



FROM PROTEST TO POWER

A Year of Struggle & Progress



2020 IMPACT REPORT



Liberty Hill is the Home for Progressive Los Angeles

- We fuel grassroots organizing
- We support activists fighting for change
- We prioritize building power in communities impacted by systemic oppression
- We provide a community where donor activists can engage beyond their gift

A Year of Progress: 2020 By The Numbers

\$15M+

Grants Awarded

1000+

Grants Distributed

10

New Activist Commissioners
Appointed in LA

15

Rising Activist (emerging)
Organizations Funded

90

Organizations Trained

225+

Community Activists Trained

255

New Donor Activists

1500+

Individual Gifts to Liberty Hill

OUR MISSION: Liberty Hill is a laboratory for social change philanthropy. We leverage the power of community organizers, donor activists, and allies to advance social justice through strategic investment in grants, leadership training, and campaigns.

A Note From Shane

As we look back on 2020—a generation-defining year that changed all of our lives in a profound way—I want to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible resilience and strength of the Liberty Hill community. Through a global pandemic that threatened both lives and livelihoods, and a national uprising for racial justice that challenged and ultimately changed hearts, minds, and laws—the fight for social justice has continued.

And you have been with us through it all.

This is the moment Liberty Hill was created to meet. Every step from our founding more than 40 years ago has prepared us to rise to the challenge of this time together—a community of activists, leaders, donors, visionaries, and fighters for justice all united in a common goal to advance social justice and equity.

This past year, our partners stepped up like never before, transforming protest to power and making incredible progress and significant policy gains in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. They pushed to get incarcerated youth released from lockup where COVID-19 was spreading unchecked. And thanks to their efforts, we are one step closer to ending youth incarceration as we know it due to the recent Board of Supervisors decision to move youth out of the probation system and create a Department of Youth Development that emphasizes emotional support, counseling, and treatment. Our partners also won eviction protections to prevent unscrupulous landlords from kicking tenants onto the street during a time of social distancing; and they continue to fight to protect Black, Brown, Native American, and Indigenous people from the effects of the toxic oil drilling that puts residents at higher risk of respiratory conditions during the pandemic.

I was so inspired to see our dedicated partners step into the gap in the face of COVID-19 and provide a lifeline of support to their members, assisting with

essentials such as groceries and food, rental assistance, and technology setup and support.

Our donor activists also went the extra mile throughout 2020, contributing above and beyond their previous gifts to help power our Rapid Response Funds for Racial Justice and COVID-19. These emergency funds enabled our grantees to keep up the fight for progress and adapt their current outreach methods to the new reality of digital organizing, virtual events, and Zoom meetings.



This past year made an indelible mark on all of us.

And it truly took our entire Home for Progressive Philanthropy to keep the wheels of progress turning. Thanks to the incredible partnerships between our grantees, staff, board, government and foundation partners, and dedicated donor activists, we were able to hold the line in the fight for justice and gain ground during one of the most challenging times in our history.

The 2020 Impact Report details the progress we made in the face of a global pandemic and a national reckoning on racial justice. I hope you will be proud of what we were able to accomplish together and inspired by the fighting spirit that keeps the fires of justice burning through even the darkest of times.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shane Murphy Goldsmith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Shane Murphy Goldsmith
President/CEO
Liberty Hill Foundation

OUR VISION: Liberty Hill envisions a society in which all people have a powerful voice, including those currently shut out of our democracy, people cut off from opportunities because they are poor, because of their skin color, because of their gender or sexual orientation, because of where they live, or where they were born.

We will not rest until society provides justice and equality for all.

Liberty Hill Powers Social Change In Los Angeles

We
are a convener
and facilitator that
brings unusual allies
together to effect
change.

We
give donor activists
opportunities to
engage beyond
their financial
commitment.

We
fund and
support grassroots
organizations leading
social justice
campaigns.

We
help organizations
build capacity for
future success.

We
train the next
generation of leaders
to represent their
communities within
movement campaigns
and government.



2020: On the Road to Change



There is an old African proverb: *If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.*

At Liberty Hill we believe that the people closest to the pain should be closest to the power and leading the fights for change. As the COVID-19 crisis exposed, we still have a long way to go in the fight to achieve equity for disenfranchised Black, Brown, Native American and Indigenous people in our society.

We also know that there is no one organization, activist, or leader who can win these David and Goliath battles alone. It takes a village of dedicated people and a chorus of voices calling for change from various corners of our society to move the needle on the issues that matter.

In 2020 we saw those voices rise up in new ways—in defiance of the status quo.

In the early days of COVID-19, they shouted from their cars during “Car March Protests” against youth incarceration, they stepped up their digital organizing efforts and learned new tools and technology to reach their communities during the pandemic, and when the nation rose up in response to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless other Black people across the country, they masked up and hit the streets to fight against police brutality and systemic racism.

At Liberty Hill, we have been in this fight for more than 40 years supporting frontline activists and organizations most impacted by systemic oppression. We know we have a long road ahead. But if this past year has proven anything, it is that we can go so far when we go together.



Making an Impact in 2020: A Year of Progress

Despite the many challenges we faced together in 2020, it was undeniably a year of progress on several fronts and we achieved or exceeded our strategic goals for the year. We also recommitted ourselves to our *Agenda for a Just Future* and our efforts to end youth incarceration as we know it, fight for a roof over every head, and eliminate toxic neighborhood oil drilling.

