces us to work for others; it is not even sympathy in its wide sense; it is a feeling infinitely wider than love or personal sympathy — an instinct that has been slowly developed among animals and men in the course of an extremely long evolution, and which has taught animals and men alike the force they can borrow from the practice of mutual aid and support, and the joys they can find in social life.

The parental feelings, with the aid of foresight, have developed into a feeling of solidarity with the offspring for life; and when we see how much the sociable animals are helped in their struggle for life by their being sociable, how often they escape dangers, and get food, just because they mutually aid each other — we certainly must recognize that the sociable feeling has been strengthened by natural selection. It is a feeling which is so deeply enrooted in animal life, especially in the life of the mammalia, and it has developed so much under the influence of natural selection, that it has become one of the chief features of animal life, one of the chief factors of further evolution. In the animal world we have seen that the vast majority of species live in societies, and that they find in association the best arms for the struggle for life: understood, of course, in its wide Darwinian sense — not as a struggle for the sheer means of existence, but as a struggle against all natural conditions unfavourable to the species. The animal species, in which individual struggle has been reduced to its narrowest limits, and the practice of mutual aid has attained the greatest development, are invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous, and the most open to further progress. The mutual protection which is obtained in this case, the possibility of attaining old age and of accumulating experience, the higher intellectual development, and the further growth of sociable habits, secure the maintenance of the species, its extension, and its further progressive evolution. The unsociable species, on the contrary, are doomed to decay.

From: "Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution" 

'Solidarity, Not Charity': A Visual History of Mutual Aid

ARIEL ABERG-RIGER



Tens of thousands of mutual aid networks and projects emerged around the world in 2020. They have long been a tool for marginalized groups.

► 2020 was a year of crisis. A year of isolation. A year of protest. And, a year of mutual aid.

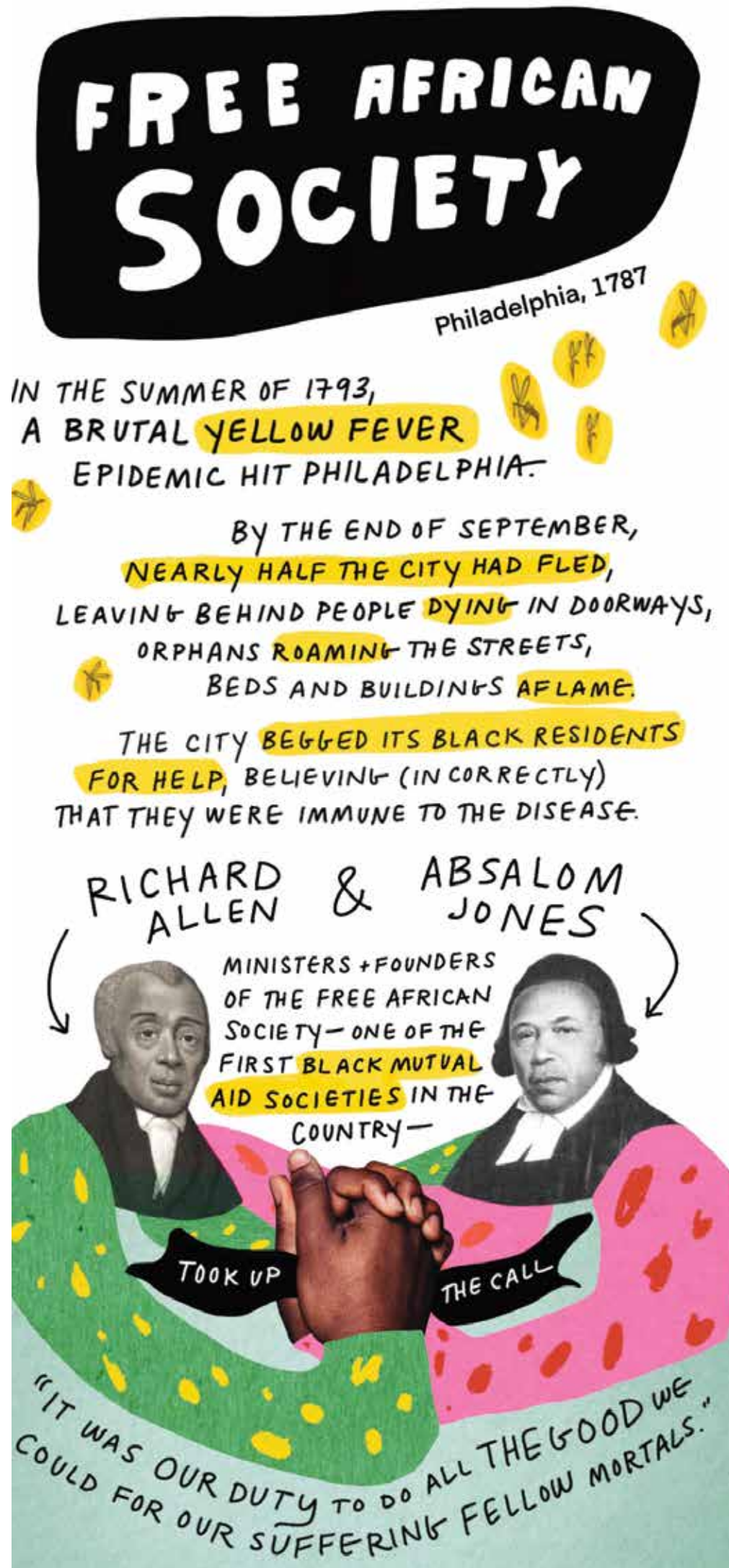
From meal deliveries to sewing squads, childcare collectives to legal aid, neighbors and strangers opened their wallets, offered their skills, volunteered their time, joined together in solidarity to support one another.

Tens of thousands of mutual aid networks and projects have emerged around the world since the Covid-19 pandemic began, according to Mariame Kaba, an educator, abolitionist and organizer. During the first week of the U.S. lockdown in March 2020, Kaba joined with Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to create Mutual Aid 101, an online toolkit that educates and empowers people to build their own mutual aid networks throughout their buildings, blocks, neighborhoods, cities. Emphasizing a focus on "solidarity, not charity," mutual aid is all about cooperation because, as the toolkit puts it, "we recognize that our well-being, health and dignity are all bound up in each other."

"Mutual aid projects are a form of political participation in which people take responsibility for caring for one another and changing political conditions," says Dean Spade, a trans activist, writer, and speaker. "Not through symbolic acts or putting pressure on representatives, but by actually building new social relations that are more survivable."

While many are engaging with mutual aid for the first time this year, there is a rich history and legacy of communities — especially those failed by our systems of power — coming together to help each other survive, and thrive. Here are nine examples from history.

Ariel Aberg-Riger is a visual storyteller who writes about everything from affordable housing to domestic violence for places like The Guardian, Teen Vogue, and CityLab. Her first book America Redux: Visual Stories From Our Dynamic History is out now!



► The Free African Society (FAS), founded in 1787, was a benevolent organization that held religious services and provided mutual aid for "free Africans and their descendants" in Philadelphia. The Society was founded by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones. It was the first Black religious institution in the city and led to the establishment of the first independent Black churches in the United States.

Founding members, all free Black men, included Samuel Baston, Joseph Johnson, Cato Freedman, Caesar Cranchell, James Potter, William White. Notable members included African-American abolitionists such as Cyrus Bustill, James Forten, and William Gray.

- Wikipedia

THE F.A.S. RALLIED ITS MEMBERS TO OFFER RELIEF TO THE SICK, SHELTER ORPHANS, AND TRANSPORT + BURY THE DEAD.

THE EFFORT COST MANY OF THEM THEIR LIVES AND ACTUALLY FURTHER ISOLATED THEM FROM PHILADELPHIA'S WHITE COMMUNITY (RATHER THAN THANK THEM, SOME ACCUSED THEM OF PROFITING OFF THE DISASTER).

BUT,

F.A.S. CARRIED ON, REFUTING THE SLANDER, AND CONTINUING THE MUTUAL AID WORK IT HAD DONE FOR YEARS, FEEDING, HOUSING, PROTECTING & CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER.

BLACK MUTUAL AID SOCIETIES SPREAD RAPIDLY IN THE EARLY 1800S. BY 1830, THERE WERE 100 MUTUAL AID SOCIETIES IN PHILADELPHIA, 30 IN BALTIMORE, AND OTHERS IN CITIES FROM BOSTON TO NEW ORLEANS.

► The Free African Society (FAS) developed as part of the rise in civic organizing following American independence in the 1776 to 1783 Revolutionary War; it was the first mutual aid society in Philadelphia. The city was a growing center of free blacks, attracted to its jobs and other opportunities. By 1790, the city had 2,000 free black residents, a number that continued to increase. In the first two decades after the war, inspired by revolutionary ideals, many slaveholders freed their slaves, especially in the Upper South. Northern states largely abolished slavery. Numerous freedmen migrated to Philadelphia from rural areas of Pennsylvania and the South; it was a growing center of free black society. In addition, their number was increased by free people of color who were refugees from the Haitian Revolution in Saint-Domingue, as well as fugitive slaves escaping from the South. - Wikipedia

MANY, LIKE F.A.S., WERE ABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR COMMUNITY BY CHARGING MEMBER MEMBERSHIP DUES THAT CREATED SOLIDARITY AND A COMMUNAL POT FOR ALL TO DRAW FROM. AS MORE BLACK PEOPLE SELF-EMANCIPATED AND CAME NORTH, MUTUAL AID NETWORKS EXPANDED TO MEET THEIR NEEDS LIKE —

