

**CLIMATE JUSTICE ALLIANCE**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**OCTOBER 2024 – OCTOBER 2025**



**COMMUNITIES UNITED FOR A JUST TRANSITION**



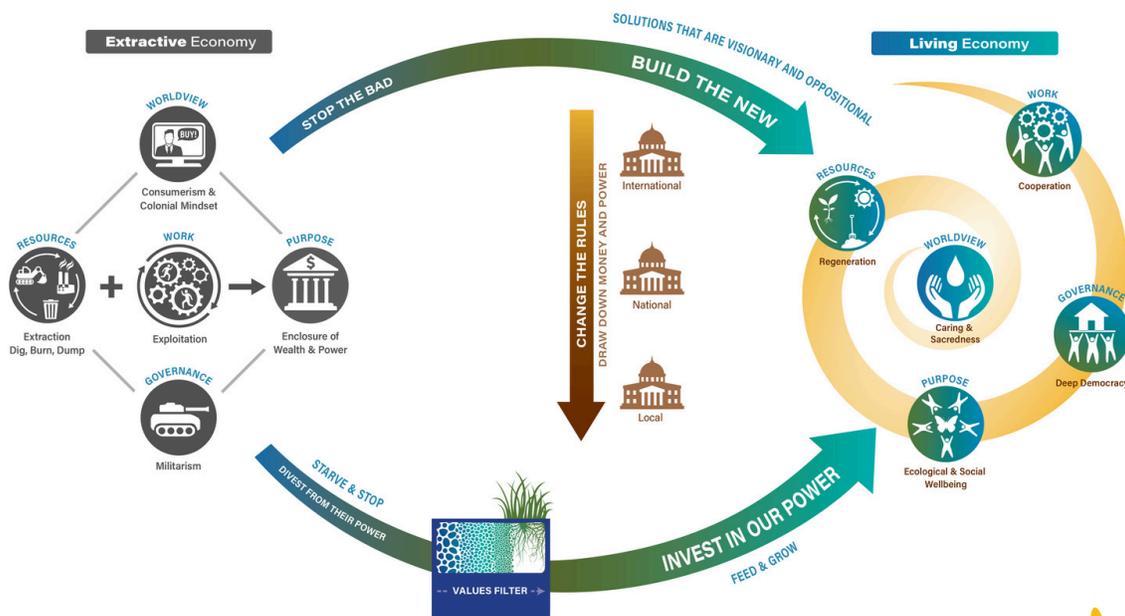
# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO: COMMUNITY TAKING CARE OF COMMUNITY

Climate Justice Alliance (CJA) was formed in 2013 by community-led Environmental Justice organizations to create a new center of gravity within the climate movement, while working to usher in a Just Transition. We have grown to an alliance of 94 organizations working at the forefront of the interlinked crises of climate change, racial injustice, economic and social inequality.

Our members span 28 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Tribal Territories across the United States. These include Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Asian-Pacific Islander, and low-income white communities, many of whom are located close to toxic facilities and polluting industries. We know frontline communities hold the solutions needed to address the climate crisis, and yet their solutions are not being prioritized.

Photo of La Vía Campesina International Brigade in Puerto Rico, hosted by long-standing Climate Justice Alliance member Organización Boricúa. Photo features final exam and closing celebration of the 12th cohort at El Josco Bravo School of Agroecology. Photo by Dom Hosack, Earthbound Building

Cover image: Members of the Media Justice and Memphis Communities Against Pollution (MCAP) data center delegation. Photo by Jessica Xiao, CJA



## WHAT IS A JUST TRANSITION?

Just Transition is a framework for shifting from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy—one that approaches production and consumption holistically and waste-free. It defines both our destination and how we get there.

The concept emerged from labor unions and Environmental Justice groups in low-income communities of color. These groups recognized the need to phase out industries harming workers, communities, and the planet while providing equitable pathways to just employment. It was rooted in workers and frontline communities defining the transition together.

Transition is inevitable; justice is not. The process of transition must be just and equitable, or the outcome never will be.

