

# People's Progress Report

BOOK OF FIRE,  
BOOK OF CHANGES

2017 & 2018

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**ONE DC**  
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# FIRE STARTERS

OUR TEAM (2017 & 2018)

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“

## THE WORLD'S ON FIRE.

Whether you look at the political or meteorological weather, things are heating up. From the rise in fascism to the rising seas, people of conscience are charged with stemming the tide.

We could turn to the symbolic power of the salamander, which mythology has long held as impervious to fire. Like the fabled phoenix, the salamander spirit drowns in flame but emerges from the ashes, reborn.

The question beckons:  
*how do we change the climate for the good of all?*

We can douse the fires set by mercenary landlords, acts that lead to lost lives and lost homes, to displacement and disenfranchisement. We can challenge the 100 companies

that are responsible for 71% of the world's carbon emissions, as well as the U.S. military-which is the world's single largest polluter and consumer of petroleum. Welcome to ONE DC's **Book of Fire, Book of Changes.**

It is inspired by the searing pen of Frederick Douglass, who was born in Maryland and died in DC. In 1857 he declared:

*"Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are [people] who want crops without ploughing the ground; [they] want rain without thunder and lightning."*

And there is Harriet Tubman, another Maryland native, hailing from the Eastern Shore. Brilliant military tactician that she was, she staked her life on the praxis famously articulated by Douglass:

*"This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."*

ONE DC burns in tribute to these warrior-ancestors and more, names known and unknown.

- ONE DC Shared Leadership Team

One of the great prophets of climate change was Octavia Butler. From her *Parable of the Sower*.

“

ALL THAT  
YOU TOUCH,  
YOU CHANGE.  
ALL THAT YOU  
CHANGE,  
CHANGES  
YOU.

# ONE DC Creative Reconstruction

## A Period of Collective Learning, Healing and Transformation

ONE DC's Shared Leadership Team (SLT) is continuing our creative reconstruction work with energy, gratitude, and support. We have heard from many members and partner organizations about the importance and need for all of us involved in this work to take time to reflect and look inward. We have done internal political education in racialized capitalism and in participatory democracy. We have also engaged in healing and wellness activities to help us take inventory of our own wellness as individuals, and as a group.

At our annual retreat this past July—members, staff, volunteers, and Shared Leadership team members sat under the shade of a large oak tree reflecting on the last years' work and the many years before. 2018 marks the 12th year of ONE DC's organizing efforts for racial and economic equity in Washington.

As with every annual retreat, we reflected about the state of our organization. As we did so, a recurring question arose from the group. What would it look like for ONE DC to turn our work inward for a time of deep learning and reflection? We heard feedback from our members during our shared leadership listening sessions in the spring, and took these conversations into account while wrestling with questions about prioritizing the direction of our work for the coming year. At the end of our discussions, dialogues, and through a process of consensus building,



Members of the Shared Leadership Team

it became clear that there was energy in the room to take on this internal work of reflection and transformation. We see this as a time set aside to actively practice, shape, and reshape our organization to do **collective healing, and learning with ourselves and our membership.**





We are living in especially toxic times—pressing up against the systems of oppression that destroy our universal rights to housing, income and wellness. And yet, how do we live, work, and organize in this space and not replicate the systems of oppression in our relationships with ourselves and others? How do we, as an organization, uphold our values in all the spaces we traverse? The answer, we believe, is in intentional practice.

“Intentional Practices are those that we choose to do in order to transform the way we show up in the world. Through new practices we increase choice and alignment with our values.”

“Organizationally we want to ask similar questions: What practices do we need to be in as a staff and organization?”

“What practices do we want to support in our member base to align with our vision and political commitments? ”

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***from The Transformative Power of Practice by Ng'ethe Maina and Staci Haines***

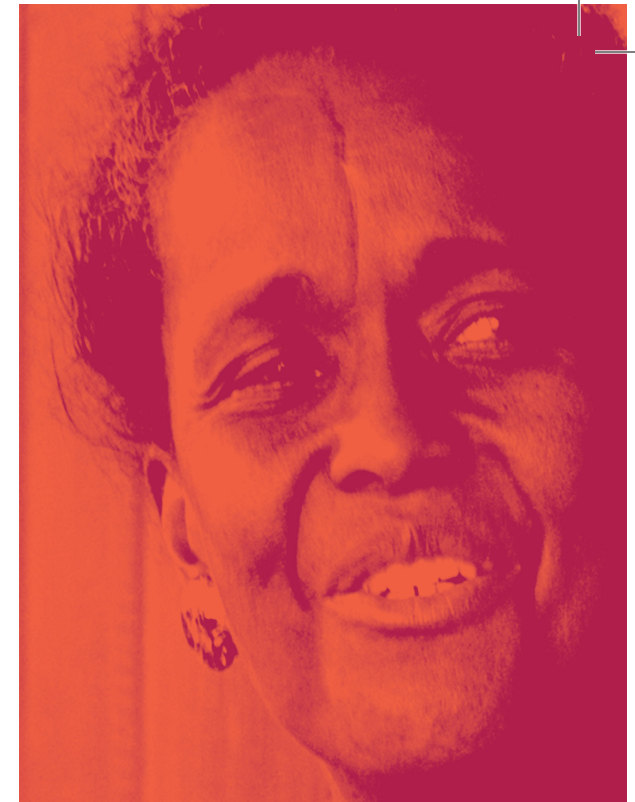


## What does it mean for ONE DC to take on this period of internal reflection, practice, and transformation?

At our 2018 retreat, members, staff and SLT members defined the major areas of internal work and growth that we saw as priorities for the period ahead. We organized ourselves with a Coordinating Committee to take on this challenging work of growth. Over several months following the retreat, we planned out a series of orientations, re-orientations, and a 2019 training schedule for our full membership.

