

Community CONNECTION

The Voice and Heartbeat of Our Community

April - May 2015 | www.congress.org



You Can't Kill Africa Community Residents Organize for Justice for Charly Keunang

Written by Adam Rice and General Dogon

On the morning of Sunday, March 1, the Los Angeles Police Department murdered another unarmed homeless Skid Row resident. This time, however, the brutal killing was captured on video by a community member. The video was posted on the internet and went viral immediately, making the incident a national news story. In the video, the man known as "Africa" (later identified as Charly Keunang) was taken down by a group of five officers and soon after three of the officers opened fire, shooting and killing Africa while he was being held by all limbs on the ground. On the video, it is clearly audible that the three officers shot at point blank range after another yells, "He's got my gun!" but there is nothing seen in the video that actually confirms this claim. Officers then handcuffed African and left him to die on the sidewalk, in front of the whole community.

As has become standard practice in officer involved shootings in our city, LAPD responded by deflecting attention away from their crime. The same day LAPD murdered brother Africa's body, attacking him in the small piece of sidewalk that was his home, Chief Charlie Beck attempted to murder Africa's character in the press. Beck stated, prior to any investigation, that Africa had grabbed one of the officer's guns. Chief Charlie Beck and Mayor Garcetti both used another standard tactic when responding to LAPD use of lethal force on unarmed people -- reinforcing over and over again that no decision or conclusion on the killing would be made until after the City's thorough investigation process ran its course, yet simultaneously exonerating the officers. Just two days later, when LAPD first released information on the victim they predictably opened with his criminal past, which led to the Los Angeles Times headline, "Man Shot Dead by LAPD on Skid Row was Convicted Bank Robber."

While LAPD tried to use their propaganda machine to control the story, the community immediately jumped into action, conducting their own investigation and organizing the neighborhood outrage into focused demands for swift justice and accountability.

Continued on page 6

No Se Puede Matar a Africa Residentes de la Comunidad Organizan por la Justicia para Charly Keunang

Escrito por Adam Rice y General Dogon | Traducido por Carmen Vega

En la mañana del domingo, 1ro de Marzo, el Departamento de Policia de Los Ángeles, mató a otro hombre residente desalojado, no armado en Skid Row. Sin embargo, esta vez el asesinato brutal fué captado en video por un miembro de la comunidad. El video pasó a la red y se volvió viral de inmediato convirtiendo el incidente en noticia nacional. En el video, el hombre conicido como "Africa" (luego identificado como Charly Keunang) fué derrotado por cinco oficiales y poco despues tres de ellos dispararon y mataron a Africa mientras lo sujetaban al suelo por cada extremidad. En el video se escucha claramente que los tres oficiales dispararon a quemarropa luego que uno de ellos grito "¡Tiene mi pistola!" Pero no se muestra nada en el video que confirme la reclamación. Los oficiales entonces esposan a Africa y lo dejan en la acera a morir frente a toda la comunidad.

Como ultimamente es practica común en tiroteos que involucren a un oficial en nuestra ciudad, LAPD respondió desviando la atención de su crimen. El mismo dia que LAPD mato el cuerpo del hermano Africa, atacandole en el pedacito de acera que era su casa, en la prensa, Chief Charlie Beck intento asesinar su carácter. Hantes de cualquier investigación Beck declaro que África habia agarado la pistola de uno de los oficiales. Chief Charlie Beck y el Alcalde Garcetti usaron taticas estándar al responder a el uso de fuerza letal contra personas no armadas- reforzando una y otra vez que no habría conclusión en el asesinato hasta despues de de que un minucioso proceso de investigación por la Ciudad se haiga completado, y simultaneamente, exonerando al los oficiales. Sólo dos días despues, cuando LAPD publicó información de la victima, prediciblemente comen-zaron con sú historial criminal cual conlleva a el título del Los Angeles Times "Hombre asesinado por LAPD en Skid Row era un convicto ladrón de bancos."

Mientras que LAPD trató de utilizar su máquina propagandista para controlar la historia, la comunidad salto a la acción llevando su propia investigación y organizando la ira de la vecindad hacia demandas rapida y enfocadas a la justicia y rendición de cuentas.

Continúa en la página 7

YES ON 47
CALIFORNIANS FOR
SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS & SCHOOLS

Page 4
WHAT PROP 47 MEANS TO ME AND HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT FROM IT TOO

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Page 5
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: HOW TO LEGALLY FILM THE POLICE



North American Street Newspaper Associat

Suggested Minimum Donation \$1

Pueblo Del Rio Residents Lead Neighborhood Clean Up

Written by Steve Diaz

In March, the Pueblo Del Rio tenant committee organized a neighborhood clean-up of the MTA bridge located in the middle of the community on 53rd Street and Long Beach Blvd. Since the neighborhood is divided by the train tracks, the bridge was created to link one side of the community to the other. Historically, neither the bridge nor the areas around the bridge have been maintained by either the city or the MTA. This lack of attention by elected officials and public agencies has created frustration for tenants who have been actively working to improve the Pueblos.

So on an early Saturday morning residents decided to take the matter into their own hands and clean up the often littered bridge. After breaking up into teams and cleaning for two hours, committee members removed six bags of trash and were excited about taking something they had been complaining about for months and transforming it into a friendlier, cleaner space. "It was great," said tenant leader Francisco Estrada. "We came out here to do something good. Now we need to get more people involved the next time."

Throughout out the year the tenant committee will be organizing events like this to continue to transform public space throughout Pueblo Del Rio. Issues of housing stability food access, public safety, speed bumps and overall community improvement will be at the forefront as we move forward.

To get more involved, join the committee, which meets the second Wednesday of every month at 5:30pm in the Slauson Park Rec Center on 53rd and Compton. You can also stop by our weekly community produce market every Wednesday from 1pm to 3:30pm in the same location.