This means:

- Centering race, gender, and class in climate solutions
- Redressing past harms through reparations
- Creating new relationships of power centered in community governance

Just Transition is a vision-led, place-based set of principles and practices that build economic and political power. It challenges the status quo of extractive capitalism to create systems where both environments and communities can thrive.



# ADVANCING OUR META STRATEGIES IN 2025

Despite external pressures and reduced federal funding, we advanced a Just Transition by strengthening coordination between member organizations and the alliance.

Through our six meta-strategies—Fight the Bad, Build The New, Change The Rules, Move The Money, Build The Bigger We, and Change The Story—we organized frontline communities to create and implement community-led climate solutions and push back against harm.



# FIGHT THE BAD

ORGANIZING TO SHUT DOWN THE EXTRACTIVE ECONOMY THAT HARMS OUR COMMUNITIES, EXPLOITS OUR LABOR, AND DENIES US BASIC RIGHTS AND SOVEREIGNTY.

## AI Data Centers

In the past year, CJA created 7 educational resources for alliance members outlining AI and data center environmental justice impacts, including increased energy consumption, ratepayer hikes, land and water acquisition and compromise, impacts on frontline communities, especially Black communities, and the implications for tech security. In October 2025, CJA took a delegation of 10 southern and southwest members to Memphis, Tennessee, to participate in a training hosted by [Media Justice](#) and [Memphis Communities Against Pollution \(MCAP\)](#) to educate and coordinate strategy to challenge data center development that has been shown to harm and/or extract from their communities.



Following the training, CJA began working with members to create a new ad-hoc committee focused on supporting communities on the ground who are organizing to halt new data center projects, reject existing and new dirty energy projects related to data center development, ensure that environmental and health protections are upheld, and to demand regulation when development is inevitable.

In April 2025, CJA launched the CJA Movement Tech Cohort as another strategy to combat encroaching Big Tech. The cohort aims to build the capacity of CJA members to create a culture of security at their organizations, implement basic cybersecurity tools, learn about the harmful dependency that organizations have on Big Tech, and teach them about alternative tech stacks that exist to align our operations to our missions. The cohort engages in a series of regular workshops and collaborative engagements that include 40 CJA member organizations.

# BUILD THE NEW

BUILDING REAL MODELS OF THE NEXT ECONOMY THAT ARE ROOTED IN ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND EQUITY.

## Reinvest In Our Power (RiOP)

Reinvest in Our Power is a collaborative effort led by CJA to address inequity and democratize wealth by moving capital and governance from the extractive to the regenerative economy. The Reinvest in Our Power Campaign calls on Philanthropy to divest \$100 million from the extractive economy and reinvest this capital in the regenerative economy. RiOP stewards the Our Power Loan Fund (OPLF), a non-extractive fund to support community-led projects building a just economy.

Members of the Media Justice and Memphis Communities Against Pollution (MCAP) data center delegation. Photo by Jessica Xiao, CJA

In September 2024 and 2025, RiOP hosted a Just Transition Finance Training (JTFT) for 34 participants from across 9 states and territories to share expertise on cooperative development, non-extractive financing, and regenerative economic strategies. Prior to JTFT, we hosted a Training for Trainers session for new trainers to learn cooperative development frameworks and teach to others. By teaching RiOP's cooperative development curriculum, it provides communities a framework to utilize when developing their own local projects.

## **CHANGE THE RULES**

**WORKING WITH OUR MEMBERS FROM THE LOCAL TO INTERNATIONAL TO FIGHT THE BAD AND ADVANCE THE NEW ECONOMY.**

### **Policy**

CJA's policy team convened members and consolidated an alliance strategy around legislative action, from local to international. With limited opportunities to support new federal climate policy, given a changing



*CJA Change the Rules Strategy Session in DC. Photo by Keenan Rhodes*

political landscape, our approach shifted to protecting current safeguards through multiple channels. We advocated for maintaining EPA staffing and funding levels to ensure adequate environmental oversight of industries, and supported environmental priorities in the FY25 federal appropriations process and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) FY26 funding.