We want to tackle issues like gender equity, power, and popular education. We will be re-examining staff roles, treatment and expectations. We also created a Healing and Wellness Committee that will be working diligently to create a code of responsibility, processes for ONE DC to deal with conflicts, and ways to help upkeep the internal health of our organization at all levels.

For several months, ONE DC also took a pause on not engaging in new organizing work or campaigns. We pared back our level of coalition work, panels, and outside engagements in order to focus internally. This opened up opportunities for members to join us in envisioning what it means for us as a community to do this work and what it will mean for our external work in the future.



Above: Ella Joe Baker



“

IN ORDER TO SEE WHERE WE  
ARE GOING, WE NOT ONLY  
MUST REMEMBER WHERE  
WE HAVE BEEN, BUT WE  
MUST UNDERSTAND WHERE  
WE HAVE BEEN.

- *Ella Jo Baker*


Members of ONE DC are an integral part of our growth and have been called to take on parts of this journey with us. And we invite you to engage in opportunities to practice, learn, and grow as part of this community in the months and years ahead!

We look forward to what this intentional time will do and mean for our community. And we look to our movement ancestors before us who knew deeply that the “work” is both in how we treat each other, how we organize ourselves, and how we fight

for justice around us. We draw inspiration from them and from all of you, who have been showing great support for this time ahead. We hope to continue our radical imaginations for what is possible, and to deepen our connections to one another during this time.

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in the center of her chest,  
the fist-sized muscle was turning back to  
carbon again, burning black and then  
black like it wanted to be

diamond.

the scroll had said her heart would change, but she never imagined it meant this.

here,

on the planet of sulfur and memories,  
she leaned her cracked  
back on the hot and broken ground.

was this lava or her blood?  
volcano or revelation?  
what she was breathing would not have  
been called air.

except that it was everywhere. except that she was  
breathing it.

there was never rain.  
but she waited for lightning to find her.

the mercury of her veins aligning with the shock of being here after  
everything and before whatever.

her heart was accelerated coal,  
growing deep dark and sharp. she kept on breathing, prostrate,  
burning, knowing soon it would be clear and unbreakable.

her beautiful blackening heart.

**Archive of Fire: Rate of Change**

from M Archive: After the End of the World, a series of poetic artifacts that  
speculatively documents the persistence of Black life following a worldwide cataclysm.

Alexis Pauline Gumbs



# COOPERATION DC

Cooperation DC's mission is to expand dignified employment opportunities in low-income communities of color through the development of worker cooperatives, businesses owned and managed democratically by their employees. Cooperation DC has supported two emerging worker co-operatives: Co-Familia, a Latinx women-led childcare cooperative, and Dulce Hogar, also a Latinx women-led cleaning service. In solidarity with workers, ONE DC has fundraised to provide cooperative building training as well as stipends to cover the worker-owners' transportation, childcare, and lost wages as they attended training sessions. Initial meetings were also held to start a childcare cooperative located East of the River. Cooperation DC meetings are held at ONE DC's Black Workers and Wellness Center.

## Why cooperatives?

Cooperatives are worker-owned businesses that diffuse wealth and power among workers involved through democratic, shared leadership structures, instead of concentrated within individuals under traditional hierarchical models of capitalistic business. Worker-owners benefit from higher wages, better benefits, higher quality jobs, workers' control of jobs, job security, and prioritization of humanity over profit. Cooperatives: a force for workers to take control of their labor!

## Seven Principles

- i. Voluntary and open membership
- ii. Democratic member control
- iii. Member economic participation
- iv. Autonomy and independence
- v. Education, training, and information
- vi. Cooperation among cooperatives
- vii. Concern for community