We made major progress in the face of the pandemic, and our partners stepped up in new ways to secure victories on everything from expanding eviction protections during COVID-19 to getting incarcerated youth released from lockup.



NORTH STAR:

TO BUILD POWER IN COMMUNITIES MOST IMPACTED BY SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE AND EQUITY.

Achieve Agenda For Just Future:



Ending Youth Incarceration As We Know It

- 🔌 \$75M divested from punishment systems and redirected to youth development programs
- 🔌 Established new LA County Youth Development Department
- 🔌 Youth arrests down 31%*
- 🔌 Youth incarceration down 52%*
- 🔌 Closed half of LA's youth jails (9)*
- 🔌 Raised more than \$4M+ for Our Kids, Our Future fund*



Fighting for a Roof Over Every Head

- 🔌 Launched Stay Housed L.A. County program, reaching over 180,000 tenants to prevent eviction, in partnership with LA County and 20 community organizations
- 🔌 Won permanent rent stabilization in 4 jurisdictions*
- 🔌 Passed temporary emergency eviction protections and rent caps in 15+ cities throughout LA County



Eliminating Toxic Neighborhood Oil Drilling

- 🔌 LA City Council drafted a motion to phase out oil drilling throughout the City
- 🔌 Culver City voted to end drilling in Inglewood Oil Field
- 🔌 Expanded emPOWER program to provide critical access to environmental subsidies and resources to residents in highly polluted neighborhoods

**Progress since 2017 when we launched Agenda for a Just Future*

Expand Our Home for Progressive Philanthropy:



Exceeding Our Donor Engagement Targets

- 🔋 \$3,872,780 in individual contributions for FY20
- 🔋 Total event fundraising: \$357,790
- 🔋 Secured \$5.5M+ in foundation revenue



Donor Advised Funds (DAFs) Increase Giving

- 🔋 Total DAF grantmaking increased by \$3M in FY20
- 🔋 32 Donor Advised Funds made 86 gifts to Liberty Hill
- 🔋 Black-led giving circles increased grantmaking by \$100,000
- 🔋 DAFs paid out 73% of annual balances as grants, shattering the national payout rate of 22%

Liberty Hill works in collaboration with many organizations and individuals who spearheaded these campaigns and led the way toward these transformative victories. We are deeply grateful for the partnerships we have with our program grantees.

To dive deeper into our Strategic Roadmap Results and see a full list of our grantees, visit our Impact Report website at: www.LibertyHill.org/impact



Wally Marks Leadership Institute 10th Anniversary

WMLI celebrated our 10 year anniversary with a robust set of trainings for activists: youth op-ed writing, digital organizing, financial management, renters' rights campaign management and base building, and the Ready to Rise youth development partnership. More than 225 people and 90 organizations participated in trainings in 2020.

Accelerate Power Building Throughout LA County:



Investing in Organizing

- 🔋 Awarded \$5.9M in grants to community organizers through our competitive and partnership grant programs
- 🔋 Funded 15 Rising Activist (emerging) organizations
- 🔋 Provided leadership training to 225 youth and community activists



Supporting Activists to Win Major Policy Victories

- 🔋 Passage of Measure J in LA County
- 🔋 Passage of Measure US in Long Beach
- 🔋 Passage of countywide Public Health Councils policy to empower essential workers and stop the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace
- 🔋 Legalization of street vending in LA County
- 🔋 Statewide educational literacy lawsuit win
- 🔋 Establishment of the first-ever LA County Youth Commission
- 🔋 Countywide elimination of criminal justice fines and fees
- 🔋 Passage of LA County alternatives to incarceration plan
- 🔋 Creation of a new Probation Oversight Commission
- 🔋 Redirected \$25 million from Los Angeles Unified School District school police to serve Black students
- 🔋 Closure of the state's youth prison system and creation of a new youth development department
- 🔋 Launched Community Land Trust pilot program with \$14M investment from County



“Even though COVID happened the racism didn’t stop. The Rapid Response funding from Liberty Hill helped us to continue to have peace rallies and press conferences—to let the community know we’re still here. This support literally enabled us to rapidly respond to the issues on the ground.”

– Pharoah Mitchell, Community Action League

A Rapid Response: A Year Like No Other

Since its founding in 1976, Liberty Hill has sought to build deep relationships with grassroots organizations and leaders in marginalized communities who form the backbone of progressive change in Los Angeles.

These are the everyday people who have been leading protests and driving essential conversations about the effects of structural racism in our society for years.

But the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying public health restrictions only exacerbated existing inequities, bringing them into sharp relief and hitting our partners and their communities particularly hard.

As the nation grappled with how to effectively respond to both the ravages of the global pandemic and the cries for racial justice from the streets of America, the groups we work with continued the fight.

And Liberty Hill stepped up to support them, moving quickly to create multiple Rapid Response funds providing \$625,000 in grants for COVID-19 and racial justice. These funds were designed to provide maximum flexibility, allowing our partners to adjust their operations, provide aid to their communities, and adopt new organizing techniques in the face of COVID-19. Most of all, it allowed their critical work to continue.