Additionally, we worked against proposals on permitting reform, especially those designed to weaken foundational environmental laws that safeguard public health and well-being, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Clean Water Act (CWA), and Endangered Species Act (ESA). Since January, we have co-signed 40 letters urging Congress to reject Congressional Review Acts that would roll back critical protections, including Clean Air Standards, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) protections for marine archaeological resources, EPA's methane polluter fee, and EPA's Trichloroethylene (TCE) Rule. These efforts collectively aim to preserve the regulatory framework that safeguards public health and environmental integrity.

## MOVE THE MONEY

**ORGANIZING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VEHICLES TO WEAKEN EXTRACTIVE SYSTEMS AND STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY.**

### Just Returns

With the [National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy \(NCRP\)](#) and the [Tishman Environment and Design Center \(TEDC\)](#), we released the final sections of [The Just Returns Project](#). The results of this three-part research project demonstrate that prioritizing grassroots organizations in funding portfolios and moving money into climate-aligned investments has a greater reduction in carbon emissions than traditional endowment holdings. We presented this at multiple funder conferences to provide a research-based case for why major philanthropic institutions need to [move money](#) out of the old economy using both public and private vehicles.

### Fund to Build Grassroots Power

CJA serves as an advisory board member for [The Fund to Build Grassroots Power \(FBGP\)](#). FBGP is a movement-accountable intermediary fund established in 2018 by Freedom Together—formerly JPB Foundation—to accelerate a Just Transition by strengthening and supporting four national grassroots networks: CJA, the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum, the People's Action Institute, and PowerSwitch Action. Since 2019, FBGP has distributed \$34 million to 136 groups across the country.



*Photo: Panelists at the "Put Your Money Where Your Mission Is: How to Make Your Investments Climate-Justice Aligned" event during NY Climate Week*

## BUILD THE BIGGER WE

BRIDGING MOVEMENTS ACROSS SECTORS, ISSUES, AND GEOGRAPHY TO CREATE A GLOBAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT THAT CONNECTS CLIMATE, WORKERS' RIGHTS, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, HOUSING, AND OTHER CONCERNS.

CJA's 'build the bigger we' approach recognizes that climate justice cannot be won in silos. By coordinating with 25 grassroots-led alliance groups within our 94-member network, we create intentional bridges across economic sectors, issues, and geography. In October 2024, a small delegation of CJA members and staff traveled to Cali, Colombia, for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The delegation built relationships with international social movements, learned about UN processes, and regional dynamics. Our COP30 delegation in Brazil applied lessons learned from many previous COPs and the recent CBD to develop movement strategies and build relationships to empower frontline communities pursuing climate justice at local and international levels.



## CHANGE THE STORY

SHIFTING DOMINANT CULTURE AND POWER STRUCTURES BY CHANGING NARRATIVES THAT NORMALIZE INJUSTICE AND BUILD CAPACITY TO MAKE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IMAGINABLE.

### Creative Wildfire

As part of our narrative strategy, we launched the next iteration of the [Creative Wildfire](#) (CW) artist program with Movement Generation (MG), New Economy Coalition (NEC), and art.coop this September. Established in 2021, CW is a cultural organizing project designed to partner artists with grassroots organizations to create art to advance cultural narratives on the importance and effectiveness of frontline climate solutions. In addition to artists being partnered with movement groups, CW is in the process of creating a new narrative strategy and artist manifesto to guide their future cultural work.

### Media Work

We also focused on leveraging the voices of CJA's member leadership through increased media coverage in mainstream news outlets. By ensuring CJA's leadership broke through the news cycle at critical moments, we helped ensure that the true impact of frontline communities and the organizations that serve them are better understood and valued, especially at a time when they are under attack. Amplifying the real-life value their programs have for hard-working families and communities throughout the country is critical in this climate of misinformation and rollbacks.

Photo of CJA COP 30 delegation in Belém, Brazil



# MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

*CJA Members at the UN's Biodiversity Summit in Colombia. Photo by Photo by Edgar Franks*

## NORTHWEST OREGON JUST TRANSITION ALLIANCE

Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA) works to advocate for policies that promote Environmental Justice, economic fairness, and community empowerment during the transition to a clean energy economy. Their 2025 legislative priorities included expanding access to renewable energy and energy efficiency programs, supporting job training and workforce development, enhancing protections for workers in fossil fuel industries, and advancing equitable community-led renewable energy projects.