# COOP DAY!

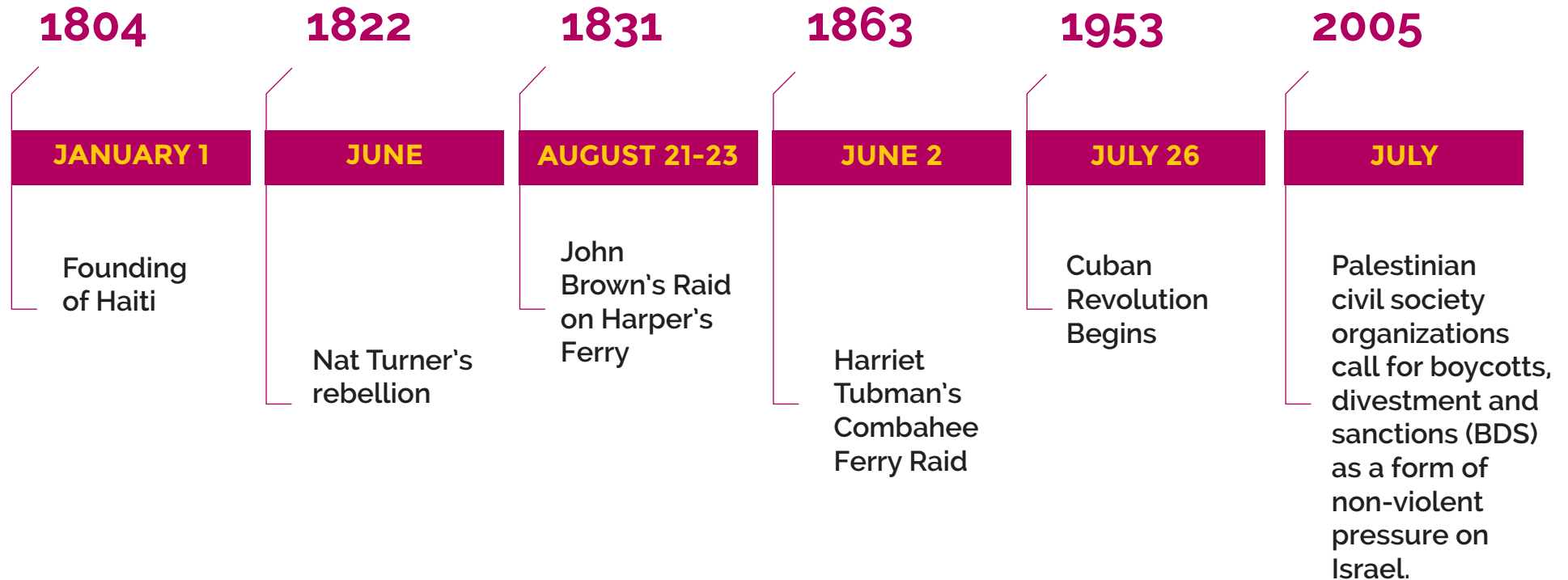
## A Cleaning Cooperative

In August 2018, we held a Coop Day to educate our membership about the power of cooperatives.

ONE DC members and supporters discussed their ideal workplace environment, the meaning of "dignified work," and cooperatives as an alternative to exploitative capitalistic workplaces. Residents envisioned transportation, solar panel, childcare, tutoring, fitness/wellness, thrift store, food, and housing cooperatives as possible ventures to be created in their communities.

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## SOME HOT SPOTS IN HISTORY



# People's Platform

## Organizing for racial and economic equity in DC

ONE DC joined the the People's Climate March under the banner of the People's Platform. We believe in the right to health and wellness for humans and the earth. We believe in a system designed to meet our human needs, not to exploit and profit.

As we organize for racial & economic equity in DC, we demand housing justice, worker justice, and environmental justice! We join the People's Climate March to let the people's voices be heard loud and clear. Now more than ever we must stand together and fight against harmful climate policies!



## Ten Principles

- I. Housing for every person. Housing is a human right, not an opportunity to exploit and profit.
- II. Decent, dignified and sustainable work or occupation for everyone who wants it.
- III. A right to health for humans and the earth.
- IV. Government transparency accountability, participatory democracy.
- V. Equitable development that values people over property. Development without displacement that cedes power over land use to democratic community control.
- VI. Equitable and equal access to a free, decent, holistic and non-imperialistic education that creates critical, political thinkers and leaders.
- VII. Full access for returning citizens to housing, jobs, education as well as decriminalization, demilitarization, and prison abolition.
- VIII. Access to safe and affordable transportation so that we can travel between our homes, jobs, schools and recreational spaces.
- IX. A process of restorative justice for residents who have faced physical, emotional, or psychological violence at the hands of District government and its agencies.
- X. The right of return and reclamation for those who have been forced out of the District by developers and gentrification. We demand self-determination, which depends on our ability to control the land.