You cannot organize people who cannot eat. The money from the Rapid Response Grant helped us get vital supplies, buy groceries, and get personal protective equipment and medical supplies out to people. But we’re investing just as much in a cultural shift—how do you live in a way where you are a resource to your neighbors and your neighbors are a resource to you?

– Bill Przylucki, Executive Director, POWER

Against the Odds

While the world changed immeasurably this past year, one thing that remained constant was the commitment our grantees and community partners made to their causes and communities. As the cries for justice began to rise from the streets of America, our partners were ready. They've been fighting the good fight for years, leading the movements that have already brought about significant progress, and pushing for the fundamental change we know is possible—ending youth incarceration as we know it, fighting for a roof over every head, and eliminating toxic neighborhood oil drilling near our homes and schools.

For them, it has never been easy.

The odds have always been stacked.

But together we are stronger than fear.

Together, we are Powerful. Resilient. Determined.

Witness that spirit in action through the stories of three of the incredible activists and community leaders who have had the courage to fight against the odds and win.

*“Do not get lost in a sea of despair.
Be hopeful, be optimistic...
Never, ever be afraid to make some
noise and get in good trouble,
necessary trouble.”*

—The Honorable John Lewis



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Fighting For a Roof Over Every Head

The transformation of Silvia from homeowner to one of the leading tenant advocates in LA is a beautiful story of someone who was determined with every ounce of her being to fight back.

– Joe Delgado, Los Angeles Director, ACCE

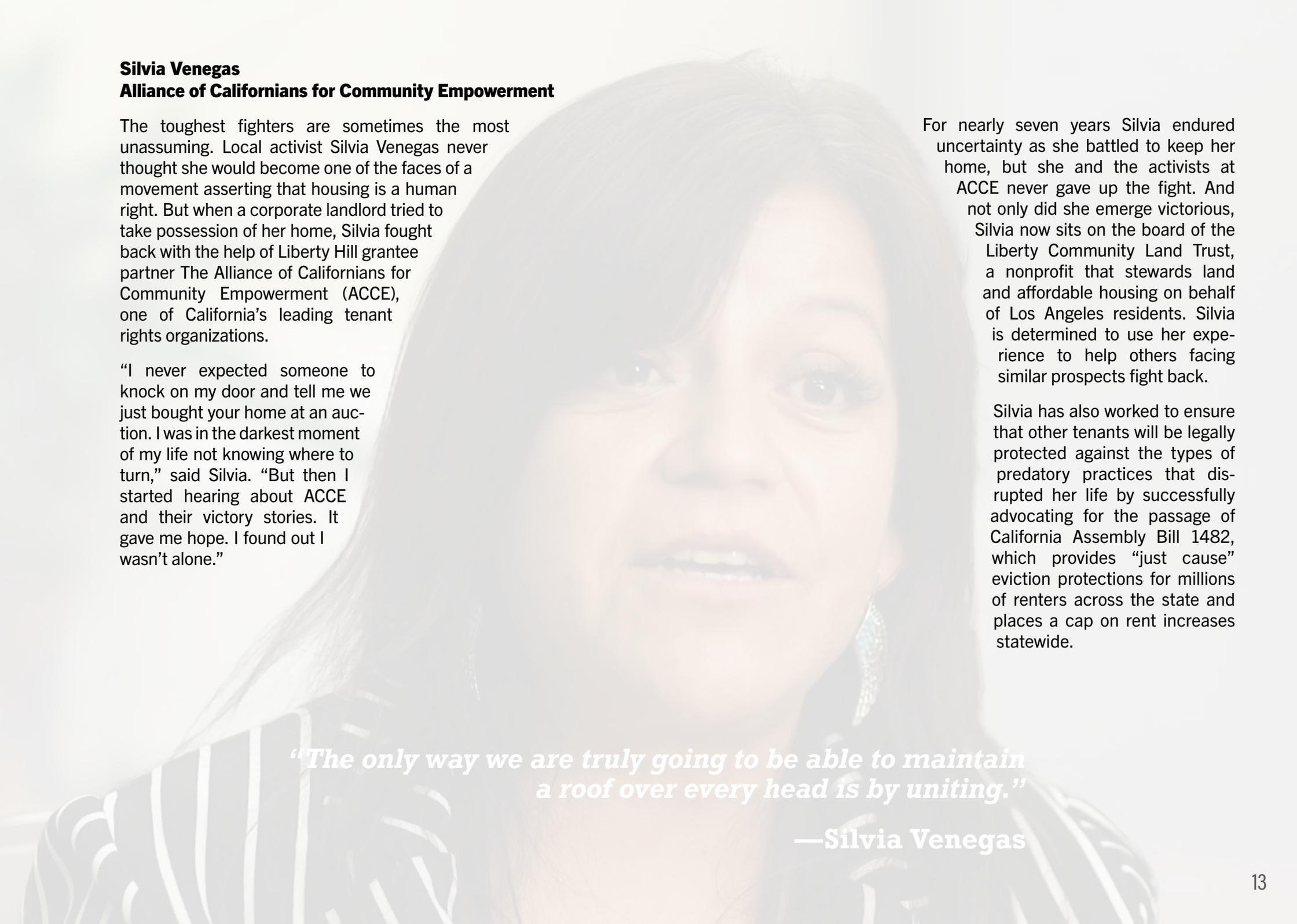
2020 Victories

- Passed statewide and local eviction moratorium and renter relief policies to prevent homelessness during the pandemic
- Launched Stay Housed L.A. County, a partnership of 20+ organizations and the County of Los Angeles to prevent homelessness and help tenants exercise their rights through outreach, education, and legal assistance
- Initiated new Community Land Trust pilot program, supporting five emerging land trusts and their successful campaign to win a \$14M investment from LA County