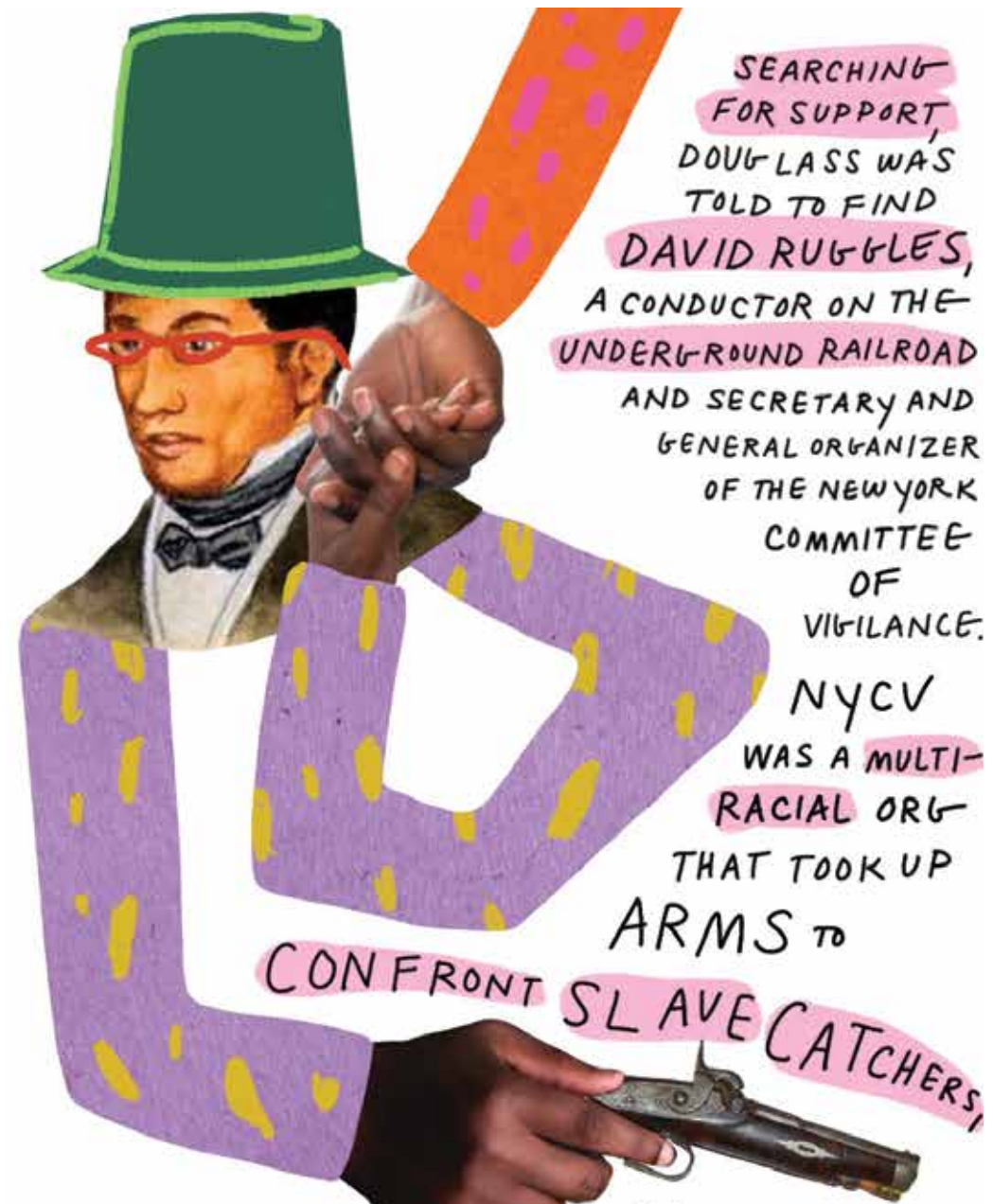
THE NEW YORK COMMITTEE OF VIGILANCE

New York City, 1835

WHEN FREDERICK DOUGLASS ESCAPED FROM ENSLAVEMENT IN 1830, HE FLED TO NYC. SELF-EMANCIPATION WAS DANGEROUS AND TERRIFYING — YOU HAD NO MONEY, NO HOME, AND WHITE KIDNAPPERS + POLICE WERE HUNTING YOU DOWN.

► During the antebellum era, New York City became an even more dangerous place for African Americans. Slave hunters scoured northern cities in search of black men, women and children who could be trapped and sold into slavery.

In New York, the common black citizenry sustained The New York Committee of Vigilance (NYCV). This group of poor laborers could be called upon to support the formal organization, but also acted informally, sometimes mobilizing to rescue blacks from authorities, often to the displeasure of black leadership. While the New York communities offered some sanctuary, a great element of danger existed, as those who made fugitive slave catching and kidnapping their business understood the city to be ripe with possibilities.



SEARCHING FOR SUPPORT, DOUGLASS WAS TOLD TO FIND DAVID RUGGLES, A CONDUCTOR ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD AND SECRETARY AND GENERAL ORGANIZER OF THE NEW YORK COMMITTEE OF VIGILANCE.

NYCV WAS A MULTI-RACIAL ORG THAT TOOK UP ARMS TO

CONFRONT SLAVE CATCHERS,

PASSIONATELY ADVOCATED FOR BLACK PEOPLE IN COURT, AND PROVIDED AN ARRAY OF RELIEF INCLUDING SHELTER, FOOD, COMMUNITY, ADVICE, TRANSPORTATION, AND ACTIVISM EDUCATION. RUGGLES CALLED IT:

"PRACTICAL ABOLITION"

BY THE 1840s, VIGILANCE COMMITTEES SPRUNG UP IN ALBANY, BOSTON, DETROIT,

David Ruggles, Secretary of the New York Committee of Vigilance organization, made it clear to readers of *The Liberator* that the time had come for the African American community to take their problems into their own hands. Ruggles wrote, "We must no longer depend on the interposition of Manumission or Anti-Slavery Societies, in the hope of peaceable and just protection; where such outrages are committed, peace and justice cannot dwell."



PHILADELPHIA, ROCHESTER + CLEVELAND — EACH WORKING ON THE GROUND LOCALLY WHILE COMMUNICATING WITH ONE ANOTHER.

WHILE AFFLUENT WHITE ALLIES PROVIDED RESOURCES, BLACK WOMEN WERE THE MAIN FUNDRAISERS FOR THE COMMITTEES — HOLDING BAKE SALES, SELLING CRAFTS, AND POOLING WHAT MONEY THEY HAD TO FUEL THE WORK.

THROUGHOUT THE 19TH CENTURY, BLACK WOMEN WERE POWERFUL DRIVERS OF MUTUAL AID EFFORTS, ESTABLISHING DAY CARES, ORPHANAGES, ELDERCARE, HOSPITALS, CEMETERIES, NIGHT SCHOOLS, SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS, AND IN THE CASE OF THE COMBAHEE RIVER COLONY, THEIR OWN SELF-SUFFICIENT COOPERATIVES.

The Combahee River Colony was located in a remote area where African Americans established their own settlements and remained relatively self-sufficient and semiautonomous: The Gullah/Geechee communities in South Carolina and Georgia Sea islands. The Combahee River Colony in South Carolina consisted of several hundred African American women during the Civil War who men had gone to join the Union Army. The occupied abandoned farmland where they grew crops and cared for one another.

The refused to work for Whites and were proud of their handicrafts and cotton crop, as well as their independence. The community became relatively well known as an example of Black women's independence and collective spirit.

- *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought*

The Raid on Combahee Ferry (also known as the Combahee River Raid) was a military operation during the American Civil War conducted on June 1 and June 2, 1863, by elements of the Union Army along the Combahee River in Beaufort and Colleton counties in the South Carolina Lowcountry.

Harriet Tubman, who had escaped from slavery in 1849 and guided many others to freedom, led an expedition of 150 African American soldiers of the 2nd South Carolina Infantry. The Union ships rescued and transported more than 750 former slaves freed five months earlier by the Emancipation Proclamation, many of whom joined the Union Army.

One early effort to obtain pensions for ex-slaves was led by white newspaper editor, Walter R. Vaughan of Omaha, Nebraska. He modeled his plan off of pensions provided by the Federal government to former Union soldiers, and he persuaded his congressman, William James Connell (R-NE) to introduce the measure to the House of Representatives in 1890. A native of Selma, Alabama, Vaughan believed that pensions to former slaves would provide increased economic vitality and stability to the New South. In 1891 he published a pamphlet entitled "Freedmen's Pension Bill: A Plea for American Freedmen," and sold copies at a dollar a piece. A black man who worked as a distributor of Vaughan's pamphlet was Isaiah Dickerson of Rutherford County, Tennessee. A few years later, Dickerson and Callie House would launch their own pension and reparations movement by forming an organization led by and composed of African Americans. The 1900 Nashville City Directory lists the address of the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association as being located at 903 Church Street in Nashville.

The first annual convention of the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association was held November 28 through December 1, 1898 in Nashville, Tennessee at Gay Street Christian Church.

- Wikipedia

THEIR ACTIONS WERE
VISIONARY + VARIED,
 CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO VIOLENT,
 OPPRESSIVE POWER STRUCTURES.
 THEY CARED FOR EACH OTHER'S
MATERIAL NEEDS
 WHILE THEY ALSO FOUGHT FOR JUSTICE
 LIKE IN THE CASE OF —

**THE EX-SLAVE
 MUTUAL RELIEF,
 BOUNTY + PENSION
 ASSOCIATION**
 Tennessee, 1896

BY THE MID-19TH
 CENTURY, MANY WHITE
 MUNICIPAL WORKERS BEGAN
 TO RECEIVE
PENSIONS
 FOR THEIR
 LABOR, AND
 BY THE LATE 19TH
 CENTURY THE IDEA
 OF GIVING PENSIONS
 TO UNION VETS TOOK
 HOLD AS WELL.

AS FOR THE
**NEARLY FOUR
 MILLION BLACK
 WORKERS**

EMANCIPATED
 AFTER THE
 CIVIL WAR?
NO SUCH LUCK.
**CALLIE
 HOUSE,**
 ONE OF THOSE WORKERS,
 ORGANIZED AN
 ASSOCIATION
 WHOSE GOAL WAS TO
DEMAND PENSIONS
FOR THE FORMERLY
ENSLAVED, AS WELL
AS COMPENSATION
FOR YEARS OF UNPAID
LABOR. THE GROUP ALSO
PROVIDED RELIEF TO
MEMBERS IN NEED,
 INCLUDING MEDICAL + BURIAL
 SUPPORT. MEMBERS PAID AN INITIAL **25¢**
 PLUS **20¢** A MONTH (\$6-7 TODAY). THE
FEEES CREATED A DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE
WHERE EVERYONE COULD CONTRIBUTE,
& EVERYONE HAD A VOICE.

BY 1890,
 15% OF BLACK
 MEN + 52% OF
 BLACK WOMEN
 IN NYC BELONGED
 TO A MUTUAL AID
 SOCIETY.
 - W.E.B. Du Bois

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY,
 AS MORE AND MORE IMMIGRANTS CAME
 TO THE U.S., THEY ALSO TURNED TO EACH

Callie House (1861-1928) was a leader of the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association, one of the first organizations to campaign for reparations for slavery in the United States.

House was born enslaved in Rutherford County, near Nashville, Tennessee. At the age of 22, she married William House. They had six children, five of which survived. After William died, House supported her family by being a washerwoman. At 36, she began organizing hundreds of thousands of people calling for US reparations, building a powerful movement for which she was unjustly imprisoned in 1916.