# What are some ways folks can get involved with climate justice?

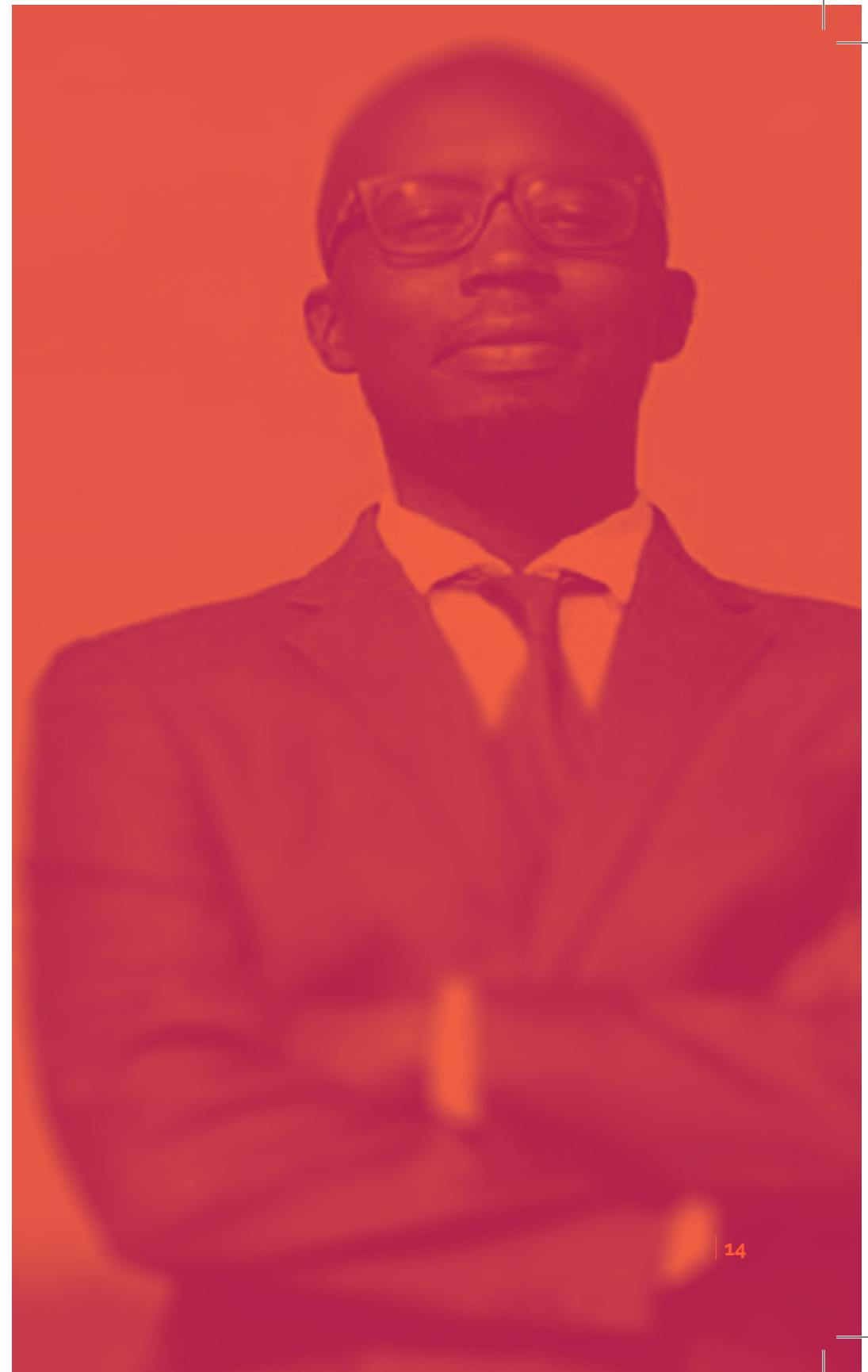
People can join or support an organization! There are a lot of organizations in DC that are fighting neighborhood fights to prevent climate injustice (e.g., cleaning up the river and air, expanding access to universal public transportation options,); there are organizations like 350 DC, Sierra Club DC, and Sunrise Movement DC that are based in DC and are fighting for big-picture climate justice policies locally and nationally (e.g., Green New Deal). I would love to be a resource for anyone who is looking for an organization in their neighborhood or city that is fighting for climate justice.

Folks can also fight for climate change by talking to their neighbors. If you feel as though your park is not being cleaned up, or your apartment has been neglected by slumlords, then it's time to talk to our neighbors and organize. Organize a clean up, organize a petition or email campaign to your local elected officials, speak out at your local ANC or civic association meeting to earn their support!

Keep speaking out and keep organizing, and in the end we will win our fight for climate justice.

## Jeremiah Lowery

DC Sierra Club board member Chair of DC for Democracy  
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# Red summer...

Burning crosses on lawns.  
Tulsa, 1921.

Four little Black girls consumed  
in a flash, in Bombingham.

Black churches, arson'd.

Osage Avenue alight: MOVE.

So much anti-Black terrorism is  
marked by fire.

So, we honor the flamethrowers  
who fight with light:

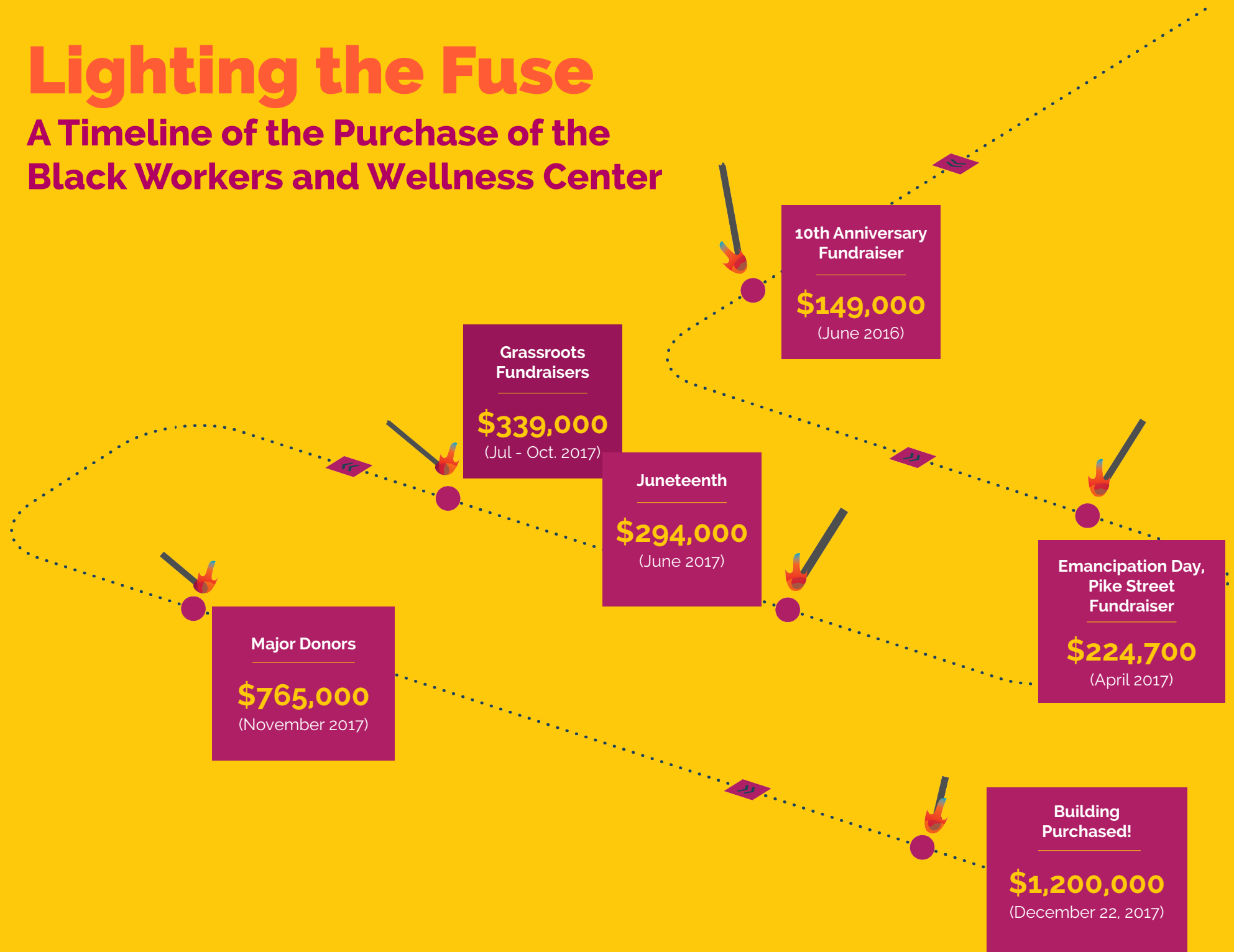
**REST IN POWER  
EDWARD CRAWFORD**

Yet another #BlackLivesMatter activist  
lost to suicide.

Photo by: Robert Cohen

# Lighting the Fuse

## A Timeline of the Purchase of the Black Workers and Wellness Center



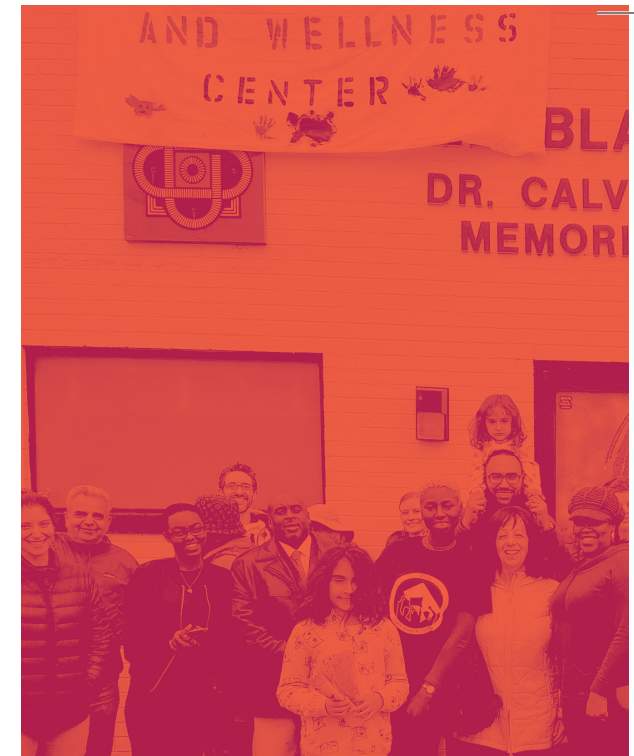
# Black Workers and Wellness Center— IGNITED!

The Black Workers and Wellness Center has been in development since 2014, with regular monthly community meetings held at the United Black Fund building for the first two years. The idea for the project emerged out of community listening sessions following the Washington Marriott Marquis Hotel Jobs Training Program. Troubled by the continued failure of DC's workforce development system to address unemployment, DC workers and residents began to envision a community-controlled space to address the intersections of race and work in DC.

On December 22nd, 2017, ONE DC finalized the purchase of the former United Black Fund building at 2500 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE for \$1.2 million. This crucial moment arrived after nearly two years of grassroots fundraising. 963 donors gave gifts from as little as \$5 to as much as \$300,000

to help us realize our goal. Dedicated ONE DC members spent weeks cleaning and repairing the building, and the Black Workers and Wellness Center opened for public use in spring 2018.