Grantee Spotlight —> ALLIANCE OF CALIFORNIANS FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (ACCE)

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and a longstanding housing crisis, families continued the fight for their right to a safe place to live. As a recipient of Liberty Hill's Rapid Response Fund for COVID-19 and longtime community partner, The Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) led efforts to support rent forgiveness, as well as California Assembly Bill 3088, which extended

eviction protections to tenants dealing with financial hardship due to COVID-19. ACCE also was instrumental in supporting the Reclaiming Our Homes campaign that seeks to turn hundreds of vacant homes owned by Caltrans into permanently affordable housing for local families, seniors, and those with chronic illness.



Silvia Venegas
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment

The toughest fighters are sometimes the most unassuming. Local activist Silvia Venegas never thought she would become one of the faces of a movement asserting that housing is a human right. But when a corporate landlord tried to take possession of her home, Silvia fought back with the help of Liberty Hill grantee partner The Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), one of California's leading tenant rights organizations.

"I never expected someone to knock on my door and tell me we just bought your home at an auction. I was in the darkest moment of my life not knowing where to turn," said Silvia. "But then I started hearing about ACCE and their victory stories. It gave me hope. I found out I wasn't alone."

For nearly seven years Silvia endured uncertainty as she battled to keep her home, but she and the activists at ACCE never gave up the fight. And not only did she emerge victorious, Silvia now sits on the board of the Liberty Community Land Trust, a nonprofit that stewards land and affordable housing on behalf of Los Angeles residents. Silvia is determined to use her experience to help others facing similar prospects fight back.

Silvia has also worked to ensure that other tenants will be legally protected against the types of predatory practices that disrupted her life by successfully advocating for the passage of California Assembly Bill 1482, which provides "just cause" eviction protections for millions of renters across the state and places a cap on rent increases statewide.

"The only way we are truly going to be able to maintain a roof over every head is by uniting."

—Silvia Venegas



“The only way we are truly going to be able to maintain a roof over every head is by uniting.”

—Silvia Venegas



COVID-19 changed nearly everything in 2020

The pandemic impacted the way we relate to one another, our ability to stay connected with loved ones, and the causes we care about. As “Safer at Home” orders spread across the country—and the days of social distancing became weeks, then months—the realities of an uncertain future began to set in.

Making a Virtual Connection

At Liberty Hill, we considered our place in this changing landscape, and the unique role that foundations like ours could play during this critical time.

Injustice takes no sick days and observes no social distance. That’s why our desire to keep up the fight for progress has been unwavering.

While our methods needed to change, we never stopped making connections, honoring heroes, and building power.



Zoom For Social Change

The rise of the Zoom event provided us with a unique opportunity to focus on issue-based discussions that opened up a dialogue on critical issues such as the future of policing in America, the fight for tenant rights and housing protections during COVID-19 and more. We also provided opportunities for our community partners and grant recipients to come together virtually to strategize and learn new digital organizing skills.



Socially Distant Celebrations

With live events on ice this past year, Liberty Hill went virtual with our annual Upton Sinclair Awards Dinner and Leadership Brunch, along with a variety of other special events that typically bring our donor activists together to celebrate progress. Community members were inspired by talks from former Attorney General Eric Holder, Distinguished Professor Deepak Bhargava, and Congressmembers Karen Bass and Ayanna Pressley, among others.



Voter Engagement

2020 was all about flexing our electoral muscle like never before. We held several virtual Prop Party events designed to educate voters and encourage participation. We also produced our 2020 Liberty Vote! guide, highlighting several of the propositions our partners led to victory in the local election, including the landmark Measure J initiative and Proposition 17, which restored voting rights to people on parole.

We realized we needed to adapt—and help our partners adapt—to survive this new reality. Liberty Hill pivoted in the face of the pandemic, making virtual connections to reach our supporters in new ways, helping them stay connected to the issues they care about, and ensuring no ground was lost during this turbulent time.

– Jenny Delwood, Liberty Hill Executive Vice President

Partnerships: The Key to Progress in Uncertain Times

Liberty Hill's partnerships have always been the key ingredient to our success—bringing unusual allies together to figure out solutions to some of society's most challenging issues. It takes a progressive village to build the road forward to a more just and equitable future. Our partners bring unique perspectives to this work that enable us to make more progress, win more battles, and secure the vision of a progressive future for which we are all fighting.