- Wikipedia

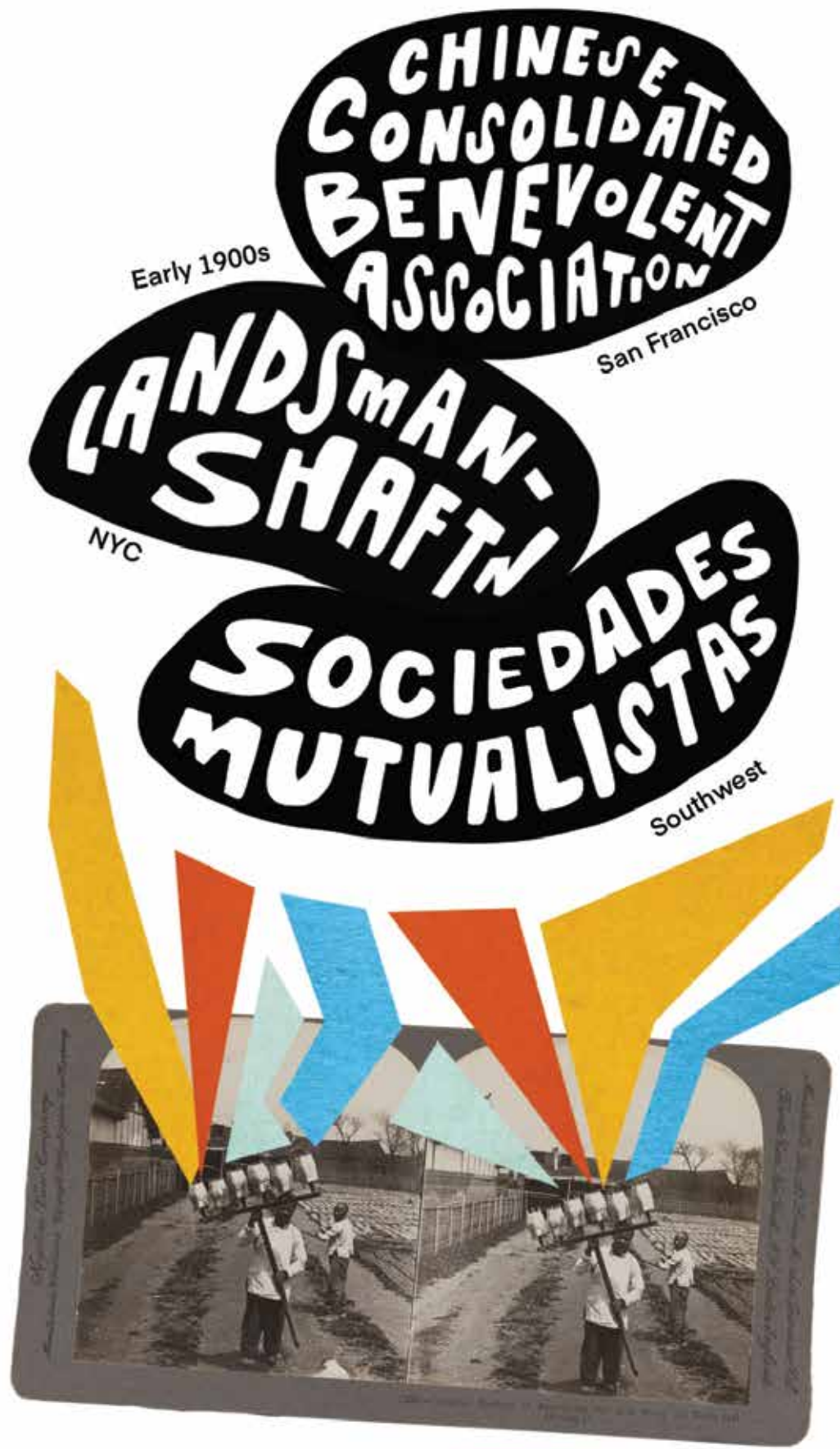
Since its organization in the 1850s and formal establishment in 1882 in San Francisco's Chinatown, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) has received a diverse range of publicity from American media. Much of the attention often overlooked inherent cultural differences, which ultimately led to misunderstanding by much of the American population. This factor, together with increasing anti-Chinese sentiment, hastened the need for an empowered Chinese organization in the US. Thus, the CCBA was formed out of the need for the Chinese to have organized social, political, and economic structures

The CCBA was set up to help Chinese people relocate and travel to and from the US, including returning bodies of the deceased to China. With many families fragmented between China and across the US, the association also allowed for communal care of the sick or poor. When the association became more prominent and anti-Chinese sentiment increased, the organization also offered legal and physical protection. Physical abuse was not uncommon in Chinatown from racist Americans. Such incidents led to the rise of groups like the tongs, which were noted to have protected Chinese from abuse by white miners.

Through the 1800s, a large portion of Chinese immigrants to California came for the promise of work in the gold mines, and their contribution was integral to the economic boom the state experienced as a result of the discovery of gold. When this industry declined, the Chinese found other opportunities, such as fishing, food service, farming, and railroad building. Many in the mid-to-late-19th century argued that the influx of Chinese immigrants decreased job availability for American citizens. However, the job competition theory is disputed due to the strong language barrier that forced many Chinese to create their own jobs.

- Wikipedia

OTHER TO SEEK PROTECTION FROM
RACIST SYSTEMS
 OF POWER THAT DID NOT PROTECT
 THEIR INTERESTS OR THEIR LIVES.



THE PRACTICE OF **STICKING TOGETHER** FOR PROTECTION,

COMMUNITY AND POOLED POWER
 WAS COMMON ACROSS IMMIGRANT GROUPS.

IN SAN FRANCISCO,
 WHERE **ANTI-CHINESE RACISM** WAS
RAMPANT, THE CCBA
MET NEW ARRIVALS
 AT THE DOCK AND
 CONNECTED THEM WITH
SUPPORT NETWORKS
 THAT OFFERED **SHELTER,**
EMPLOYMENT
CONNECTIONS,
PROTECTION,
 AND **LEGAL**
DEFENSE.



ON THE
 EAST COAST,
JEWISH
IMMIGRANTS
 ALSO FORMED
 MUTUAL AID
 SOCIETIES
 BASED ON THEIR
HOMETOWNS
 CALLED
 LANDSMAN-SHAFTN
 WHICH HELPED TO
LOCATE FAMILY
 AND **JOB OPPORTUNITIES,**
PROVIDED MEDICAL CARE AND FORMS OF
LIFE, DISABILITY, AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE,
TAUGHT ENGLISH, AND HELD
SOCIAL EVENTS.



There were different types of landsmanshaftn, including Jewish burial societies known as chevra kadisha, societies associated with a particular synagogue or social movement, and "ladies auxiliary" societies for women.

Members paid dues on a regular basis, and if they lost their jobs, became too sick to work, or died, the society paid the member or their family a benefit to keep them afloat during that time. When the funds were not needed to support members, landsmanshaftn frequently invested the money in funds that supported the Jewish community in other ways, such as Israel Bonds. Most landsmanshaftn were based in New York City, where the majority of Jews settled and conditions were conducive to sustaining these types of organizations, though they sometimes relocated as the membership migrated to the suburbs.

- Wikipedia

► **Sociedades Mutualistas** for Latin Americans flourished in the Southwestern United States at the turn of the 20th century, serving as vehicles for community self-sufficiency and social support. Some societies still survive today, stressing their original values of Unity, Work, Protection, Education, Faith, and Brotherhood. These groups borrowed concepts from medieval guilds, 1900s friendly societies, rural cooperatives, and charitable lay brotherhoods of the Catholic Church.

Like their African American counterparts, duties of these societies historically included caring for the sick, making funeral arrangements, assisting widows and orphaned children, and settling disputes. During the colonial period, they formed local ditch associations to take charge of developing and maintaining irrigation waters essential to agricultural villages. Work tasks were performed collectively by all members (a practice which continued into the modern era).

In the 19th and 20th century, sociedades mutualistas filled a gap left by commercial life insurance companies which were disinterested in selling to minorities due to stereotypes and desire to maximize profits. (Companies refused to sell policies to Mexican Americans, for example, because it was believed that they all had tuberculosis).

The sociedades also played a prominent role in labor and civil rights issues. In its first decade, one of the most successful of these organizations—The Alianza Hispano-Americana—successfully negotiated concessions for higher wages on behalf of 1,200 to 1,500 striking mine workers in Arizona. By the early 1920s, Alianza chapters provided legal assistance through a defense fund to victims of injustice based on their national origin or economic status. Alianza fought to change legal procedures on behalf of the poor, and offered its lawyers whenever possible to any Mexican American without proper representation.

- Go Humanity

IN THE SOUTHWEST, SOCIEDADES MUTUALISTAS OFFERED MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS AND NATIVE TEJANOS EVERYTHING FROM LOANS TO LEGAL AID,

LIBRARIES TO LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES. THEY WERE SAFE SPACES FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS, AND SOME WERE TRADE UNIONS WHICH STAGED STRIKES, FOUGHT FOR INTEGRATED SCHOOLS, AND ADVISED FARM WORKERS OF THEIR RIGHTS.

WHILE MANY ORGANIZED MUTUAL AID GROUPS SHRANK AFTER THE GREAT DEPRESSION, THE 1960S + 70S SAW A RESURGENCE OF CREATIVE, COMMUNAL RESISTANCE AS A RESPONSE TO STRUCTURAL RACISM.

THE BLACK PANTHERS' FREE BREAKFAST FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM

Oakland, 1969

ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN MUTUAL AID EFFORTS IN RECENT HISTORY. THE FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM, WAS ONE OF 60 SOCIAL "SURVIVAL" PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY THE BLACK PANTHERS (OTHERS INCLUDED THE FREE AMBULANCE PROGRAM, FREE MEDICAL CLINICS, AND RIDES FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE DOING ERRANDS).

DRAWING ON RESEARCH THAT SHOWED WHAT AN ESSENTIAL MEAL BREAKFAST IS FOR HEALTH + LEARNING, THE PANTHERS BEGAN COOKING + SERVING FREE BREAKFASTS TO LOCAL KIDS IN OAKLAND.

Photo: It's About Time

► Founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, the **Black Panther Party for Self Defense** was the era's most influential militant black power organization.

Its members confronted politicians, challenged the police, and protected black citizens from brutality. The party's community service programs - called "survival programs" - provided food, clothing, and transportation. Rather than integrating American society, members wanted to change it fundamentally. For them, black power was a global revolution.