Throughout 2018, the Black Workers and Wellness Center operated as a vital community organizing center—a space for political education, the promotion of sustainable employment and economic alternatives, and the construction of racial and economic justice. Last year, some of the projects operated out of the BWWC included:



**Top:** Black Worker Center Commemoration







**Bottom:** Members celebrating



## Events and Trainings

Code on the Block  
Timebanking  
Cooperation DC  
Worker's Rights Clinics  
Tenant organizing meetings to  
unite for residents' rights  
Workers Rights Clinics  
BW/WC Chorus  
Community organizing  
trainings

## Partners

Laborer's International Union  
of North America (LiUna)  
DC Jobs with Justice  
Family and Friends of  
Incarcerated People (FFOIP)  
The National Reentry Network  
For Returning Citizens  
Washington Lawyers'  
Committee for Civil Rights and  
Urban Affairs

# Fired Up and Pushing Back

## February 2017

MidCity Financials wanted to build 1,750 units of luxury apartments in Brookland Manor, reducing the amount of affordable housing units from 535 to 373 units (200 of which are designated for seniors 62+). To agitate Brookland residents further, MidCity placed unnecessary security detail and fencing at the housing complex. On February 23rd, Brookland Manor residents were joined by ONE DC and other DC organizations to protest the displacement of the residents. 2017 saw many similar demonstrations at hearings to prevent MidCity from dividing and further marginalize the long-time DC community.

## December 2017

The Ward 5B Advisory Neighborhood Commission passed a resolution that met the demands posed by the Brookland Manor Residents Association, to keep 535 affordable units, along with their bedroom number and size, as well as the existing subsidies.

Slumlord Geoff Griffis negotiated with mercenary Sanford Capital to keep residents of a Congress Heights affordable housing complex from exercising their TOPA (Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act) rights.

## January 2018

"A Method for Making the Just City" was published in Housing Policy Debate, co-authored by Dominic T. Moulden.

## February 2018

ONE DC supported the launch of *Because We Care Coalition: Richman Apartments Tenants Association*

After demonstrations and a hearing, Congress Heights residents won \$50,000 to repair housing issues.

**March 13, 2018**

The Fair Elections Act of 2017 officially became law! The legislation is designed to empower small donors and democratize the city's electoral system. The act establishes a voluntary public-financing system that matches small donations, allowing candidates to focus on meeting with their constituents instead of having to dial for dollars from developers, wealthy donors, and big corporations. This means that working families and people of color will not only be better able to participate in the political system as donors, but also face fewer financial barriers to running for office. ONE DC was proud to be a member of the Fair Elections Coalition, which led the multi-year campaign to secure elections for the people!

**April 2018**

*Put A Price On It D.C. - Carbon Rebate Coalition* ONE DC linked with local faith leaders, economic justice advocates, labor organizers, environmentalists, and others gathered on the front steps of DC's city hall to unveil a dynamic "carbon fee and rebate" plan to reduce global warming pollution in DC. The plan would charge polluters for their carbon emissions and rebate the overwhelming majority of the revenue back to every resident of the District.

The groundbreaking plan outlines how DC can reduce carbon pollution in the city while increasing employment. The plan will also boost incomes in the District through a universal "carbon rebate" paid to every resident on a quarterly basis, including an enhanced rebate to low-income District residents. The plan would also make investments in green infrastructure throughout the city. Finally, the plan proposes using a small share of the carbon revenue to create a tax credit for local businesses.

**June 26, 2018**

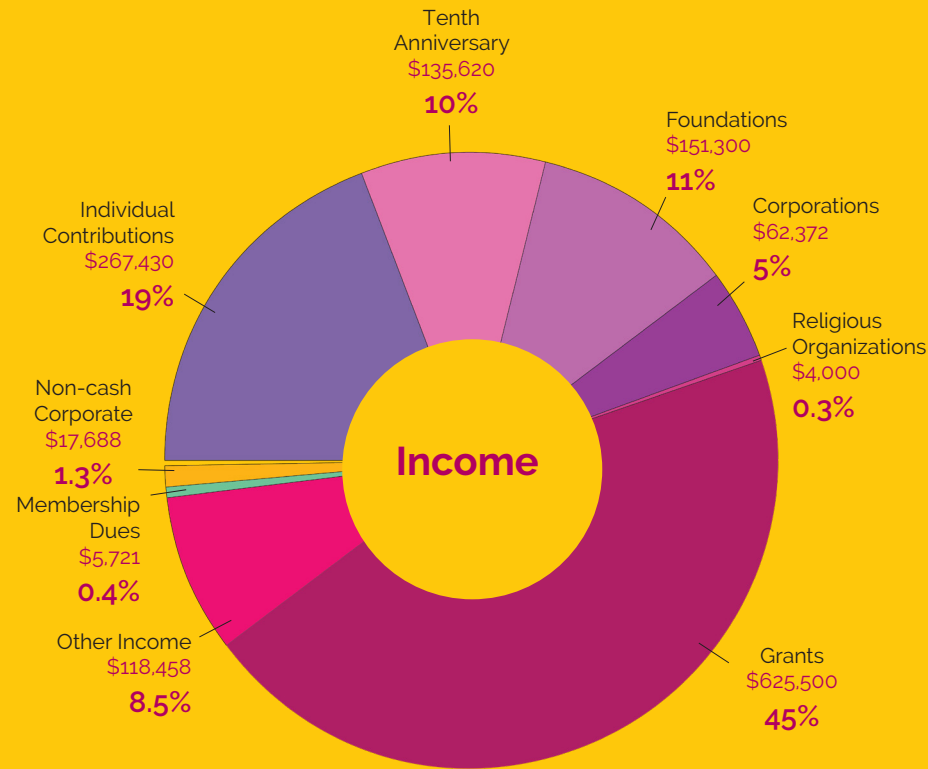
Representatives from ONE DC, Bread for the City, and the Poor People's Campaign delivered a petition with 100,000+ signatures to the House Financial Services Committee Chair Jeb Hensarling and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to protect the housing rights of low-income renters nationwide.