Members of the Pueblo del Rio tenant committee after the clean up; Miembros del comité de inquilinos de Pueblo Del Rio despues de la limpieza.

Residentes del Pueblo del Río organizan una limpieza del vecindario

Escrito por Steve Díaz

En marzo, el comité de inquilinos de Pueblo Del Rio organizó una limpieza comunitaria del puente que cruza sobre las vías de tren de MTA y que se encuentra en medio de la comunidad por la calle 53 y Long Beach Blvd. Desde que la comunidad fue dividida por las vías del tren, el puente fue creado para vincular una parte de la comunidad a la otra. Históricamente, ni el puente ni las áreas alrededor

del puente se han mantenido por la ciudad o el MTA. Esta falta de atención por parte del gobierno y las agencias públicas ha creado frustración para los inquilinos que han estado trabajando activamente para mejorar los Pueblos.

Así que en un reciente sábado por la mañana los residentes decidieron a tomar el asunto en sus propias manos y limpiar el puente. Varios equipos de residentes limpiaron durante dos horas y recogieron seis bolsas de basura. Ellos estaban emocionados por haber transformado algo de que se quejaban durante meses en un espacio más limpio y más amable. "Fue genial," dijo un líder de los inquilinos Francisco Estrada. "Hemos venido aquí para hacer algo bueno. Ahora tenemos que lograr que más gente se involucre la próxima vez."

Este año el comité de los inquilinos estará organizando eventos como este para seguir transformando el espacio público a lo largo de Pueblo Del Rio. Problemas de acceso a los alimentos, la seguridad pública, los topes de velocidad y la mejora general de la comunidad van a ser las principales medidas que avanzamos.

Para involucrarse, únase al comité que se reúne el segundo miércoles de cada mes a las 5:30 pm en el Centro Recreativo del Parque Slauson en la 53 y Compton. También puede pasar por nuestro mercado comunitario de productos todos los miércoles desde la 1 hasta las 3:30 de la tarde en el mismo lugar.

PUEBLO DEL RIO COMMUNITY PRODUCE MARKET

FRESH | ORGANIC
LOCAL | AFFORDABLE
FRUITS AND
VEGETABLES

JAMES SLAUSON PARK
COMMUNITY CENTER

Located at 53rd and Compton Ave.

Thursdays
starting
in May



EVERY WEDNESDAY
1PM - 3PM

LA COMUNIDAD PUEBLO DEL RIO MERCADO DE PRODUCTOS

FRESCO | ORGÁNICO
LOCAL | ASEQUIBLE
FRUTAS Y
VERDURAS

EN EL SALON COMUNITARIO
DEL PARQUE JAMES SLAUSON

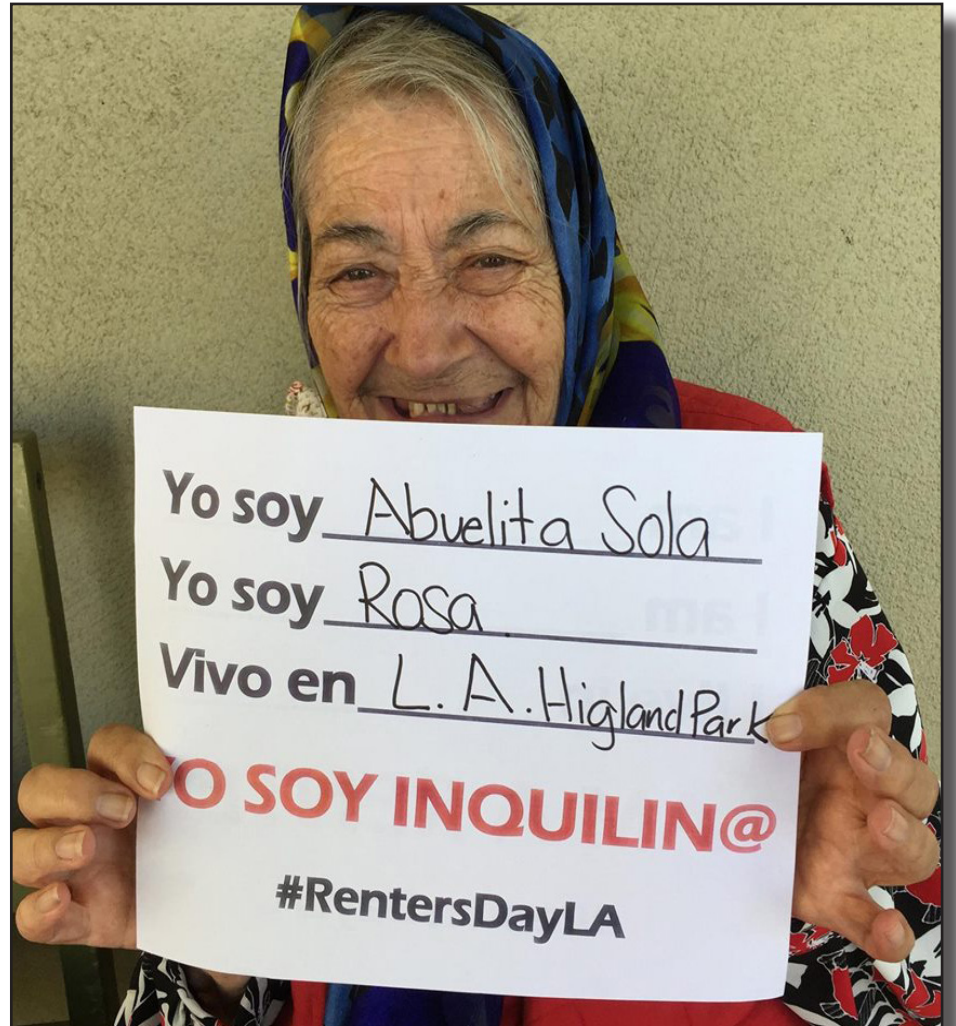
ubicado en 53rd and Compton Ave.