_ National Museum of African American History and Culture

► The Panthers started the **Free Breakfast Program** because hunger and poverty made it difficult for many poor black children to learn in school. In 1968, most poor children went to school hungry and stayed hungry. The national School Lunch Program provided reduced-price, but not free lunches for poor children, and the national School Breakfast Program was limited to a few rural schools. To address this need, the Panthers initiated the Free Breakfast Program at St. Augustine's Church in Oakland in January 1969.

The Panthers' **Free Breakfast Program** focused national attention on the urgent need to give poor children nutritious meals so they could be successful in school. In 1973, this attention helped lead to Congress' dramatic increase in funding of the national School Lunch Program so poor children could get free lunches. The Panther's Free Breakfast Program spotlighted the limited scope of the national School Breakfast Program and helped pressure Congress to authorize expansion of the program to all public schools in 1975.

▶ The Black Panther Party first publicized its original "What We Want Now!" Ten-Point program on May 15, 1967, following the Sacramento action, in the second issue of The Black Panther newspaper.

We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.

We want full employment for our people.

We want an end to the robbery by the Capitalists of our Black Community.

We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.

We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in present-day society.

We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.

We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of Black people.

We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.

We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black Communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.

We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace.

THEY SOLICITED DONATIONS (OF BOTH FOOD + MONEY) FROM NEIGHBORS + LOCAL BUSINESSES, AND QUICKLY EXPANDED TO 45 CITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY FEEDING 50,000 KIDS.

TEACHERS IMMEDIATELY SAW RESULTS, SAYING CHILDREN WERE HAPPIER, MORE ALERT, AND LEARNING MUCH BETTER THAN THEY HAD BEEN BEFORE. THE F.B.I. SAW A "THREAT" AND SHUT DOWN THE PROGRAM BY RAIDING CAFETERIAS WHILE KIDS ATE, AND IN ONE CASE URINATING ON FOOD TO DESTROY IT. SHORTLY AFTER THE PROGRAM ENDED, THE USDA STARTED A FEDERAL FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM.

THE YOUNG LORDS GARBAGE OFFENSIVE
New York City, 1969

IN EAST HARLEM, A GROUP OF YOUNG PUERTO RICANS CALLED THE YOUNG LORDS (AGED 15-22) WERE SICK OF THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD OVERFLOWING WITH TRASH BECAUSE THE SANITATION DEPARTMENT NEGLECTED THEM.

"MOTIVATED BY LOVE FOR OUR PEOPLE AND OUTRAGE AGAINST AN UNJUST SYSTEM, WE BELIEVED THAT THE COMMUNITY'S SURVIVAL AND WELL-BEING DEPENDED ON COLLECTIVE ACTION."

SO, THEY STARTED GETTING TOGETHER EVERY SUNDAY TO CLEAN IT UP.

A FEW SUNDAYS IN, NEIGHBORS CAME OUT TO HELP.

▶ The Young Lords started in 1960 in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood as a Puerto Rican turf gang. On Grito de Lares, September 23, 1968, Jose Cha Cha Jimenez reorganized them and formed the Young Lords as a national political and civil rights movement. The new community-wide movement then spread to nearly 30 cities, including three branches in New York, which at the time served as the entry point for 90% of Puerto Ricans. In addition, the Young Lords began operating free programs for the community. In addition to their support for Puerto Rico's independence, all Latino nations, and oppressed nations of the world, the Young Lords also supported neighborhood empowerment. The radical movement of the Young Lords modeled themselves after the Black Panther Party, calling for a vanguard of revolutionary minority parties coming together that felt oppressed by a system that wasn't designed to be of assistance to minorities.

The 1968 Democratic Convention protests in Grant Park and the adjacent Lincoln Park Neighborhood, resulted in the Young Lords, under the leadership of founder José Cha Cha Jiménez, to join with others to form a broader civil and human rights movement. [11] Puerto Rican self-determination and the displacement of Puerto Ricans and poor residents became the primary issues of organizing. The Young Lords organization also began to train students and youth to take on the leadership to organize the Latino community on a national level.

On July 27, 1969, the chapter office in New York City mounted a "Garbage Offensive" to commemorate the 1968 Sanitation Strike and to protest the substandard garbage collection service in East Harlem. The event also promoted the opening of the Young Lords' New York City office. The offensives targeted local city services and were aligned with the National Headquarters mission to develop neighborhood empowerment. In Chicago, the Young Lords occupied local institutions in the Lincoln Park neighborhood to support low-income housing for working families.

▶ The National Headquarters Young Lords' mission called for self determination for Puerto Rico, all Latino nations, all oppressed nations of the world, and for barrio empowerment. The Young Lords also created a 10-point program modeled after the Black Panthers 10 point program. The New York office created a 13-point program after they split from Chicago National Headquarters as follows:

We want self-determination for Puerto Ricans—Liberation on the island and inside the United States.

We want self-determination for all Latinos.

We want liberation for all third world people.

We are revolutionary nationalists and oppose racism.

We want community control of our institutions and land.

We want true education of our creole culture. We oppose capitalists and alliances with traitors.

We oppose the amerikkkan military.

We want freedom for all political prisoners.

We want equality for women. Machismo must be revolutionary ... not oppressive.

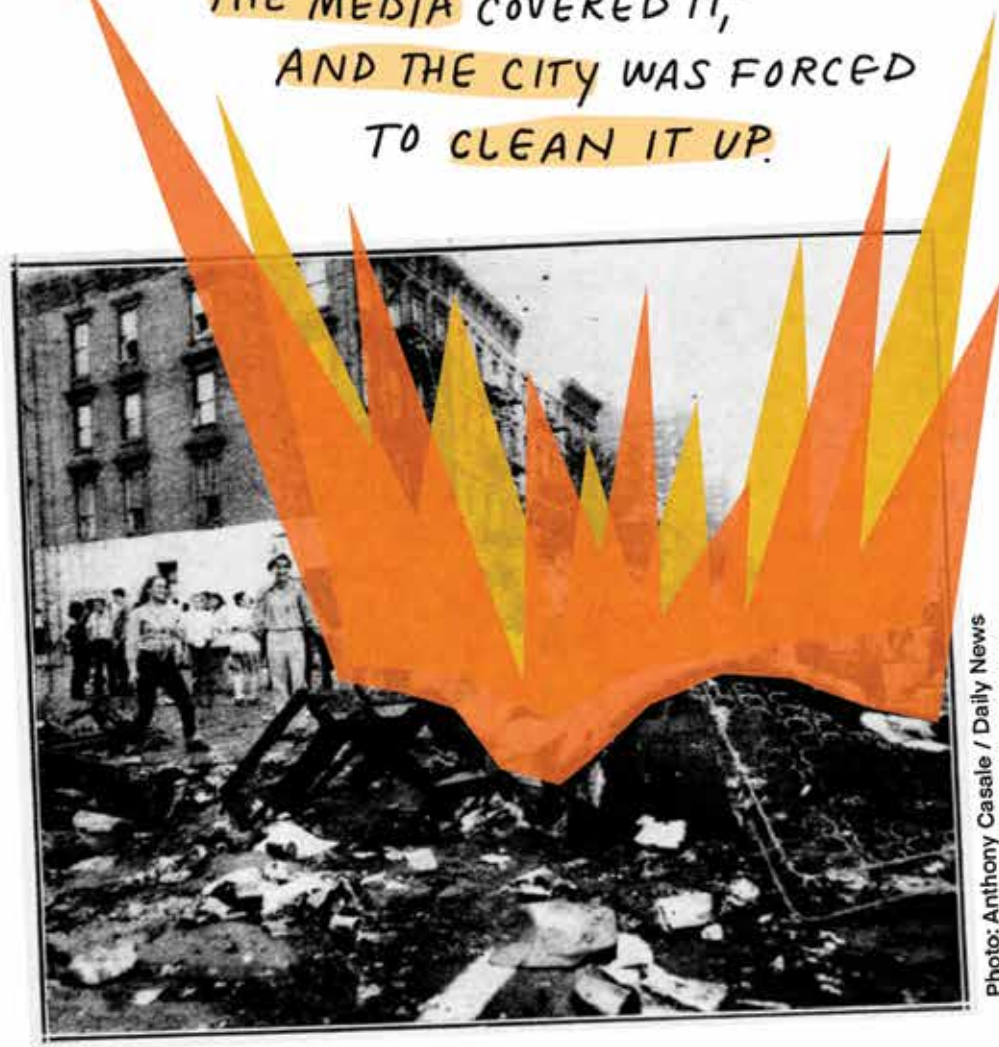
We fight anti-Communism with international unity.

We believe armed self-defense and armed struggle are the only means to liberation.

We want a socialist society.

WHEN THEY DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH BROOMS,
THE YOUNG LORDS ASKED THE CITY TO
PROVIDE THEM. WHEN THEY WOULDN'T, THEY
SWEPT ALL OF THE GARBAGE INTO THE
MIDDLE OF THIRD AVENUE AND
SET IT ON FIRE.

TRAFFIC WAS BLOCKED,
THE MEDIA COVERED IT,
AND THE CITY WAS FORCED
TO CLEAN IT UP.



OTHER YOUNG LORDS' MUTUAL AID
INITIATIVES INCLUDED OCCUPYING
SEVERAL CHURCHES TO RUN FREE
BREAKFAST + DAYCARE PROGRAMS, AND
COMMANDERING A CITY-OWNED TB-
TESTING X-RAY TRUCK THAT HAD
BYPASSED THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN ORDER TO
PROVIDE FREE HEALTHCARE SCREENINGS
FOR THE COMMUNITY.

FIFTEEN YEARS LATER,
AS THE AIDS EPIDEMIC SWEEPED
THE COUNTRY + THE GAY COMMUNITY
WAS LEFT SICK, ABANDONED BY
THE GOVERNMENT, AND REVILED BY
MAINSTREAM AMERICA, MUTUAL
AID NETWORKS AGAIN AROSE
TO PROVIDE CARE.

Seattle, 1980s/90s
THE CHICKEN
SOUP
BRIGADE

AS MORE AND MORE GAY MEN BEGAN
DYING OF AIDS, TIM BURAK, A VOLUNTEER
AT SEATTLE GAY CLINIC PROPOSED A
"BUDDY NETWORK" WHERE
VOLUNTEERS COULD

HELP SICK
MEN WITH
CHORES, DOCTOR'S
VISITS, GROCERY
DELIVERY AND
JUST GENERALLY
KEEP HOMEBOUND
PEOPLE
COMPANY.

▶ Chicken Soup Brigade was born out of the Seattle Gay Clinic in 1983 as a way to help people living with any disabling illness to get to doctor's appointments, to provide companionship, and to deliver groceries to them. By 1984, the focus shifted to serving people with AIDS.