**October 2018**

October 2018: Making the Just City completes research action project, including resident interviews that illustrate the role of affordable housing in creating a culture of health.

# ONE DC Financials

## 2017 Income & Expenses



In 2017, the organization raised \$1.2 million to purchase a building for the Black Workers and Wellness Center. Grants accounted for 45% of the income for the year. Income from individuals accounted for 19% of the income.

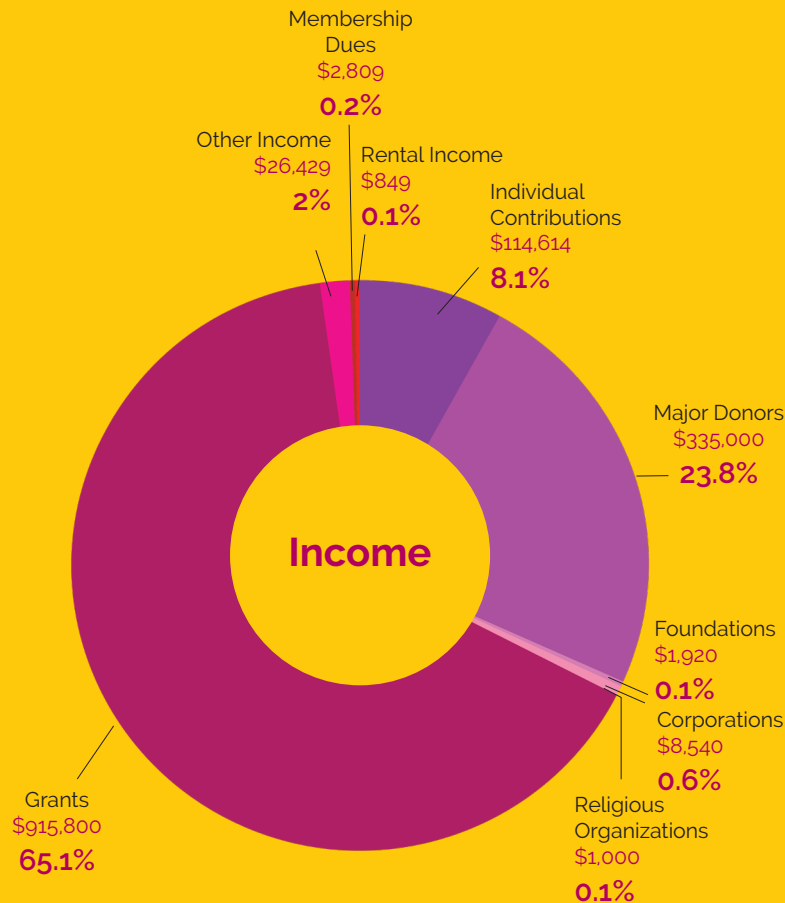


Right to Income includes expenses for the Black Workers and Wellness Center. Purchases of equipment for community use were made during the year. Right to Income accounted for 42% of the organization's expenses. Making a Just City (Right to Wellness) and People's Platform accounted for 13% and 15% of the expenses respectively.