Jueves
empezando
en Mayo



CADA MIERCOLES
1:00PM-3:00PM

Housing | La Vivienda



Renters' Day 2015

Written by Becky Dennison

On April 22, hundreds of renters and their allies from across Los Angeles will convene at City Hall for the second annual Renters Day LA. In a city with a renter majority and the worst housing crisis in the country by most measures, LA's City government simply must do much more to protect tenants from displacement, bring down rent levels, and end homelessness.

This year, one important policy is moving forward that will help preserve rent stabilized housing for the long-term and ensure that renters of all incomes live in healthy and safe conditions. Among other Renters Day LA declarations and testimonies, a motion is being heard on the 22nd that instructs the City's Housing and Community Investment Department to make recommendations to the City Council regarding ordinance changes needed to ensure and enforce high quality repairs when renters make complaints and/or the City issues orders to repair.

Right now, there are limitations that lead to "Mickey Mouse" repairs - or those repairs that patch over the symptom of the problem, but don't fix the problem for the long term. This is especially prevalent for low-income tenants. But this is just the first step - much more is needed. Get involved with LA CAN and Renters Day LA today to hold the City accountable to renters and really start to end our housing crisis.

The Jordan Downs Tenant Committee

The Jordan Downs Tenant Committee began meeting in the summer of 2013 and has already accomplished great things like stopping evictions, getting warning signs placed on the toxic factory site wall and getting the State to commit \$100,000 towards investigating the Exxon Mobil pipeline leak on Alameda! The Committee came together to promote tenants' rights and stop unfair evictions and, with a dedicated base of mostly resident mothers, the committee has expanded its focus to also address community safety and environmental justice.

Have you received a legal notice from HACLA and are worried you might be evicted? Are you concerned about unannounced visits by HACLA staff and LAPD? Have the new parking restrictions left you with nowhere to park or spending much needed cash on parking tickets & towing bills instead of rent, food and other basic necessities? Are you worried about the lead and arsenic found all over Jordan High or that you and your children might be exposed to dangerous toxins right in your own backyard?

COME and express your concerns, LEARN how to defend your rights and EMPOWER yourself and your community through working together towards common goals, large and small. All JD TENANTS ARE WELCOMED! The committee is looking for a permanent meeting place but still meets every 2nd and 4th Tuesday evening at 5pm in the park behind the gym. Contact (text/call) Thelmy at 818-835-1091 or at lahumanrighttohousing@gmail.com for more information!

El Día del Inquilino 2015

Escrito por Becky Dennison

El 22 de Abril, cientos de inquilinos y sus aliados de todas partes de Los Angeles se reunirán en el Ayuntamiento para el segundo anual Día del Inquilino. En una ciudad donde la mayoría de la población son inquilinos y existe la peor crisis de vivienda en el país, el gobierno de la Ciudad de LA simplemente debe hacer mucho más para proteger a los inquilinos contra el desplazamiento, para reducir las rentas, y para poner fin a la falta de vivienda.

Este año, una política importante se está moviendo hacia adelante que ayudará a preservar las viviendas bajo control de rentas a largo plazo y asegurará que los inquilinos de todos ingresos vivan en condiciones saludables y seguras. Entre declaraciones y testimonios del Renters Day LA (Día Del Inquilino), una moción será escuchada el 22 que instruyera al Departamento de Vivienda de la Ciudad a hacer recomendaciones al Consejo Municipal respecto cambios necesarios a las ordenanzas para garantizar y hacer reparaciones de alta calidad cuando los inquilinos hacen quejas o la Ciudad emite órdenes para reparar.

En este momento, existen limitaciones que resultan en reparaciones "Mickey Mouse" - o sea, las reparaciones que solo hacen parcha sobre el síntoma del problema, pero no solucionan el problema a largo plazo. Esto es especialmente frecuente para los inquilinos de bajos ingresos. Pero esto es sólo el primer paso - se necesita mucho más. Involúcrese con LA CAN y Renters' Day LA hoy para responsabilizar la Ciudad a los inquilinos y realmente empezar a poner fin a nuestra crisis de vivienda.

El Comité de Inquilinos de Jordan Downs

El Comité de Inquilinos de Jordan Downs comenzó a reunirse en el verano de 2013 y ya ha logrado grandes cosas como detener los desalojos, obtener letreros de advertencia colocados en la pared de la fábrica tóxica y conseguir \$100,000 dólares del Estado destinados hacia la investigación de la ruptura del oleoducto de Exxon Mobil que corre debajo de la calle Alameda! El Comité se reunió para promover los derechos de los inquilinos y detener los desalojos injustos y, con un dedicado base de residentes (la mayoría madres), el comité ha ampliado su enfoque para abordar también la seguridad y la justicia ambiental.

¿Ha recibido un aviso legal de HACLA y se preocupa que puede ser desalojado? ¿Se preocupa por las visitas sin previo aviso por parte del personal de la HACLA y LAPD? ¿Se ha quedado sin donde estacionar su coche o pagando caros tiquetes con dinero necesario para pagar la renta y otras necesidades básicas -debido a las nuevas restricciones de estacionamiento? ¿Está preocupado por el plomo y el arsénico encontrado en todo Jordan High o que usted y sus hijos podrían estar expuesto a toxinas peligrosas justo en su propio patio trasero? Venga a expresar sus inquietudes, aprender a defender sus derechos y empoderarse usted mismo y a su comunidad a través de trabajar juntos hacia metas comunes, grandes y pequeñas.