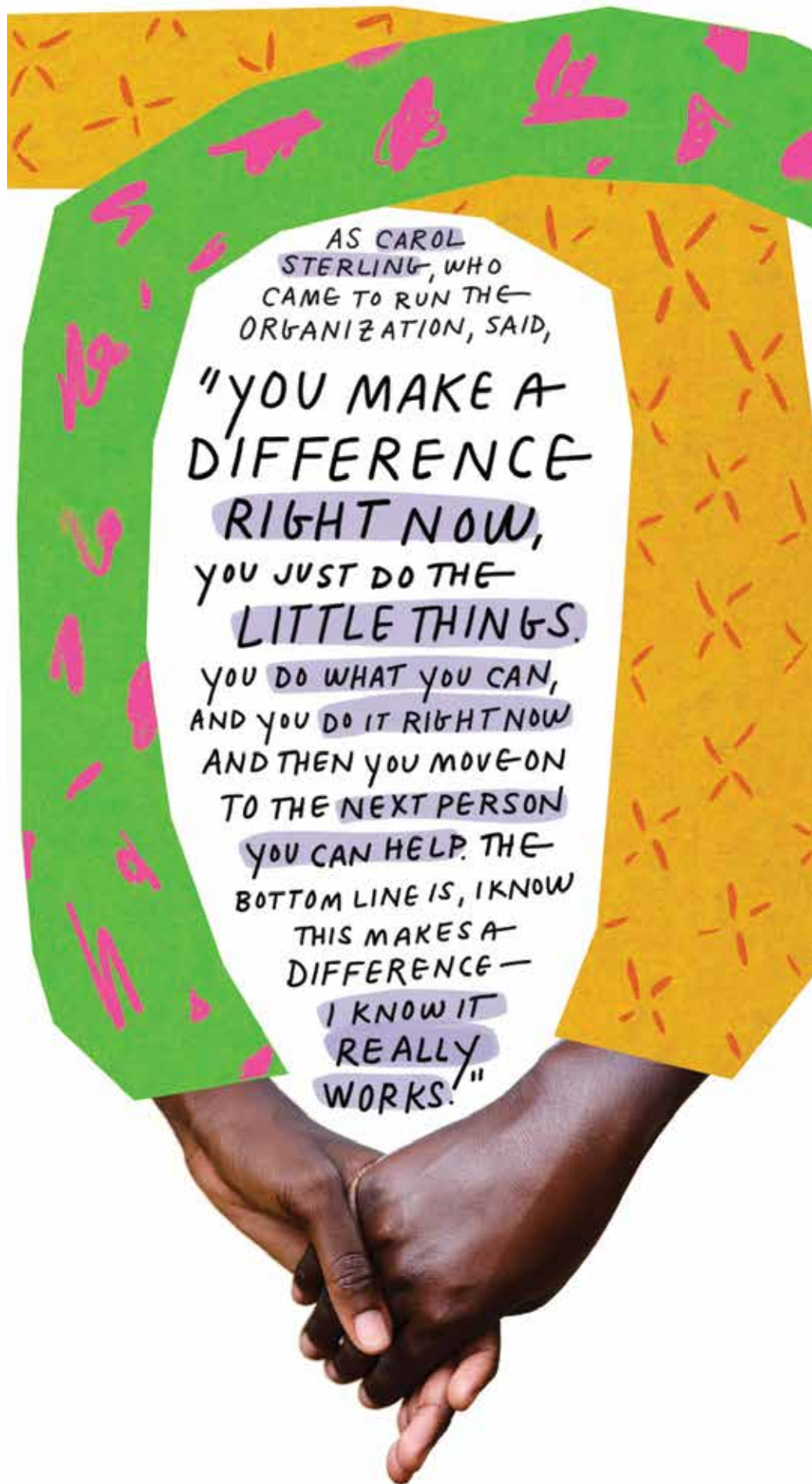
As the volunteer effort grew, the focus shifted to food. In 1987, CSB hired its first paid staff member, Carol Sterling, who has been credited with creating a period of immense growth. She hired new staff and grew the budget and volunteer base. Sterling reached the position of executive director in 1990 but stepped down to focus on fund development. A co-executive director model was then adopted.

By 1991, CSB had approximately 400 volunteers — most providing four hours a week. CSB then opened a thrift store at 207 Harvard Ave. In 1994, it hired a dietician. In 1996, it expanded its services to include anyone who was HIV-positive. Its client base expanded from 187 (or 350, depending on which historical document you read) in 1990 to over 900 by 1997.

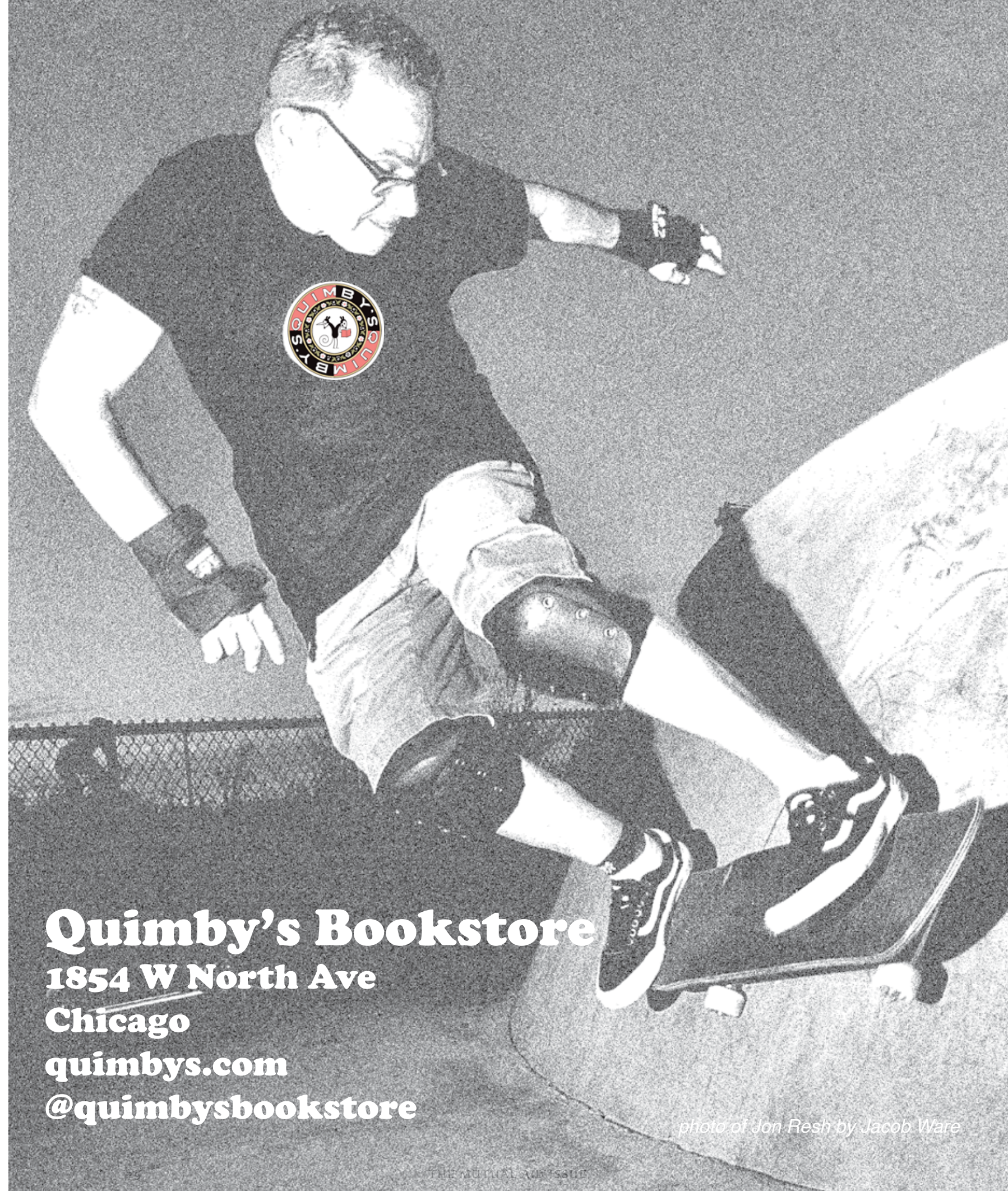
In June 2000, Chicken Soup Brigade and the Northwest AIDS Foundation announced their intention to merge to form the Lifelong AIDS Alliance in 2001. Today, the organization is named, simply, Lifelong, to better fit its changing client base and shifting mission. -SGN

► Dean Spade's seminal work, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (And the Next)*, defines mutual aid as "survival work," done by ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances where government policies inadequately address crisis situations and even exacerbate structural inequities. When community care work is done in conjunction with ongoing social justice movements, this in Spade's mind is mutual aid.¹ Ride shares, free food and other survival items, community fundraising, prison letter-writing campaigns, and more can all fall under the umbrella of mutual aid. But more than this, mutual aid is about mobilizing communities to address a shared injustice and working together to collectively find solutions that don't rely on any one person, corporation, or government entity.

THE NETWORK EVOLVED INTO THE
CHICKEN SOUP BRIGADE,
 AN ALL-VOLUNTEER CREW
 SUPPORTING OVER 450 MEN.



You too would also successfully land a wallride if you were in a Quimby's t-shirt.



Quimby's Bookstore
 1854 W North Ave
 Chicago
 quimbys.com
 @quimbysbookstore

photo of Jon Resh by Jacob Ware



OCTOBER 1966 BLACK PANTHER PARTY PLATFORM AND PROGRAM



WHAT WE WANT

1. WE WANT FREEDOM. WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK COMMUNITY.
2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE.
3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE WHITE MAN OF OUR BLACK COMMUNITY.
4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS.
5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT DAY SOCIETY.
6. WE WANT ALL BLACK MENTTO BE EXEMPT FROM MILITARY SERVICE.
7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE.
8. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK MEN HELD IN FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY AND CITY PRISONS AND JAILS.
9. WE WANT ALL BLACK PEOPLE WHEN BROUGHT TO TRIAL TO BE TRIED IN COURT BY A JURY OF THEIR PEER GROUP OR PEOPLE FROM THEIR BLACK COMMUNITIES, AS DEFINED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.
10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE AND PEACE, AND AS OUR MAJOR POLITICAL OBJECTIVE, A UNITED NATIONS-SUPERVISED PLEBISCITE TO BE HELD THROUGHOUT THE BLACK COLONY IN WHICH ONLY BLACK COLONIAL SUBJECTS WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE WILL OF BLACK PEOPLE AS TO THEIR NATIONAL DESTINY.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

WE BELIEVE THAT BLACK PEOPLE WILL NOT BE FREE UNTIL WE ARE ABLE TO DETERMINE OUR DESTINY.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE AND OBLIGATED TO GIVE EVERY MAN EMPLOYMENT OR A GUARANTEED INCOME. WE BELIEVE THAT IF THE WHITE AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN WILL NOT GIVE FULL EMPLOYMENT, THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION SHOULD BE TAKEN FROM THE BUSINESSMEN AND PLACED IN THE COMMUNITY SO THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE COMMUNITY CAN ORGANIZE AND EMPLOY ALL OF ITS PEOPLE AND GIVE A HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING.