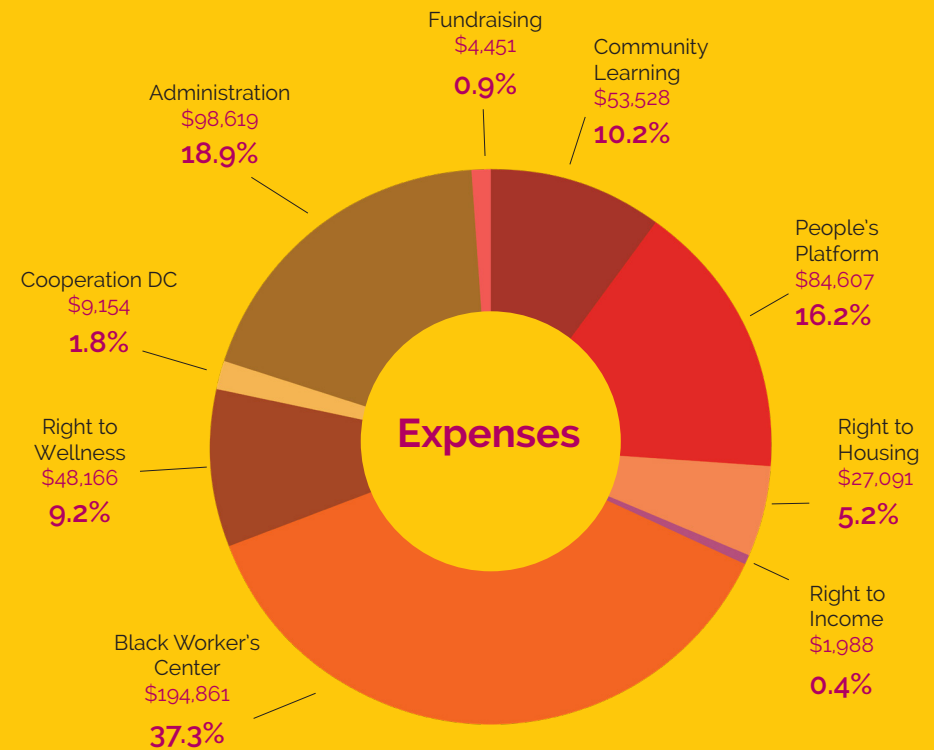


# ONE DC Financials

## 2018 Income & Expenses



Income for the organization included \$400,000 from a government grant and \$325,000 from a major donor for renovation of the Black Workers and Wellness Center. This accounted for 49% of the total 2018 income.



The Black Workers Center accounted for 37.3% of total expenses and included costs for architectural services and other consultants for pre-construction work. Also, repairs to the building are included in this category. Peoples' Platform and Community Learning accounted for over 26% of the community organizing work done by the staff in the city.

# Acknowledgements

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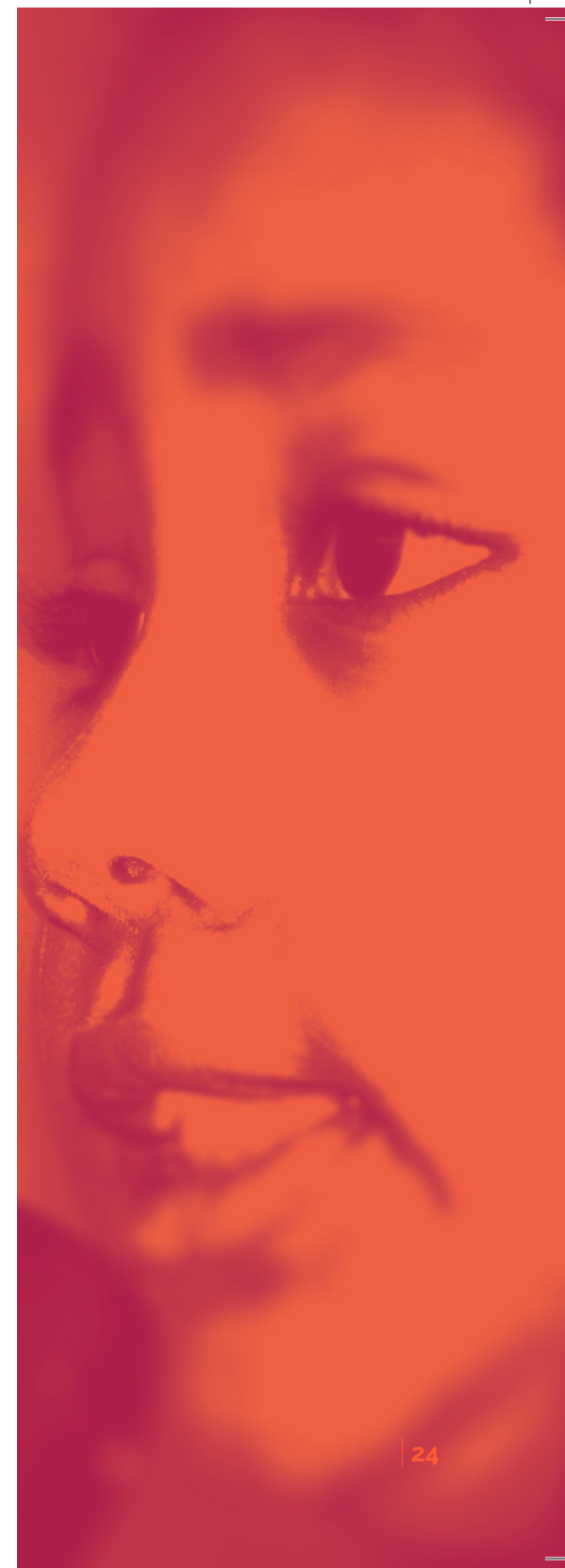
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# Acknowledgements

Melissa Mayer  
Micaela Suminski  
Michael Chelen  
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Mignotae Kebede  
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At ONE DC, our mission is to exercise political strength to create and preserve racial and economic equity in Shaw and the District. We seek to create a community in DC that is equitable for all.

Since 1997, ONE DC has sought to address the structural causes of poverty and injustice, stemming from race, power, economic, political and social forces.

ONE DC has distinguished itself as one of the few organizations to move beyond service, and strive to create a sustainable community leadership, to enable low-income people of color to speak for themselves.



Community Celebration and Fundraiser at BW/DC, October 2018.

**Top:** SAMAIYAH **Bottom:** Jude