Todo INQUILINO de JD son bienvenidos! El comité se sigue reuniendo cada 2º y 4º martes a las 5 de la tarde en el parque atrás del gimnasio. Comuníquese (text / llamada) con Thelmy al 818-835-1091 o al lahumanrighttohousing@gmail.com para más información!

Civil Rights

What Prop 47 Means to Me and How You Can Benefit Too

Written by Wesley Walker

In November of last year, California voters passed Proposition 47, which changed several felonies or “wobblers” (can be charged as a felony or misdemeanor) to misdemeanors and allows people who have been convicted of these offenses in the past to remove the felonies from their record. Last fall, I too helped with the campaign to get Proposition 47 passed, because it was a very important change for me. Now with its passage, felonies can be removed from old criminal record like mine. Yes, it was personal for me, and I loved working with LA CAN, Equal Voice, and many other groups from across the state to achieve this historic change and reduce mass incarceration.

Proposition 47, also known as the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act, impacts the following convictions: simple drug possession, petty theft under \$950, shoplifting under \$950, forging or writing a bad check under \$950, and receipt of stolen property under \$950. These offenses will now only be able to be charged as misdemeanors, reducing sentences and the number of people sent to prison. By reducing incarceration costs, hundreds of millions in savings can be re-invested in substance abuse and mental health treatment, education and other community health programs. However, the allocation of

these savings will be a hard fight to keep them out of re-investment in the criminal justice system, so more organizing is happening now.

The time is now to re-classify your record if you qualify, because you can only do that for three years from the passage of the Proposition – and there are only 2 ½ years left! I look at it this way: why have a lifetime label attached to you as a stigma of being a convicted felon when you can help yourself by coming to the LA CAN legal clinic and file your petition to have your felony changed to a misdemeanor? Your potential for getting a job, or housing, or sometimes other benefits is impacted because you have a felony on your record.

So what are you waiting for? The first thing I did – and you have to do – was to go get a complete case docket at a Los Angeles County Courthouse (or the County(ies) where your conviction occurred). Sometimes the clerk will tell you there is a fee, but low-income people should not have to pay any fee and you can show your California ID or EBT card to get your docket for free. I filled out my petition for reclassification in LA CAN’s legal clinic and am waiting for my final result now. There is no appearance before a judge – if you were convicted of the qualifying offenses, you are automatically eligible to benefit. Unfortunately there is an exception to eligibility – those with murder or sex offense convictions are not eligible.

Someone like me and others who were convicted of a minor, non-violent offense can now have a little bit of justice and remove that felony label and all the negative that comes with it. And others facing these

Do you have a low-level, non-violent felony on your record? Under Prop 47, you may be able change that felony to a misdemeanor.

(Individuals with certain previous convictions, such as, rape, murder or child molestation, or who are in the sex offender registry will not be eligible to get these felonies reclassified.)

Simple drug possession | Petty theft under \$950 | Shoplifting under \$950 | Forging or writing a bad check under \$950 | Receipt of stolen property under \$950.

No matter how old the conviction, if you have any of the crimes listed above on your record, most people can apply through a simple process to have it changed from a felony to a misdemeanor (if the conviction was in a California court). You will need a copy of your record, rap sheet, and/or court docket to apply.

To learn more or to apply to have your felony record changed to a misdemeanor, come to the LA CAN Legal Clinic every Wednesday at 6pm at 838 E. 6th St. 90021.

See other side of flyer for more information.

same charges now will face reduced consequences. So, to me, while there is much more work to be done to end mass criminalization and incarceration, Prop 47 gives me and others a better chance of a successfully re-establishing ourselves in our communities, and that’s sure better than our chances before.

Come to LA CAN anytime to get detailed information about Prop 47 eligibility, how to get your court docket, and come to our legal clinic on Wednesday nights at 6:00 pm to start your petition process. The time is now, don’t miss it!

Campaign to Expose the Failures of the Los Angeles Police Commission

Written by The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition

On Tuesday February 24, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition and its partners launched a city-wide campaign to expose the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners on their failure to meaningfully respond to community concerns regarding the LAPD. The coalition delivered an eight page demand letter which was read aloud by coalition members.

The letter detailed how on several occasions communities across Los Angeles have brought to the Commission’s attention LAPD programs, policies, and enforcement practices that continue to violate human and civil rights of residents of Los Angeles yet the commission has repeatedly dismissed these concerns and failed to act upon communities’ requests to investigate and take corrective action.

Following are some of the recent examples highlighted in the letter signifying the Commission’s failure to act effectively upon Los Angeles communities’ concerns:

1. Denial of Racial Profiling evidenced by the recent Office of the Inspector General audit of LAPD Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Program.
2. Sham “Community Meetings” on Body Cameras.
3. Increased militarization with acquisition of Drones. Repeatedly Chief Beck and the Commission were publicly exposed Misrepresenting and Lying.
4. Sabotaging “corrective actions” taken by the department in response to the Federal Consent Decree.

The Police Commission was given two weeks to respond to the following demands:

1. We demand that LAPD rescind the SAR program with immediate effect including terminating the

iWATCH – See Something, Say Something – program;

2. We demand that the Commission launch full investigative hearings and fact finding on the violation of human and civil rights of people of Los Angeles resulting from these programs;

3. We demand an immediate halt of the launching of the body camera use by LAPD;

4. We demand a thorough investigation into the decision making process on the acquisition and financial transactions involved in the body camera program;

5. We demand real public hearings with full participation for community members to present their research, analysis, and perspectives against the use of body cameras by LAPD;

6. We reject the proposed use of Drones by LAPD;

7. We demand that LAPD destroy the drones or give them back to the manufacturer;

8. We demand full public hearings on the militarization of LAPD and relinquish the control of such public hearings to the community;

9. We demand full investigative public hearings of LAPD conspiracy and officer violation of department policies;

10. We demand the Commission to immediately send a detailed report to the Department of Justice and US District Court Judge Gary Feess informing them of violations of conditions and intent of the federal consent decree;

The commission responded on March 3rd and once again dismissed these concerns, stating that no action was to be taken since the Commission is satisfied by how LAPD conducts its business.