During Oregon's 2025 Legislative Long Session, Oregon Just Transition Alliance members and allies helped pass [the FAIR Energy Act](#). Now signed into law, this victory curbs unchecked utility rate hikes, protects frontline families who already spend a disproportionate share of their income on energy bills, and tackles a root cause of Oregon's energy affordability crisis.

## WEST COAST FEED BLACK FUTURES

Feed Black Futures (FBF) works alongside communities to reclaim access to healthy, culturally relevant food and land. Evolving from emergency relief to sustainable change, they install edible gardens, provide agricultural training, and support Black-led food economies. To date, they've delivered 6,267 nutritious food boxes to over 215 Black individuals, invested over \$300,000 in BIPOC farming operations, and helped 166 individuals receive food justice training. This year marked the formation of their first Leadership Council, a collective of seven dedicated members guiding food sovereignty and abolition work by deepening political education, hosting teach-ins and gatherings, and cultivating relationships with land stewards to shape lasting structures of care and governance. The Leadership Council is vital because it reflects FBF's belief that true liberation and self-determination come when those most impacted lead the way in shaping the future of our food systems.

## MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

### SOUTH THE PEOPLE'S JUSTICE COUNCIL

The People's Justice Council in Alabama is dedicated to empowering communities to fight for their own justice and equity through a variety of programs that provide them with the necessary tools, resources, and leadership skills. Their work focuses on fostering community-led advocacy, organizing, and policy change to address issues of social and economic injustice.

People's Justice released its first documentary, *Exposing the Unspoken*, in 2025 to shed light on how the dirty energy industry, led by corporations like Southern Company, endangers vulnerable communities. The documentary exposes how these companies manipulate legislators, use their influence to deny the climate crisis, and prioritize shareholder profits over public health and democracy. By highlighting these predatory practices, this documentary is a crucial tool for exposing the abuses of powerful energy companies and advocating for a just and equitable transition to clean energy.

### GLOBAL GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR INCINERATOR ALTERNATIVES (GAIA)

GAIA is a global alliance of more than 1,000 grassroots organizations advancing Environmental Justice and working toward a just, zero waste future that fosters collaboration, strategic alignment, and capacity-building across movements. As both a convening leader and funding intermediary, they work with their members to strengthen grassroots leadership, foster collaboration, and build power to expose false solutions and reshape the narrative around waste, pollution, and justice. Through coordinated policy advocacy and grassroots mobilization, the network is pushing back against escalating threats from plastics, methane, and toxic electric vehicle battery waste, while advancing proven zero-waste solutions that put people and planet first, opening the door for deeper impact with committed partners. This year, they launched their newest regrant initiative, [Advancing Methane Reduction and Environmental Justice](#). With an investment from the [Global Methane Hub](#), GAIA mobilized \$675,000 to its member organizations across the US that are implementing community-driven solutions, including composting, food waste prevention and diversion, landfill pollution reduction and monitoring, and climate and Environmental Justice leadership.



## MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

# NORTHEAST PUSH BUFFALO

PUSH Buffalo (People United for Sustainable Housing) is a community-based organization mobilizing people to fight against systemic divestment and displacement in Buffalo, New York. They organize residents to create affordable, sustainable housing, train workers for green jobs, and co-lead policy campaigns that advance climate and economic justice.

On September 30, 2025, PUSH Buffalo cut the ribbons on West Side Homes, a \$23 million development that brings 49 new affordable apartments to Buffalo's West Side. This initiative of PUSH Buffalo's housing development arm (Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company) renovated two buildings and constructed 14 new buildings across 17 vacant lots, creating homes for households earning at or below 50 percent of the area median income while integrating cutting-edge sustainability features that address climate resilience and utilize renewable energy. PUSH's work to create

affordable housing and ensure that no Buffalonian is left behind comes directly from their process of community engagement and development. This project is proof that housing can be affordable, sustainable, and within reach for our community when we build it together.