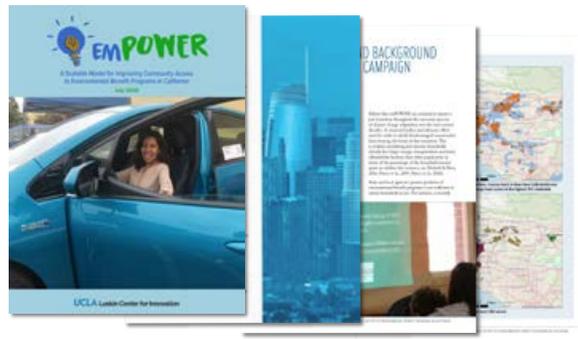
Partnerships Expand in 2020



Ready to Rise is a public-private partnership between Liberty Hill Foundation, the California Community Foundation, and the Los Angeles County Probation Department that expands opportunities and resources for youth development and diversion programs that keep youth out of the criminal justice system and help those in the system successfully transition back into the community. The program began as a \$3.2 million pilot with an initial cohort of 20 organizations. This year, the County allocated another \$16 million to the partnership, allowing Ready to Rise to expand to a second cohort of 29 grantees, and a third year is currently under consideration. To date, nearly 3,500 youth have been served by the program, and more than \$7 million in funds have been awarded.



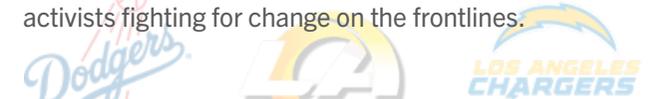
For Liberty Hill, environmental justice is a cornerstone of social and racial justice. Our emPOWER initiative is a coalition of community-based organizations committed to making sure those most affected by pollution and environmental racism can access millions of dollars in rebates and incentives provided by public agencies to combat climate change and reduce their utility bills. This year we added new community organizations in Wilmington, South LA, southeast LA, and Pomona. We also expanded online outreach during COVID-19, holding virtual Ride & Drives and other events to introduce people to electric vehicles and other rebates. In 2020, the program educated more than 10,000 residents about saving money and the environment, helping families increase their economic resiliency in the face of financial crisis. UCLA's Luskin School of Public Affairs also released an official report, *emPOWER: A Scalable Model for Improving Community Access to Environmental Benefits in California*, which outlined the program's success at using unique outreach models to reach disenfranchised communities.



Playing For Justice

LA Sports Teams Step Up

As the drumbeat of progress continued, Los Angeles sports teams stepped up their commitment to social justice. Liberty Hill met with representatives, coaches, players, and staff from a variety of sports franchises to underscore the importance of using their brands and platforms to advance the cause of racial justice across the county. We also organized a series of listening sessions with team representatives and our longtime community partners to share the lived experiences of activists fighting for change on the frontlines.



The Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation announced a grant of \$304,400 to Liberty Hill's Our Kids, Our Future Fund—a partnership between Liberty Hill and the California Funders for Boys and Men of Color to radically transform the lives of Black, Brown, and Native American youth in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Chargers also stepped up to announce a \$100,000 grant and partnered with us on several campaigns to raise awareness of their commitment to social justice, including the auction of a variety of collectible memorabilia—signed helmets, cleats, jerseys, and other player items to benefit Liberty Hill. And at the end of the year, the Los Angeles Rams joined the team to announce a \$40,000 social justice grant to Liberty Hill, and to several of our longtime community partners as well.





Fighting to End Youth Incarceration as We Know It

This was one of the largest school police budget cuts and redirections in the country. We know this is not the end of the work, but an important next step in our fight to make Black Lives Matter in schools.

– Joseph Williams, Students Deserve

2020 Victories

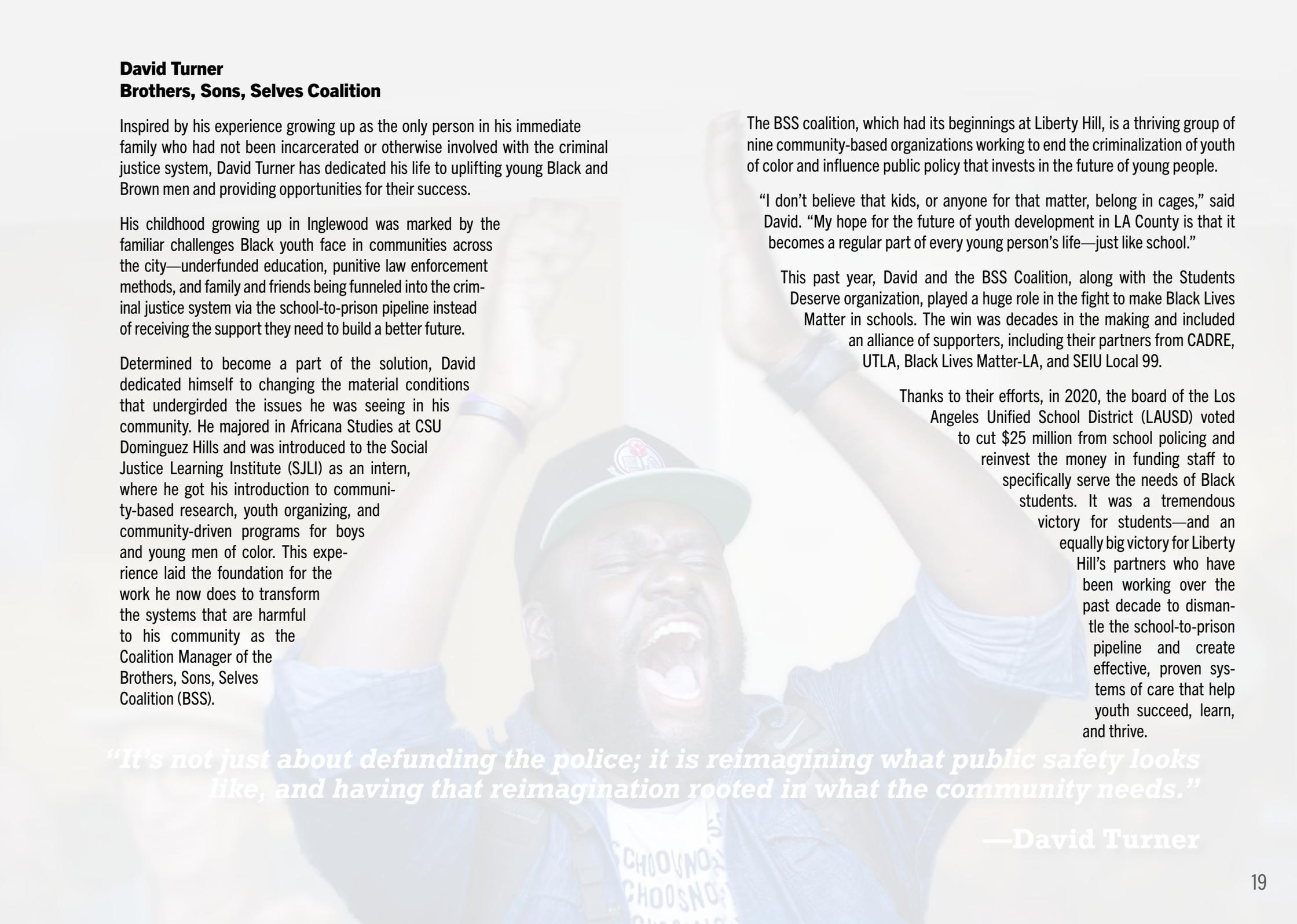
- **Building the nation's largest youth development system:** The LA County Board of Supervisors voted to replace the nation's largest youth justice system with a care-first model emphasizing emotional support, counseling, and treatment managed by a new Department of Youth Development. With an initial public investment of \$75 million, this transformation will serve as a national model for shifting from a system rooted in punishment to one rooted in care
- The board of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) voted to cut \$25 million from school policing and reinvest the money in funding staff to specifically serve the needs of Black students
- Measure J redirected more than \$250 million of the county's general fund to community investments like affordable housing, mental health services, youth development programs and job creation