The function and role of the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners officially states: “The Commissioners’ concerns are reflective of the community-at-large, and their priorities include implementing

LOS ANGELES BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

 Steve Soboroff President	<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">RACIAL PROFILING</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.1em;">The Commission denied racial profiling evidenced in the LAPD Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) program.</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">-Inspector General SAR Audit 2013/2014</p> <div style="background-color: #f00; color: white; padding: 5px; font-size: 0.8em; margin-top: 10px;"> DISTURBING REPORT FACT: Black females accounted for 50% of SARs filed on woman and 30% of all the SARs forwarded were on people identified as Black. The LA Black city population is under 10%. </div>
 Paula Madison Vice-President	
 Sandra Figueroa-Villa	
 Robert Saltzman	
 Kathleen Kim	

FAILURE OF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT

#LAPCFAILS

FOLLOW US @stoplapdspying GET THE FACTS! www.stoplapdspying.org

recommended reforms, improving service to the public by the Department, reducing crime and the fear of crime, and initiating, implementing and supporting community policing programs.”

The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition joins communities across the Unites States against racist police brutality and systems of oppression that foster state violence, and the continuing marginalization and murders of black and brown people.

The country and the city of Los Angeles are at a critical juncture in history. Increasingly people are feeling frustrated, angry, and disillusioned by the façade of civilian oversight and bodies such as the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners. The LA Police Commission has failed in its responsibility to protect the community’s interest. The Commission’s culpability exists not just in the public sphere but in the personal as well--they’ll not just be held to account at LAPD headquarters, but across the city.

Join the fight! #LAPCFAILS. More information at www.stoplapdspying.org.

Civil Rights

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:
F(ilm) T(he) P(olice)

Written by John Raphling

Filming police officers in public spaces is a clearly established First Amendment right. (*Glik v. Cunniffe* 655 F.3d 78, 79 (2011 1st Cir.))

“The First Amendment protects the right to gather information about what public officials do on public property, and specifically, a right to record matters of public interest.” (*Smith v. City of Cumming* 212 F.3d 1332, 1333 (2000 11th Cir.))

We have the right to watch police activity. We have the right to witness what they do. We have the right to film them.

We have the right to share what we film the police doing with anyone, including the whole world through the Internet. We have the right and, as good citizens, when we see police officers abusing their authority, we have the duty to witness them.

Imagine what would have happened if the police killing of Africa in Skid Row had happened and nobody had pulled out their cell phones to film. Based on many years of watching cases of police misconduct go through the courts, here is what I think would have resulted:

The police would have sent out a team of investigators to look into the incident. Most likely, they would have ignored the people standing by as witnesses. If they did talk to the witnesses, they would either try to manipulate what they said or disregard anything negative about the officers' conduct. The witnesses' statements, even if accurately reported, would have remained secret. If the witnesses came forward on their own, the police department would do their best to discredit them. The investigators controlling the crime scene would gather and interpret evidence in a way that favored the officers' story. Meanwhile, the officers get to consult their lawyers before talking to investigators. The investigators would ask them soft questions to make it easy for them to tell a false story.

If there had been no video, we would hear some outrageous story from the officers that justifies their killing an unarmed man. The officers would then go to court with their word, supported by a favorable, biased investigation, against the word of the people watching. Most likely, without the video, these officers would get away with the killing and learn only that they can act without fear of consequences.

But good people stood and watched. And filmed. And

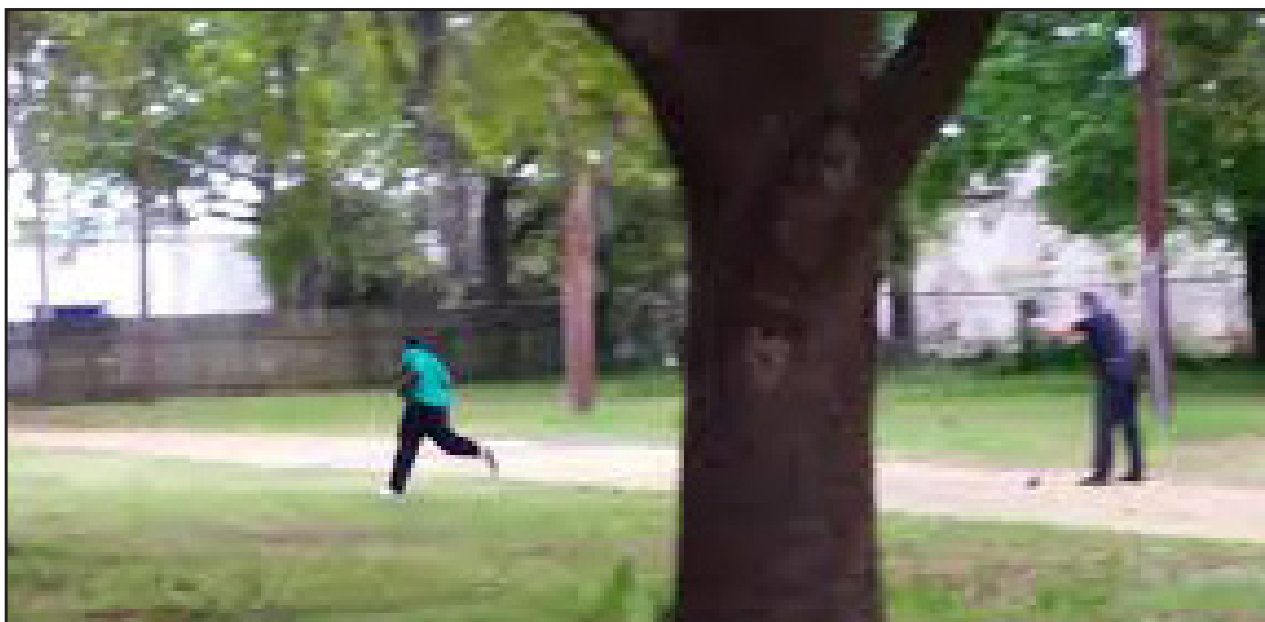
KEEP YA HANDS OFF
MY PROPERTY!