WE BELIEVE THAT THIS RACIST GOVERNMENT HAS ROBBED US AND NOW WE ARE DEMANDING THE OVERDUE DEBT OF FORTY ACRES AND TWO MULES. FORTY ACRES AND TWO MULES WAS PROMISED 100 YEARS AGO AS RESTITUTION FOR SLAVE LABOR AND MASS MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE. WE WILL ACCEPT THE PAYMENT IN CURRENCY WHICH WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO OUR MANY COMMUNITIES. THE GERMANS ARE NOW AIDING THE JEWS IN ISRAEL FOR THE GENOCIDE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. THE GERMANS MURDERED 6,000,000 JEWS. THE AMERICAN RACIST HAS TAKEN PART IN THE SLAUGHTER OF OVER 50,000,000 BLACK PEOPLE; THEREFORE, WE FEEL THAT THIS IS A MODEST DEMAND THAT WE MAKE.

WE BELIEVE THAT IF THE WHITE LANDLORDS WILL NOT GIVE DECENT HOUSING TO OUR BLACK COMMUNITY, THE HOUSING AND THE LAND SHOULD BE MADE INTO COOPERATIVES SO THAT OUR COMMUNITY, WITH GOVERNMENT AID, CAN BUILD AND MAKE DECENT HOUSING FOR ITS PEOPLE.

WE BELIEVE IN AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT WILL GIVE TO OUR PEOPLE A KNOWLEDGE OF SELF. IF A MAN DOES NOT HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF HIMSELF AND HIS POSITION IN SOCIETY AND THE WORLD, THEN HE HAS LITTLE CHANCE TO RELATE TO ANYTHING ELSE.

WE BELIEVE THAT BLACK PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE FORCED TO FIGHT IN THE MILITARY SERVICE TO DEFEND A RACIST GOVERNMENT THAT DOES NOT PROTECT US. WE WILL NOT FIGHT AND KILL OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE WORLD WHO, LIKE BLACK PEOPLE, ARE BEING VICTIMIZED BY THE WHITE RACIST GOVERNMENT OF AMERICA. WE WILL PROTECT OURSELVES FROM THE FORCE AND VIOLENCE OF THE RACIST POLICE AND THE RACIST MILITARY, BY WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY.

WE BELIEVE WE CAN END POLICE BRUTALITY IN OUR BLACK COMMUNITY BY ORGANIZING BLACK SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS THAT ARE DEDICATED TO DEFENDING OUR BLACK COMMUNITY FROM RACIST POLICE OPPRESSION AND BRUTALITY. THE SECOND AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES GIVES US A RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT ALL BLACK PEOPLE SHOULD ARM THEMSELVES FOR SELF DEFENSE.

WE BELIEVE THAT ALL BLACK PEOPLE SHOULD BE RELEASED FROM THE MANY JAILS AND PRISONS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT RECEIVED A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL TRIAL.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE COURTS SHOULD FOLLOW THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION SO THAT BLACK PEOPLE WILL RECEIVE FAIR TRIALS. THE 14TH AMENDMENT OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION GIVES A MAN A RIGHT TO BE TRIED BY HIS PEER GROUP. A PEER IS A PERSON FROM A SIMILAR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS, GEOGRAPHICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, HISTORICAL AND RACIAL BACKGROUND. TO DO THIS THE COURT WILL BE FORCED TO SELECT A JURY FROM THE BLACK COMMUNITY FROM WHICH THE BLACK DEFENDANT CAME. WE HAVE BEEN, AND ARE BEING TRIED BY ALL-WHITE JURIES THAT HAVE NO UNDERSTANDING OF THE "AVERAGE REASONING MAN" OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS, IT BECOMES NECESSARY FOR ONE PEOPLE TO DISSOLVE THE POLITICAL BONDS WHICH HAVE CONNECTED THEM WITH ANOTHER, AND TO ASSUME AMONG THE POWERS OF THE EARTH, THE SEPARATE AND EQUAL STATION TO WHICH THE LAWS OF NATURE AND NATURE'S GOD ENTITLE THEM, A DECENT RESPECT TO THE OPINIONS OF MANKIND REQUIRES THAT THEY SHOULD DECLARE THE CAUSES WHICH IMPEL THEM TO SEPARATION. WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, THAT TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS, GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED, THAT WHENEVER ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT BECOMES DESTRUCTIVE OF THESE ENDS, IT IS THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE TO ALTER OR TO ABOLISH IT, AND TO INSTITUTE NEW GOVERNMENT, LAYING ITS FOUNDATION ON SUCH PRINCIPLES AND ORGANIZING ITS POWERS IN SUCH FORM AS TO THEM SHALL SEEM MOST LIKELY TO EFFECT THEIR SAFETY AND HAPPINESS.

PRUDENCE, INDEED, WILL DICTATE THAT GOVERNMENTS LONG ESTABLISHED SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED FOR LIGHT AND TRANSIENT CAUSES; AND ACCORDINGLY ALL EXPERIENCE HATH SHEWN, THAT MANKIND ARE MORE DISPOSED TO SUFFER, WHILE EVILS ARE SUFFERABLE, THAN TO RIGHT THEMSELVES BY ABOLISHING THE FORMS TO WHICH THEY ARE ACCUSTOMED. BUT WHEN A LONG TRAIN OF ABUSES AND USURPATION, PURSUING INVARIABLY THE SAME OBJECT, EVINCES A DESIGN TO REDUCE THEM UNDER ABSOLUTE DESPOTISM, IT IS THEIR RIGHT, IT IS THEIR DUTY, TO THROW OFF SUCH A GOVERNMENT, AND TO PROVIDE NEW GUARDS FOR THEIR FUTURE SECURITY.



The Black Panther May 4, 1968



Palante May 22, 1970.

13 POINT PROGRAM AND PLATFORM YOUNG LORDS ORGANIZATION OCTOBER 1969

THE YOUNG LORDS ORGANIZATION IS A REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL PARTY FIGHTING FOR THE LIBERATION OF ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE

1. WE WANT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICANS-- LIBERATION ON THE ISLAND AND INSIDE THE UNITED STATES

For 500 years, first Spain and then the United States have colonized our country. Billions of dollars in profits leave our country for the United States every year. In every way we are slaves of the gringo. We want liberation and the power in the hands of the people, not Puerto Rican exploiters. **QUE VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!**

2. WE WANT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL LATINOS

Our Latin Brothers and Sisters, inside and outside the United States, are oppressed by American business. The Chicano people built the Southwest, and we support their right to control their lives and their land. The people of Santo Domingo continue to fight against gringo domination and its puppet generals. The armed liberation struggles in Latin America are part of the same war of Latinos against imperialism. **QUE VIVA LA RAZA!**

3. WE WANT LIBERATION OF ALL THIRD WORLD PEOPLE

Just as Latinos first slaved under Spain and then the yanquis, Black people, Indians, and Asians slaved to build the wealth of this country. For 400 years they have fought for freedom and dignity against racist Babylon (decadent empire). Third World people have led the fight for freedom. All the colored and oppressed peoples of the world are one nation under oppression. **NO PUERTO RICAN IS FREE UNTIL ALL PEOPLE ARE FREE!**

4. WE ARE REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISTS AND OPPOSE RACISM

The Latin, Black, Indian and Asian people inside the U.S. are colonies fighting for liberation. We know that Washington, Wall Street, and City Hall will try to make our nationalism into racism; but Puerto Ricans are of all colors and we resist racism. Millions of poor white people are rising up to demand freedom and we support them. These are the ones in the U.S. that are stepped out by the rulers and the government. We each organize our people, but our fights are the same against oppression and we will defeat it together. **POWER TO ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE!**

5. WE WANT COMMUNITY CONTROL OF OUR INSTITUTIONS AND LAND

We want control of our communities by our people and programs to guarantee that all institutions serve the needs of our people. People's control of police, health services, churches, schools, housing, transportation and welfare are needed. We want an end to attacks on our land by urban removal, highway destruction, universities and corporations. **LAND BELONGS TO ALL THE PEOPLE!**

6. WE WANT A TRUE EDUCATION OF OUR CREOLE CULTURE AND SPANISH LANGUAGE

We must learn our history of fighting against cultural, as well as economic genocide by the yanqui. Revolutionary culture, culture of our people, is the only true teaching. **LONG LIVE BORICUA! LONG LIVE EL JIBARO!**



7. WE OPPOSE CAPITALISTS AND ALLIANCES WITH TRAITORS

Puerto Rican rulers, or puppets of the oppressor, do not help our people. They are paid by the system to lead our people down blind alleys, just like the thousands of poverty pimps who keep our communities peaceful for business, or the street workers who keep gangs divided and blowing each other away. We want a society where the people socialistically control their labor. **VENCEREMOS!**

8. WE OPPOSE THE AMERIKKAN MILITARY

We demand immediate withdrawal of U.S. military forces and bases from Puerto Rico, Vietnam, and all oppressed communities inside and outside the U.S. No Puerto Rican should serve in the U.S. army against his Brothers and Sisters, for the only true army of oppressed people is the people's army to fight all rulers. **U.S. OUT OF VIETNAM, FREE PUERTO RICO!**

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

We want all Puerto Ricans freed because they have been tried by the racist courts of the colonizers, and not by their own people and peers. We want all freedom fighters released from jail. **FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!**

10. WE WANT EQUALITY FOR WOMEN. MACHISMO MUST BE REVOLUTIONARY...NOT OPPRESSIVE

Under capitalism, our people have been oppressed by both the society and our own men. The doctrine of machismo has been used by our men to take out their frustrations against their wives, sisters, mothers, and children. Our men must support their women in their fight for economic and social equality, and must recognize that our women are equals in every way within the revolutionary ranks. **FORWARD, SISTERS, IN THE STRUGGLE!**

11. WE FIGHT ANTI-COMMUNISM WITH INTERNATIONAL UNITY

Anyone who resists injustice is called a communist by "the man" and condemned. Our people are brainwashed by television, radio, newspapers, schools, and books to oppose people in other countries fighting for their freedom. No longer will our people believe attacks and slanders, because they have learned who the real enemy is and who their real friends are. We will defend our Brothers and Sisters around the world who fight for justice against the rich rulers of this country. **VIVA CHE!**

12. WE BELIEVE ARMED SELF-DEFENSE AND ARMED STRUGGLE ARE THE ONLY MEANS TO LIBERATION

We are opposed to violence--the violence of hungry children, illiterate adults, diseased old people, and the violence of poverty and profit. We have asked, petitioned, gone to courts, demonstrated peacefully, and voted for politicians full of empty promises. But we still ain't free. The time has come to defend the lives of our people against repression and for revolutionary war against the businessman, politician, and police. When a government oppresses our people, we have the right to abolish it and create a new one. **BORICUA IS AWAKE! ALL PIGS BEWARE!**

13. WE WANT A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

We want liberation, clothing, free food, education, health care, transportation, utilities, and employment for all. We want a society where the needs of our people come first, and where we give solidarity and aid to the peoples of the world, not oppression and racism. **HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE!**

Grocery Run Club

Interview with Lucy Angel Camarena & Jorge Saldarriaga

BY STEPHANIE MANRIQUEZ

Lumpen Magazine interviewed Lucy Angel Camarena & Jorge Saldarriaga about the impact of Grocery Run Club within the Little Village community, how a service program to run groceries for people that started during the pandemic has flourished to an educative and wellness initiative. Affirming healthy ways of living through their community garden, run club, workout classes and more.