Photo credit: Joshua Ham

Grantee Spotlight → **STUDENTS DESERVE**

Students Deserve, a Liberty Hill grantee and Rapid Response for Racial Justice Fund recipient, was also a major part of this victory. Along with Black Lives Matter-LA, and the Brothers Sons Selves Coalition, they partnered to help push LAUSD to divest the funds from the LA School Police Department, answering the call to reinvest

in youth through services such as counseling and youth development at schools with the highest numbers of Black students. As part of the campaign to push for reform, they launched a survey collecting thousands of responses. The results were powerful and played a vital role in the School Board's action.



David Turner Brothers, Sons, Selves Coalition

Inspired by his experience growing up as the only person in his immediate family who had not been incarcerated or otherwise involved with the criminal justice system, David Turner has dedicated his life to uplifting young Black and Brown men and providing opportunities for their success.

His childhood growing up in Inglewood was marked by the familiar challenges Black youth face in communities across the city—underfunded education, punitive law enforcement methods, and family and friends being funneled into the criminal justice system via the school-to-prison pipeline instead of receiving the support they need to build a better future.

Determined to become a part of the solution, David dedicated himself to changing the material conditions that undergirded the issues he was seeing in his community. He majored in Africana Studies at CSU Dominguez Hills and was introduced to the Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI) as an intern, where he got his introduction to community-based research, youth organizing, and community-driven programs for boys and young men of color. This experience laid the foundation for the work he now does to transform the systems that are harmful to his community as the Coalition Manager of the Brothers, Sons, Selves Coalition (BSS).

The BSS coalition, which had its beginnings at Liberty Hill, is a thriving group of nine community-based organizations working to end the criminalization of youth of color and influence public policy that invests in the future of young people.

“I don’t believe that kids, or anyone for that matter, belong in cages,” said David. “My hope for the future of youth development in LA County is that it becomes a regular part of every young person’s life—just like school.”

This past year, David and the BSS Coalition, along with the Students Deserve organization, played a huge role in the fight to make Black Lives Matter in schools. The win was decades in the making and included an alliance of supporters, including their partners from CADRE, UTLA, Black Lives Matter-LA, and SEIU Local 99.

Thanks to their efforts, in 2020, the board of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) voted to cut \$25 million from school policing and reinvest the money in funding staff to specifically serve the needs of Black students. It was a tremendous victory for students—and an equally big victory for Liberty Hill’s partners who have been working over the past decade to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and create effective, proven systems of care that help youth succeed, learn, and thrive.

“It’s not just about defunding the police; it is reimagining what public safety looks like, and having that reimagination rooted in what the community needs.”

—David Turner



“It’s not just about defunding the police; it is reimagining what public safety looks like, and having that reimagination rooted in what the community needs.”

—David Turner



The young people are truly what keep me motivated to continue this work. I want to ensure we honor and center these youth leaders who will carry the torch for this movement into the future.