# SOUTHEAST THE SMILE TRUST

The Smile Trust is a Black-led nonprofit rooted in radical care, mutual aid and disaster resilience across the US and Global South. As founders of the Freedom Lab and the Community Emergency Operations Center (CEOC) model, they provide food sovereignty programs, housing support, and climate disaster response that center frontline communities. In 2025, their work reached thousands through flood relief stipends, neighborhood fridges, and rapid response activations: advancing climate justice by ensuring that Black, Brown, and low-income families are not just surviving crises but building power to thrive beyond them.

*La Via Campesina International Brigade, Photo by Samantha Hosein, IALA-PR*



## MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

# MIDWEST

## LVEJO

Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 in Chicago, IL, with a mission to achieve Environmental Justice in the Little Village area. The organization works to organize and

accomplish Environmental Justice for immigrant, low-income, and working-class families through community-based organizing that addresses the root causes of environmental issues. LVEJO engages in activities such as advocating for clean air and water, fighting against pollution from industrial facilities, organizing community members through campaigns and education, and promoting policies that protect environmental health in their neighborhood.



The US Food Sovereignty Alliance awarded LVEJO the 2024 Food Sovereignty Prize for its exemplary commitment to food sovereignty and responsible stewardship of our Earth. The Food Sovereignty Prize is awarded annually to one domestic and one international organization.

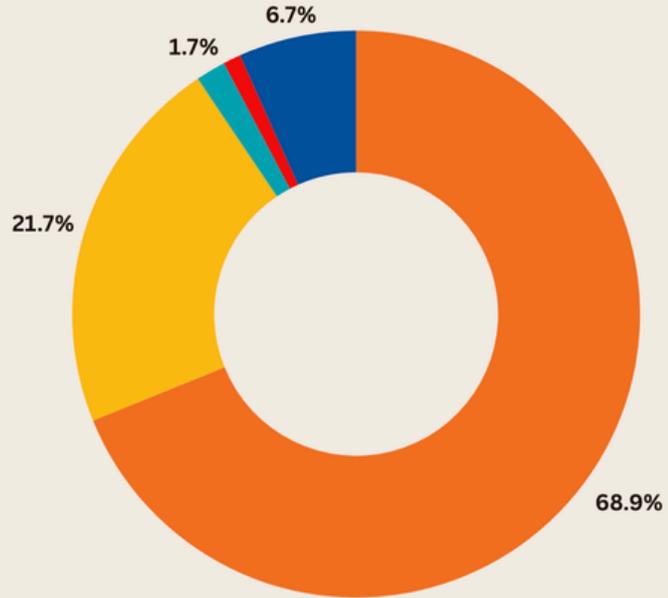
*Photo: Mural at LVEJO's Las Semillas de Justicia Garden, a hub for intergenerational exchanges of organic food-growth practices taught by, with and for Little Village residents. Semillas de Justicia is home to free weekly community dinners, bike repair workshops, and art classes for children in the summer; a Fall Harvest Fest, and several educational workshops on sustainability and climate adaptation throughout the year.*

CJA's 2025 fiscal year is from July 1, 2024, to June 31, 2025. This year, we balanced program growth with sustainable resource management, even as support for climate justice fluctuated.

# Income

\$9,128,903

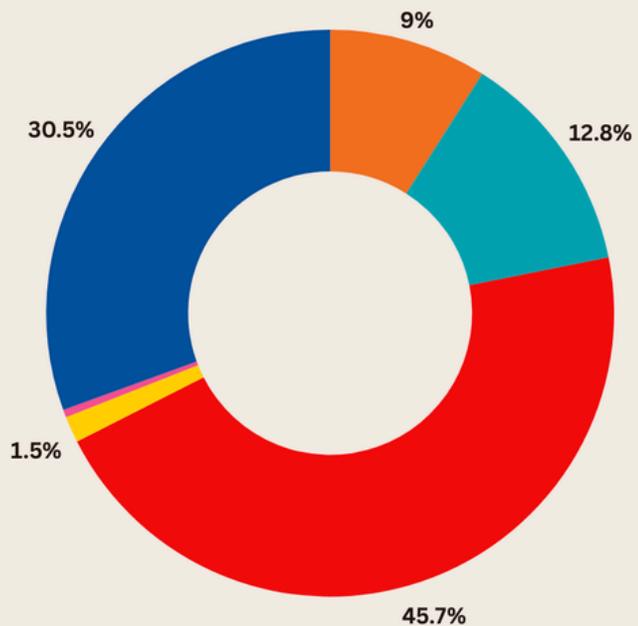
- Foundations \$6,284,608
- Individuals \$1,980,184
- Corp \$159,119
- Nonprofit \$91,554
- Other \$613,436