Written by General Dogon

For the past several years the City of Los Angeles has been in litigation over the property rights of homeless folks in Skid Row and across the City. LA CAN's Civil Rights Committee has been fighting to protect the property rights of all Skid Rowans and other poor and homeless residents throughout that time. It is an uphill battle, since the City seems intent on violating homeless residents' civil rights in various ways instead of creating much-needed housing for everyone in need.

In 2011, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order, and two months later a preliminary injunction, forbidding the City and its agents from seizing personal property, with some exceptions for truly abandoned property or to address health and safety threats. The City has tried every trick in the book to get around this injunction through appeals that were denied, even attempting to challenge at the Supreme Court level (the request was denied), instead of just respecting the basic property rights of homeless folks. The case has not yet gone to trial, and mediation and settlement efforts are ongoing.

Yet the City has not stopped their inhumane efforts to prevent homeless residents from possessing any property at all. The latest attempt was a recent proposal to modify L.A.M.C. 56.11,



Former South Carolina Officer Michael Slager shooting and killing Walter Scott, an unarmed Black male, after a traffic stop. Slager originally lied and claimed he used deadly force in self-defense. But amateur footage caught the entire incident on camera. Slager has since been fired and charged with murder. Who knows how many similar deadly shootings are deemed justifiable because there isn't footage of the incident?

posted their video for the world to see.

The video doesn't end the story. This video doesn't show everything. What it does show isn't always clear. The police have still given a story that Africa was reaching for an officer's gun. They will hide behind LAPD policy that allows them to use deadly force if someone is grabbing an officer's gun. They may still get away with the killing.

But with the video, there is a much greater chance that there will be consequences. More importantly, the world has had a chance to see what they did. And what they do.

We are allowed to film the police out in public, and report what they do. We don't have to be with the LA Times or CBS News. Each one of us can be a citizen journalist. (*Glik v. Cunniffe* 655 F.3d 78, 82-83 (2011 1st Cir.))

We can witness and film and report, but we cannot legally interfere with a police officer lawfully performing his duties (Penal Code section 148). When we film, we should be careful. We must keep a safe distance. If the officers order us to step back, we should step back. We should not move to the point where we can no longer effectively document what they are doing, unless there is a legitimate need for us to be moved away. We do not need to move off of a public sidewalk that is open to other citizens, as officers sometimes instruct those filming to do.

We should not speak to the officers or make comments. Talking can be interpreted as interference and can give the officer an excuse to arrest us, even if that arrest would likely not hold up in court later. Talking over the video can make it hard

introduced by Councilmember Mike Bonin. The current law already places significant restrictions on storing property in public space, but the proposed revisions would have made it literally impossible for homeless residents to have property unless it could be carried with them 24-7.

For example, the proposed revisions would allow for a 24-hour notice to be placed on any property on the public sidewalk or other public space, regardless of how much property someone has or whether the property is attended or unattended. After the 24-hour period, the property would be removed and stored for 90 days. First, 24 hours is not enough time for people to find alternative arrangements for their property. But more importantly, people cannot comply with the notice by moving their property to another public location. This means that someone would have to carry everything they own 24 hours a day, without ever putting it down to rest.

The revisions were approved by the City Council's Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee in February 2015 and originally were set to be heard by the full City Council on March 18th, despite strong testimony in opposition by LA CAN members. Recognizing this as another attempt to violate the 2011 court order, LA CAN members created an opposition letter and delivered it to every Council office and the Mayor. In addition to the problems with the 24 hour notice and inability to move property to another location to comply, LA CAN raised opposition to the lack of storage throughout the City for property that would be seized (there is only one

to hear what is happening and can damage the evidentiary value of the footage if it is to be used in court.

We should make sure that, when we are filming, we are not violating some other laws, like standing out in the street or blocking traffic. The police often look for excuses to arrest witnesses who might be documenting what they are doing.

After the incident, if police investigators demand that we turn over our video, we should tell them that we will make them a copy and request their contact information so that we can do so. Then consult a lawyer to review the video and to facilitate providing it to investigators. We must not give away our only copy of the video.

We should always wait at least three days before posting the video on the Internet or otherwise making it public. Or we should consult with the victim's attorney before publicizing it. If the officers are able to see the video before writing their reports, they can adapt their story to fit any uncertainty in the video.

Police and other public officials are more likely to act properly when they know that they are being filmed. There is a better chance of holding them accountable when they do abuse their authority if we have it documented on video. Video can help get justice for victims of police violence and can help protect our communities. Film the police.

Disclaimer: This column provides a very general and incomplete explanation of basic legal principles, and may not apply to the specific facts of your case. Please consult an attorney concerning your particular situation.

facility, in Skid Row, for a Citywide ordinance) and opposition to the misdemeanor offense that could result in citation or arrest for non-compliance. Though City Attorneys testified at the Committee hearing that citations and arrests were not the intent of the changes, they are clearly allowable for a misdemeanor offense.