– Darryl Sarmiento Molina, Executive Director, CBE

Fighting to Eliminate Toxic Neighborhood Oil Drilling



2020 Victories

- Permanent Closure of the AllenCo Oil Site in South LA
- LA County Board of Supervisors establishes “Just Transition to Clean Energy” task force
- Culver City votes to end toxic drilling in Inglewood Oil Field
- LA City Council drafts motion to phase out oil drilling throughout the City

Grantee Spotlight — COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT ACTION FUND (CBE Action)

CBE Action turned its attention to civic engagement this past year, launching a program to build power among low-income Black and Brown residents in four Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities in both Southern and Northern California, including Wilmington and the Southeast region of Los Angeles. Liberty Hill provided funds in support of this work designed to engage local residents in positive community change, including building an EJ Voter Block that can engage with

candidates on critical environmental concerns before and after elections. They are also working to train residents to educate and advocate through strategic involvement such as in-district visits with local legislators and providing testimony before regional decision-making bodies. In 2020, CBE Action was awarded our very first Environmental Justice Champions Award, presented by our EJ Champion donors, recognizing CBE Action’s dedication and commitment to this work.

Nizgui Gomez, Communities for a Better Environment

The fight for the environmental future we seek is a marathon, not a sprint. It will require current and future generations of dedicated activists—of all ages—to keep the pressure on interests that seek to maintain the status quo in the face of the devastating effects of climate change on our state and its residents. Particularly during the pandemic, residents exposed to the effects of toxic oil drilling have been more vulnerable to respiratory illness.

In the Harbor region of Los Angeles, adjacent to the third largest urban oil field in the nation, sits the small town of Wilmington. With hundred-year-old environmental regulations gathering dust, local residents continue to bear the brunt of the toxic effects of neighborhood oil drilling—in some instances happening only steps from their front door. This is one of the devastating forms of environmental racism youth activists like Nizgui Gomez and the organizers at Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) are fighting.

“Our family members are getting cancer, bronchitis, experiencing birth defects

and higher levels of asthma. That’s not normal,” said Nizgui. “That’s why our fight to implement a 2,500-foot safety buffer between these drilling sites and our homes and schools is so important. Our lives literally depend on it.”

Nizgui and her family are members of the Zapotecos people, tracing their roots to Oaxaca. She got her start as an activist fighting for the rights of indigenous people like her family. She discovered the work of CBE through a friend of her mother and thus began a new fight to save her community. After attending her first climate march in Wilmington at the age of 15, Nizgui began regularly attending CBE’s youth meetings to find out how to get engaged.

Soon she and other youth activists were playing an instrumental role in the Youth for Environmental Justice Lawsuit—marking the first time Black, Brown, and Indigenous youth sued the City of LA for rubber stamping drilling permits without conducting mandatory environmental studies and exposing residents to disproportionate health risks by allowing less-protective rules in their neighborhoods. They were victorious and won the right to new public processes and guidelines for local drilling sites. They also joined forces with the STAND-LA Coalition to fight for the end of neighborhood oil drilling.

“We do this not because we want to, but because we have to. Our lives depend on it.”

—Nizgui Gomez



“We do this not because we want to, but because we have to. Our lives depend on it.”

—Nizgui Gomez



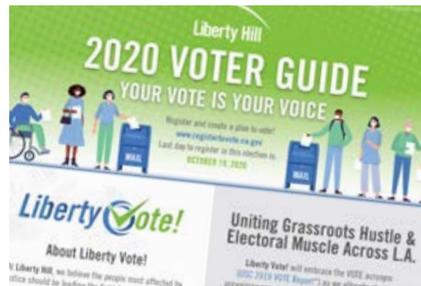
Flexing Electoral Muscle

From the community meeting to the protest march to the ballot box, the people most affected by injustice led the fights for change this past year. And Liberty Hill was there to support them. That’s why we relaunched our Liberty Vote! Program just in time for the generation-defining election of 2020.

Through grantmaking and other electorally focused initiatives designed to build power in LA County’s most disenfranchised communities, Liberty Vote! supports electoral engagement, outreach, and organizing efforts by organizations dedicated to social and economic justice. The initiative was relaunched in honor of Liberty Hill’s late Board

member and former Board chair Gary Stewart, a pioneering music executive whose lifetime of activism included strong advocacy for electoral engagement as a path to building community power.

Central to the Liberty Vote! effort was the publication of our 2020 Voter Guide and our grants to electoral (501[c]4) organizations and community-led ballot initiatives.



Igniting Grassroots Hustle

Locally, activists powered huge wins across Los Angeles on initiatives such as the landmark Measure J, which redirects hundreds of millions of dollars of the county’s general fund to community investments like affordable housing, mental health services, youth development programs, and job creation. The effort was led by the Re-Imagine L.A. County coalition—a group of activists with lived experience dealing with systems of injustice. Their longshot bid received widespread support. Another big victory was the passage of Measure US in Long Beach, which will generate additional revenue for youth and community services through an increase in taxes on business licenses for oil production.



Though disappointed in the results of Proposition 15—the Schools & Communities First Ballot Measure we endorsed—we witnessed some innovative outreach tactics that helped build power at the grassroots level. One very important outcome is a long-term commitment to year-round voter organizing that will ensure historically disenfranchised communities continue to lead the fights for reform. While we fell short at the ballot box this time, our allies and all of those fighting for equity will not give up and neither will we.