# Expenses

\$9,073,702

- Salaries and Benefits \$4,144,265
- Regrants \$816,875
- Program \$1,165,550
- General Operating \$2,771,532
- Prof Fees \$40,230
- Stipends, Honoraria and Sponsor \$135,250



# CHALLENGES AND LOOKING FORWARD

While CJA and our members have achieved significant wins over the past year, frontline communities face particular challenges such as safety concerns, federal funding cuts, and philanthropic divestment.

**Safety and Security:** Members are experiencing increased security threats to their personal, organizational, and community well-being. Threats have taken the form of ICE raids, politicized harassment, and hacking of financial accounts. These challenges are forcing members to divert their limited resources from community organizing towards legal defense and security measures, creating strain across the entire movement. We are working to provide additional support by connecting members with values-aligned legal representation so they can respond to inquiry and intimidation letters, and we launched the CJA Movement Tech Cohort (CxMT) to provide digital security training after reports of members facing increased social media threats and data breaches.

**Federal Divestment:** The cancellation of our \$60 million EPA grant led to the sunset of the UNITE-EJ Program. Awarded under the Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program (EJ TCGP), UNITE-EJ was focused on providing assistance to regional grantmakers, project technical assistance, and \$30M in grants to eligible frontline communities. After investing \$1.5 million to launch the program without receiving reimbursement from the EPA we ended up laying off 8 staff hired specifically to run the program. CJA members and allies

were also impacted by federal funding cuts. This past August, the EPA announced its plans to rescind all 60 grants awarded under its \$7 billion Solar for All Program, and on September 2, 2025, a DC District Court upheld the EPA's termination of the \$20 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The billions of dollars lost in federal funding have left organizations with major deficits, triggered staff layoffs, and forced the closing of critical projects and programs that ensured health and safety for people.

**Philanthropic Divestment:** Institutional philanthropy is stepping back from frontline climate justice organizations—shrinking climate portfolios, redirecting funds to groups outside the movement, or eliminating funding altogether. Early estimates from our membership show \$40 million withdrawn at the very moment when increased investment is critical.

*Photo of UPROSE members in Sunset Park, Brooklyn  
by Neha Gautam, Survival Media Agency*



# ANNUAL PRIORITIES

Despite these setbacks, we are still building a Just Transition through the collective power of frontline communities across the country, US territories, and Tribal nations.

In February 2025, we convened 50 Executive Directors from across our membership to focus on responding to political shifts, fortifying digital infrastructure, and advancing collective strategy across the alliance. Following this meeting, we hosted our bi-annual assembly—Rooting in Our Power—attended by 50 member organizations representing 26 states and territories. Participants created strategic roadmaps for the next 2 years and ratified the annual priorities identified from our February ED meeting for fiscal year 2026 and the year ahead (July 2026 to June 2027):

- Defend and prepare members for incoming legal, financial, and tech attacks on c3s.
- Define, plan out, and resource “Resiliency Hubs” strategy across the alliance to weave and scale Just Recovery and Food Sovereignty approaches.

- Convene and consolidate alliance strategy around policy from local, state, federal, and international levels.
- Gather and build a 12-year strategy for a Just Transition that has at its helm Black Liberation, Indigenous Sovereignty, and all frontline communities.

In times of political upheaval and uncertainty, democratically developed strategic priorities ensure that we remain anchored to our communities' authentic needs and values, and ground us in our commitment to build the new as we fight the bad.

We are not alone in our fight. To learn more about our work and the power of frontline solutions, contact [remo@climatejusticealliance.org](mailto:remo@climatejusticealliance.org).



**“The power is always with the people. That is true for every community in this country. It's up to us to create the world we want to live in.”**

**- Dawn Wells-Clyburn,  
Executive Director PUSH Buffalo**