► Could you describe what Grocery Run Club is and how it was founded?

Grocery Run Club is a 501(c)3 non-profit that focuses on providing fresh food and everyday necessities to underserved communities throughout Chicago. My co-founder Jorge Saldarriaga and I started Grocery Run Club in June of 2020 as our way of helping to bring needed supplies to communities that were in need during the pandemic, however, we know this issue of equity is something that has existed long before the pandemic and continues to post pandemic.

How many people have benefited from this program?

At this point coming to our third year in operation we've been able to service tens of thousands Chicago residents.

This program was a direct response to the pandemic, how has it changed since then or adapted to today's times?

When we first started GRC we were operating as a mutual aid and within the first year we saw the need for us to become a non-profit to better be able to fund our operation. At the start, our main priority was getting people supplies as fast as we could. We would literally do grocery runs for people and communities to get them food, cleaning supplies, health essentials, etc. Although that's still a big core of what we do under our pillar of "Immediate Impact", we added additional pillars (Education and Community Development) to our work that focus on longer lasting solutions to these equity problems.



LUMPEN, ISSUE #141, VOL. 32

Why is it important or necessary that this work is done via strategies of mutual aid? Would you rather the government or a charity filled this need? How would it be different if they did?

Our strategy today is still that of when we started, our funding has just changed. As a non-profit we are able to receive larger grant support from organizations and companies that help us expand our offerings and reach. We love that we are able to be a part of the conversation to the different avenues of support whether they are coming from government, charities or mutual aid. We believe the unique offering we provide is that we bring exact necessary needs to communities in partnership with other non-profits and mutual aids. Since Grocery Run Club services the entire Chicago area, it's important for us to work with organizations that are on the ground of their communities to let us know what their communities need. This allows us to be very thoughtful and custom in how we support which we feel is an advantage we have over larger entities that require lots of approval processes

Can you share a story of how positively it has impacted the Little Village community?

Grocery Run Club services all of Chicago, not just solely one community but one of our first larger projects was in Little Village. Together with The Love Fridge, we placed a community fridge outside of Moreno's Liquors and had our friend and artist Esperanza Rosas paint the fridge in a way that brought joy to the community. The fridge was in that location for many months and we filled it fully 1 - 2 times a week. Since then we've worked with a number of community groups in Little Village to help supply their one off distributions to community members.

Fall 2023



WEBSITE WWW.GROCERYRUNCLUB.COM
SOCIALS @GROCERYRUNCLUB @GRCLUB



What is the GRC Run Club?

GRC Run Club is our physical run club that was born a year after our non-profit was founded, in July of 2021. Our name naturally gave way to it and we found it to be an amazing opportunity to be able to gather the BIPOC community under a health and wellness initiative while also running around our favorite city. We wanted to create a free space to be able to empower people to prioritize their health and wellness to live better lives. We host 2, 5k runs each month open to all faces, all paces and also host 1 workout class each month to encourage folks to try something new, whether boxing, yoga, etc.

33

How can people get involved or support with any of these initiatives?

If you'd like to support our non-profit Grocery Run Club, you can visit us at groceryrunclub.com to sign up to be a donor. We also post on our Instagram when we have volunteer opportunities that include activities like packing our produce boxes or delivering to families. As the growing season gets nearer in these months, we also love volunteers to come support our community garden in North Lawndale. If you're interested in joining us for a run or workout under GRC Run Club, follow us on Instagram to see when and where our next run is.

THE MUTUAL AID ISSUE

Last but not least, what else can we do to develop thriving communities in our BIPOC neighborhoods?

Something I've learned deeply in this work both through our non-profit and our run club is that we are all humans and neighbors. We are all residents of this beautiful city and we each have unique life circumstances. It goes a long way to think about how we can support our neighbors to live a better and more equitable life and that can happen quicker through community care. If we all took time to think about our neighbor, our block and our community we would be able to mobilize for us to have the basic things that we need to live the lives we deserve. ♦



Photo Credit: Jae Arnold

The Orange Tent Project

An Interview with Andy Robledo

BY EDMAR

You have seen the orange tents around the city, usually beneath viaducts and in lots by highways. These tents are provided to the houseless for free by a group of Chicagoans led by the The Orange Tent Project (formerly known as Plants for People). The Mission of the The Orange Tent Project is pretty simple. They are basically “showing up for our neighbors experiencing homelessness with hope, human connection, and empowerment - one tent, meal, and person at a time.”

During the pandemic you were delivering plants through your project Plants Delivered Chicago. Can you tell why you started that gig?

I started [my](#) business, Plants Delivered Chicago, after I found myself disenchanted with the corporate world. I'd always had a knack for and love of plants, and decided to take a chance -- what began as a part-time “passion project” became my full-time livelihood. The flexibility that working for myself provided allowed me to spend more

time and energy building my “pla(n)tform” and giving back to the community, which is where the nonprofit came in! Feeding People Through Plants started as a Plants Delivered Chicago initiative in which I donated part of the revenue from plant sales to organizations fighting homelessness in the city, and with the support of community members and donors, it grew into the organization it is today.

When you discovered a person broke into your truck and took a blanket you decided you had to figure out a way to help the homeless. I imagine it was an epiphany for you. Can you describe what the first steps were to engage in providing help and aid to others?

The first step, honestly, was to stop. That sounds counterintuitive, but I mean that I had to physically stop and talk to people on the street that I had previously passed by. Feeding People Through Plants takes a relationship-led, people-first approach to ending the cycle of homelessness by really building trust and rapport with our neighbors experiencing homelessness, and the only way to achieve that is to stop and have a conversation.

Can you describe the current mission of Orange Tent Project? And do you consider the work of the group a mutual aid project or charity?

Good question. OTP is showing up for our neighbors experiencing homelessness with hope, human connection, and empowerment - one tent, meal, and person at a time. We envision a world in which the services we provide are no longer necessary — that is, a world with affordable and accessible housing, food security for all, universal health care and rehabilitation services; a world in which we care for one another as neighbors. As for the Mutual Aid vs charity question: in a 2020 article on the subject, Nonprofit Quarterly defines Mutual Aid as “Mutual Aid roots itself in the notion that if we all contribute, we come closer to making sure that every-

“Ice fishing tents are designed to hold in heat and withstand high winds, but which also provide much-needed shade in the summer. They’re also more spacious and sturdy, compared to summer tents. “

one’s needs are met. Mutual aid, in comparison to charity, is not just a transactional exchange, but also a much-needed exercise in being in community with one another.” Orange Tent Project is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and we are entirely donor-funded; that is, we do not receive grants or government funding. Our approach, as previously mentioned, is relationship-based as opposed to a top-down dictative method. In that sense, I suppose I’d classify our work as mutual aid.

The Orange Tents that you have chosen as a stopgap housing solution are visible all over Chicago. Why these tents? And how do you decide who to help and when?

Ice fishing tents are designed to hold in heat and withstand high winds, but which also provide much-needed shade in the summer. They’re also more spacious and sturdy, compared to summer tents. The orange tents are not a permanent solution; they were never meant to be. Rather, the purpose of





the insulated structures is to meet one of the most basic needs of Maslow's Hierarchy while individuals experiencing homelessness await housing placement. We believe, in accordance with research on Social Determinants of Health, that shelter, sustenance, and physical safety are vital first steps to addressing larger obstacles such as drug addiction and mental illness. Due to the high demand and strain upon housing programs, the reality is that many of our neighbors experiencing homelessness face several weeks on waitlists for placement in a housing program. Through our relationship-led tent building and meal distribution initiatives, our team is able to not only connect individuals to housing programs, but also bridge the gap between the street and their new home by providing a warmer place to stay while they wait. Our expansive network of partner organizations allows us to continue introducing neighbors to additional resources that may help get them back on their feet, including legal assistance, public benefits access, additional housing opportunities, emergency services, and more. A tent isn't necessarily a good fit for everyone. If an individual experiencing homelessness reaches out to us to request a tent, or if we hear from another neighbor that someone is looking for a tent, we do our best to get in contact with that individual and find a stable place to build. We do have a waitlist for tents because we can only build when we have the money for a tent -- a single tent, plus labor cost, is roughly \$600. Once we have the money for it, we build! For folks who might

move around more frequently, a tent may not be the best option for them and we try to get them connected to other resources.

How has the City of Chicago responded to providing new tents to those who want them?

While we are perhaps best known for our 2022 clash with the city regarding the removal of the ice fishing tents, we are grateful to report that we are actively cooperating and collaborating with the city to address our shared goal of ending the cycle of homelessness. To date, we have built more than 200 insulated shelters, distributed over 10,500 hot meals, transitioned seven neighbors into housing, and connected with countless other nonprofit partners to expand our reach across Chicago. The city has agreed not to remove tents if they are occupied, so we do our best to move someone into a tent after it is vacated.

I have heard from City of Chicago employees working on the Homeless crisis applaud your efforts in providing tents to the homeless, while there are others in the same department who claim that by providing tents to the houseless that you are enabling their continuing to live on the streets. How do you address these claims?