The support we received from Liberty Vote! enabled us to organize in ways that hadn’t previously been possible. These efforts will help empower our community to pass legislation that will improve the living conditions of Black and Brown people in Los Angeles, and ultimately eradicate the conditions that foster violence, substance abuse, and poverty.

– Leslie Cooper Johnson, Executive Director, Community Coalition Action Fund



Los Angeles renters have faced a housing crisis for many years, but it exponentially intensified with the onset of COVID-19. Over half a million people are estimated to have lost jobs in just the first six months of the pandemic, making rent even harder to pay. Although lawmakers passed several emergency policies to protect renters during the pandemic, untangling these protections and ensuring that renters know their rights became paramount. That's why Liberty Hill partnered with longtime housing justice organizations, legal service providers, and the LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs to launch Stay Housed L.A. County.

Stay Housed L.A. educates tenants on their rights and connects them to legal service providers who ensure that they are being fairly represented. The program includes targeted phone and text outreach to neighborhoods most vulnerable to eviction and displacement, know-your-rights virtual workshops, rental assistance, and free legal services for qualifying tenants.

Since the launch of the program more than 180,000 Angelenos have been connected with services and information—from the chronically ill senior who was served an eviction notice at the worst possible time to a tenant whose landlord was damaging her door and raising her utility fees in a show of illegal intimidation. We've also worked with dozens of people who are experiencing homelessness, including a woman who was hospitalized for coronavirus and had nowhere to go once released. No matter how someone enters our program they are connected with a trusted tenant organization.

This is only the beginning. Stay Housed L.A. was designed and implemented by the Renters' Right to Counsel—LA coalition (RTC), whose goal is to win a codified right to counsel across LA County. This would mean every renter facing eviction has access to legal representation. RTC is also placing a focus on tenant organizing, because it will take an empowered base of tenants across the county to build the people power needed to end unnecessary eviction and displacement for all.



Donors Bending the Arc Toward Justice

Making meaningful change in a year like 2020 would have been impossible without the unwavering commitment of Liberty Hill's longtime donor activists and funding partners and the many individuals and organizations that began new partnerships with Liberty Hill at this critical moment in history. Together, we are bending the arc toward justice.

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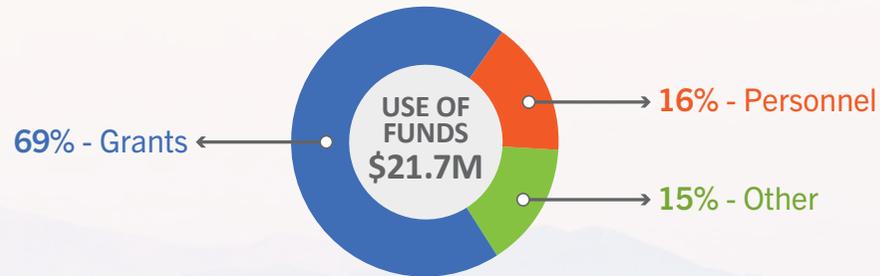
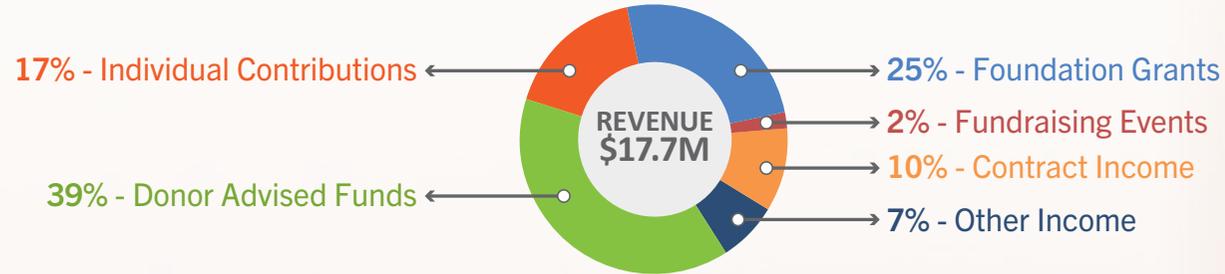
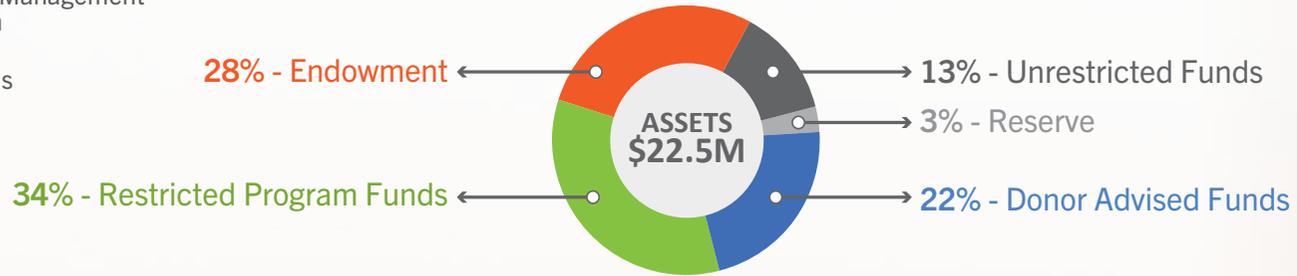
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***We want our partners to do more than just survive the pandemic—
we want them to lead the just reconstruction.***

– Shane Murphy Goldsmith



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