The revised ordinance was not heard in City Council on March 18, perhaps at least in part due to the organizing and advocacy of LA CAN and many others. However, on March 28, City Attorney Mike Feuer issued a letter to the City Council stating that his office would be developing "proposed protocols addressing the collection and storage of this personal property." The letter states the protocols will be shared with the Chief of Police, President of the Public Works Commission, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Chief Legislative Analysts for their comments - but NOT with members of the general public or directly impacted homeless residents. It goes on to say the protocols will be shared with City Council in mid-April. Given the City's history of violations and punitive proposals, it's not likely the protocols will be respectful of homeless people's rights. So the fight continues.

You have the right to own property. You have the responsibility to ensure your property does not block the sidewalk for others' use and does not block doorways. Report any property violations by LAPD, City workers or Business Improvement District guards to LA CAN immediately.

Feature



Left: Community residents leading a March 3 march and protest from Skid Row to the LAPD Police Commission, where they demand justice for Africa and challenge the City's efforts to publicly exonerate the officers who shot Keunang; Right: Keunang hugging his mother in a photo that humanizes him and challenges his depiction in the media as a criminal who might have "deserved" to be killed.

Continued from Page 1

You Can't Kill Africa

Less than an hour after the shooting, members of the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) were on the scene interviewing witnesses, many of whom had been pushed down the street by police instead of interviewed, and collecting video and testimony. Residents said that Africa was living with mental illness and was regularly harassed by LAPD about his tent on the sidewalk. Also, despite the portion of the incident caught on the viral video and LAPD talking points suggesting a short, rapidly escalating incident, community members said that officers were at the site of Africa's tent for a long period of time and engaged with him in a lengthy conversation before the fatal incident occurred. Footage from a nearby security camera later confirmed this and also shows Africa being tazed during the struggle.

As these facts continued to spread throughout the community, angry residents began to ask questions: Why did LAPD shoot another unarmed resident living with mental illness? If it was an urgent robbery call, why was the interaction before the killing occurred so long and drawn out? Where is audio from the 911 call? Were any of the officers wearing body cameras? If so, where is the footage? (Note: It has since been determined that at least one of the officers was in fact wearing a body camera, but LAPD continues to refuse to release the footage). People demanded answers, and dozens of residents, as well as outside supporters acting in solidarity, marched to the LA Police Commission two days after the killing to express their anger and call on their supposed civilian peers on the Commission to act immediately. Africa was murdered by LAPD. Action, transparency, and accountability was urgently needed, however, none of these were forthcoming from either LAPD, the Police Commission, the Inspector General or others in City government.

Steve Soberoff, the President of the L.A. Board of Police Commissioners, took several minutes at the beginning of the March 3rd meeting to ask the packed house not to "rush to judgment", assuring all that a thorough independent investigation would take place. He called our brother's death a tragedy, then went on to repeat the completely uncorroborated narrative that Africa was reaching for a gun, and that was the reason for his death. Neither the Commission nor Chief Beck had any comment about why LAPD's mental health response units, or "SMART Teams", were not deployed though there was plenty of time to call them to the scene. LAPD and their oversight Commission continue to demonstrate to the people of Los Angeles that there will be no accountability, transparency, nor action on the part of the thin layer of "protection" between us and the increasingly militarized, and seemingly rogue institution of the LAPD.

While the killing of Africa was as tragic as it was unjust, protesters were also expressing outrage at the ongoing pattern of LAPD using lethal force on unarmed residents, and black men in particular, and the ongoing LAPD occupation of Skid Row under the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI). SCI has been operating since 2006 and brought an additional 50 uniformed officers to the community, making Skid Row the most policed neighborhood in the country and increased use of force incidents substantially. As one of the speakers at the March 3rd meeting reminded the Commissioners, it was just last May that another unarmed homeless resident living with mental illness (Carlos Ocano) was shot down from a billboard while posing zero risk to officers. Others rightfully made connection to the killing of Ezell Ford, an unarmed Black resident with mental illness

who was shot in the back and killed by LAPD late last year in South Central Los Angeles.

So while demonstrators sought accountability in the killing of Africa, they also shared chants of "BLACK LIVES MATTER!" and called for an end to the police occupation of Skid Row and other poor, mostly black and brown neighborhoods under programs like SCI.

The community of Skid Row continues to organize around Africa's killing. We have a long way to go before we get justice for Africa and real solutions in Skid Row. The first steps are to take the following immediate actions:

1. A minimum of 10,000 units of permanent supportive housing are needed in the City of Los Angeles, yet in the past 8 years the City has produced only about 1,200 new units. At that pace, it would take about 65 years to meet the need. Invest in housing at the scale needed to truly impact LA's homeless crisis, including creating new local sources of funding and re-allocating existing resources to housing and actively fighting for much-needed state and federal funding.
2. End the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) and remove all extra officers associated with SCI from the Skid Row community. The over-concentration of officers create an environment of almost constant contact with police officers among residents facing homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, or other health conditions that put them at extreme risk of harassment, citation, arrest, or violence by officers. The City must stop the practice of utilizing police as the main response to homelessness and instead invest in housing and other support services.
3. Expand the LAPD's SMART teams (mental health professionals and non-uniformed officers) and create a dedicated SMART team to be deployed throughout the Skid Row community, within the existing LAPD budget. The prevalence of mental health issues in the Skid Row community is well known and documented, yet there is no SMART team assigned to our community and, in fact, there is no deployment of existing SMART teams to Skid Row. They work solely inside of Central Division, defeating the purpose of them helping to de-escalate situations, avoid arrests, and avoid unnecessary force by officers.
4. Assign an independent prosecutor to investigate the officers who killed our community member known as Africa. LAPD should release all body camera footage, release the officers' names and place them on unpaid leave until all internal and external investigations/prosecutions are completed.
5. Recognize and promote the community-level assets and expertise and local best practices in the Skid Row community and include Skid Row residents and their allies in all policy making and other decision making.