Another great question, and I'm going to refer back to question #4. The tents are not and were never meant to be a permanent solution to the homelessness crisis. The cycle of homelessness is a complicated one, and I'm really not an expert, but I can say that many of the folks we've encountered are struggling with mental illness and/or addiction. Oftentimes, we have found, seeking medical and rehabilitative services requires a certain amount of stability, and the tents provide that for some folks as they await housing placement or connection to other services. As I said in question 4: We believe, in accordance with research on Social Determinants of Health, that shelter, sustenance, and physical safety are vital first steps to addressing larger obstacles such as drug addiction and mental illness. Due to the high demand and strain upon housing programs, the reality is that many of our neighbors experiencing homelessness face several weeks on waitlists for placement in a housing program. This can be really dangerous in extreme weather; people have frozen to death waiting for housing, and people have suffered heat strokes in the summertime.

Housing is a basic human right. What have you learned through your research are some of the best practices at providing ongoing shelter and housing to those who need it? Where is it done well? How do we address this crisis here in the US? And what would you set up in Chicago if you had the resources?

We have found that housing is the most viable when people are given the opportunity to receive therapy, substance abuse rehabilitation, legal aid, access to employment, and mental health treatment. Living in an encampment often provides a sense of community -- for better or for worse -- that disappears when an individual moves into housing and is suddenly alone. Providing shelter can't just be a "one and done" solution with no treatment follow-up. Our neighbors living on the streets often require more assistance, wraparound services, than just an apartment in order for it to be a sustainable

solution. There are plenty of organizations providing housing services to the community experiencing homelessness, including Thresholds, Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center, and The Night Ministry, but to my knowledge providing wrap-around services to newly housed neighbors isn't something being done on a large scale. I would love to see Chicago allocate the necessary funding and resources to create employment opportunities, provide treatment, and provide resources to people who have been recently housed rather than leaving them to fend for themselves and navigate the system on their own.

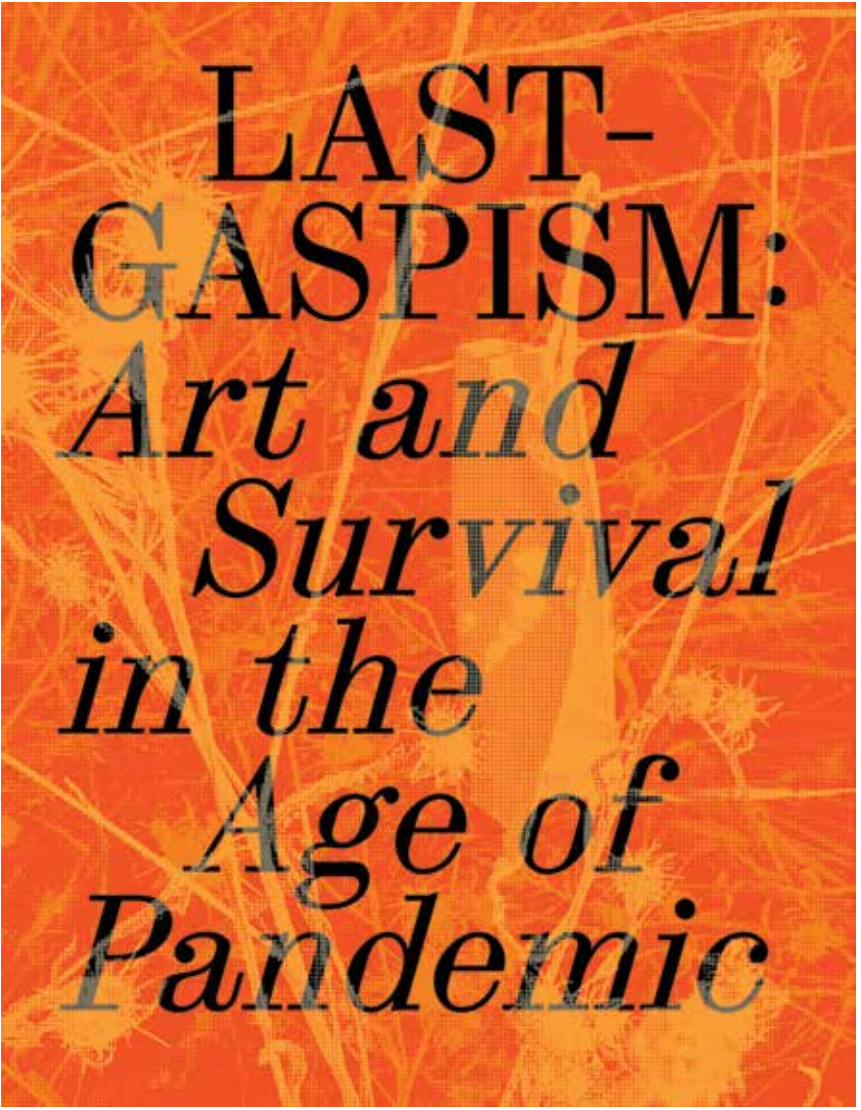
It has been incredible to see the trolling and hate messages from random assholes. They have no clue how incredibly difficult it is to organize a project of this scale. It's just difficult to organize and coordinate ongoing community projects like this on a volunteer basis. Do you have advice for those wanting to start or engage in creating a similar project? How do you deal with fundraising, coordinating members, storing supplies, managing your work and home life etc.

My advice is really to just take it day by day. Listen to the voices and the needs of the community you're serving before taking action and assuming you know what's best. Always protect your energy because you can't do the work if you're not functioning. I'm fortunate to have a strong social media platform and an amazing community of followers, donors, volunteers, and now employees. ♦



CARE IN CRISIS: On the pandemic art of Alicia Grullón

BY DANIEL TUCKER



Cover design for Soberscove Books - design by Dorothy Lin featuring the artwork of Pato Hebert's Lingering series

This essay is a brief excerpt of a longer chapter written in late 2021 for the book *Lastgaspism: Art and Survival in The Age of Pandemic* (2022 Soberscove Press) Edited by Anthony Romero, Daniel Tucker and Dan S. Wang and selected by Hyperallegoric as one of the best art books of 2022. ~~Please check out the book at <https://soberscove.com/book/lastgaspism/> or purchase it at Buddy!~~

One after another after another. Artist Alicia Grullón spent the early days of the pandemic in March 2020 trying to count ambulance sirens. She lives near a hospital in the Bronx, a borough of New York City, and the cases in her area eventually rose to over ten thousand by mid-April, the highest rate of hospitalization and death resulting from COVID-19 in the city. Counting became impossible. [1]

Grullón later reflected that “it simply got to be too many at a time, and I did not want to normalize any of it because the overall handling of the crisis had been abysmal. Another week in, I stopped looking at the time. COVID broke what was familiar to me . . . Aside from immediate family living with me, the only other human beings I would see were essential workers.” [2]

The term “essential workers” emerged as a part of the pandemic lexicon, but it actually originated during World War I. The concept was used to recognize the workers who performed duties required for basic domestic survival and the “all-out production” necessitated by the war effort. In the context of COVID-19, the category was expanded, offering an opportunity to value work that was historically lower paid and increasingly hazardous, from grocery store workers to health care workers. [3]

While it could be argued that “care” also became a key word in the pandemic lexicon, in my experience as an educator it had emerged in recent years as a framework that appealed to students as a way to grapple with and update the feminist project of exploring the interconnectedness of the personal and the political.[4] “Care” was also already on the tongues of a growing number of social theorists, artists, and community organizers, alike, in the language connecting the struggles involving health, domestic life, the organization of time, and the visibility of the marginalized workers who keep society functioning, which Grullón’s statement so elegantly captures.

And while COVID-19 touched everyone, what it felt like individually had everything to do with where one was located at the intersection of class, race, and geography. The pandemic also laid bare the contradictions of

age, disability, and even nutrition: Nursing homes were flooded with the virus, representing the largest concentration of death tolls at 40 percent of the nation’s total (for both residents and workers). [5] Disabled people, who had fought for generations to get publicly funded support for their independence, were now navigating new vulnerabilities and abandonment. Food workers, from farmers to delivery workers and grocery store cashiers, became “essential” overnight as food insecurity rose. People stranded at home felt their bodies in new ways after the numbing business of staying busy had come to a halt; some discovered self-care, others suffered. Kids were sent home from schools, leaving their parents to perform childcare and teaching roles, or not, depending on their status as workers-from-home, essential, or unemployed. This event suddenly woke everyone to what the care work advocate Ai-Jen Poo has been calling, for many years, “the work that makes all other work possible”. [6]

It doesn’t ever feel good to feel useless. Philosopher Donatella Di Cesare has described 2020 as the “anxious existence within the parenthesis,” pointing out that the impact it has had on mental health has been tremendous.[7] One question emerging from within the parenthesis is about being useful: about not being useful to exploitative jobs, about jobs that were deemed essential overnight, but also about being useful to the rising tide of justice movements, of being useful toward the self-care or community care. The pandemic has generated a number of new texts with calls for rethinking care, including four from Verso Books alone with titles such as *The Politics of Care: From COVID-19 to Black Lives Matter*; *Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence*; *The Care Crisis: What Caused It and How Can We End It?*; and *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)*. [8]

In this context food insecurity spiked due to changes in store hours and policies; episodes of consumer hoarding; rising food costs amid a massive wave of layoffs and reduced hours; and many populations, particularly the elderly and immunocompromised, simply being unsafe in public spaces with inconsistent physical distancing measures. Concurrently, grocery delivery services boomed in accordance with the parasitic nature of the gig economy. Since the pandemic began, the



Alicia Grullón, April 28, 2020: As Amazon, Walmart, and Others Profit amid Coronavirus Crisis, Their Essential Workers Plan Unprecedented Strike— <https://theintercept.com/2020/04/28/coronavirus-may-1-strike-sickout-amazon-tar-get-whole-foods/>, 2020. Archival color dye sublimation print on aluminum, 40 × 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

streets, otherwise quiet due to workplace closures and stay-at-home orders, have been abuzz with doubled-parked delivery drivers.

Numerous religious, social-service, and activist organizations quickly adapted to distribute meals and groceries. At the People’s Kitchen—where I worked solidarity shifts during the first year of the pandemic—unemployed chefs, workers, artists, and activists have committed to distributing 215 restaurant-quality hot meals a day. Some

groups have opted to fill public refrigerators with free groceries. In a particularly tech-savvy operation that I was involved with in the summer of 2020, a refrigerated warehouse was staffed by unemployed workers for three shifts a day to assemble boxes of donated food. The group was able to make use of a commercial delivery app designed for truckers, which helped volunteers go to a neighborhood pickup site with their deliveries pre-sequenced for the easiest possible movement from home to