If you would like more information or to get involved, contact the Los Angeles Community Action Network at 213.228.0024. Amanda Ngawethu, Power to Poor People.

Note: Funeral services for Brother Africa will take place on Saturday May 16, 2015 at the Holman Methodist Church in Los Angeles.

Feature



Left: Over 100 individuals gather at a March 19 public gathering honoring Charly's humanity and life at the site of his murder at the hands of LAPD; Right: In the weeks following Keunang's murder, a number of shrines, memorials, and murals have sprung up throughout the community.

Viene de la página 1 No Se Puede Matar a Africa

En menos de una hora luego del tiroteo, miembros de Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) estaban en el sitio entrevistando a testigos, muchos quienes fueron retrasados por la policía en vez de haberse entrevistado, y colectaron video y testimonio. Residentes dijeron que África vivía con enfermedad mental y que era frecuentemente acosado por LAPD a raíz de su casa de campaña en la acera. También, a pesar de la parte del incidente captado en el video viral y los puntos de plática del LAPD que sugieren un incidente corto de escalo rápido, miembros de la comunidad dicen que los oficiales habían estado en el lugar de Africa un largo rato y que estaban en larga conversación con él antes que ocurrieran los disparos. El pietaje de una cámara de seguridad confirma esto y se ve cuando África estaba siendo electrificando durante la lucha.

Segun los hechos se propagan a lo largo de la comunidad, residentes enojados comensaron a preguntarse: ¿porqué LAPD disparó a otro residente no armado y que vivía con enfermedad mental? Si fue una llamada urgente de robo, ¿porqué fue tan duradera la interacción antes de que ocurriera al asesinato? ¿Donde esta el audio de la llamada al 911? ¿Llevaba cámara en el cuerpo alguno de los oficiales y entonces, donde esta el pietaje? (Nota: Desde entonces, se ha determinado que uno de los oficiales llevaba la cámara de cuerpo pero LAPD se niega a publicar las imágenes.) El pueblo exige respuestas, y dozenas de residentes y otros apoyadores actuando en solidaridad marcharon al Comisionado de la Policía dos días después del asesinato para expresar su ira y pedir a los supuestos compañeros civilidad en la Comisión que actúen inmediatamente. África fue asesinado por LAPD. La acción, transparencia y rendición de cuentas eran urgentes, sin embargo nada de esto se llevó a cabo por LAPD, la Comisión de Policía, o por el Inspector General o otros en el gobierno de la Ciudad.

Steve Soberoff, Presidente de la Junta de Comisionados Policiales, se tomo varios minutos durante la reunion del 3 de marzo para preguntar a la gran audiencia que no "se apresuren a juzgar", asegurandoles que una investigación independiente se llevaría a cabo. El llamo la muerte de nuestro hermano, una tragedia. Luego, repitió la narrativa no corroborada de que África iba a agarrar el arma del policía y esa fue la razón de su muerte.

Ni el Comisionado, ni el Chief Beck tenían comentarios del por que la unidad de salud mental de LAPD, o "SMART Teams", no fueron desplegados aunque había tiempo de sobra para haberles llamado. LAPD y su Comisión supervisora continua demostrandole al pueblo de Los Angeles que no habrá rendición de cuenta, transparencia, o acción por parte de la capa delgada de protección entre nosotros y la institución, cada vez mas militarizada é aparentemente bribón, del LAPD.

Mientras que la muerte de África fue trágica é injusta, protestantes también expresaron indignación al continuo patrón de LAPD de usar fuerza letal contra residentes no armados, y contra hombres negros en particular, y la ocupación continua de Skid Row por LAPD bajo la iniciativa de "Safer Cities (SCI). SCI ha estado en operación desde el 2006 y ha añadido 50 oficiales a la comunidad, convirtiendo a Skid Row en la vesindad mas vigilada en el país con aumentó los incidentes de uso de fuerza substancialmente.

Como uno de los declaradores en la reunion del 3 de marzo le recuerdo a los Comisionados, fue solo en mayo pasado que otro hombre residente desalojado no armado, enfermo mental (Carlos Ocano) fue derribado de una cartelera, mientras que no presentaba ninguna amenaza

a los oficiales. Otros, legítimamente hicieron conexión a el asesinato de Ezell Ford, un hombre Negro, residente con enfermedad mental, a quien dispararon en la espalda y asesinado por LAPD el año pasado en South Central Los Angeles.

Mientras protestantes buscaban rendición de cuentas en el asesinato de África, también compartían cantos "¡Las Vidas Negras Cuentan! y hacían pedido que termine la ocupación policiaca de Skid Row y otras vecindades, principalmente de gente 'negra y marron', bajo programas como SCI.

La comunidad de Skid Row continúa organizandose al rededor de la muerte de África. Tenemos un largo camino que recorrer antes de recibir justicia para África y soluciones reales en Skid Row. Las primeras medidas es tomar las siguientes acciones inmediatas:

1. Se requiere un minimo de 10,000 unidades de vivienda permanente y con apoyo en la ciudad de Los Angeles. Sin embargo, en los últimos 8 años la ciudad ha producido solo 1,200 unidades nuevas. A ese paso, se tomaría 65 años en satisfacer la necesidad. Invertir en vivienda a una escala que verdaderamente impacte la crisis de desalojamiento en LA, incluyendo nuevos recursos de fondos y re-asignar los recursos que existen hacia viviendas y luchar activamente para fondos estatales y federales.
2. Terminar a el Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) y remover a todo oficial extra asociado con SCI de la comunidad de Skid Row. La sobre-concentración de oficiales crean un medio ambiente de constante contacto con oficiales policiacos entre los residentes que enfrentan desalojo, enfermedad mental, abuso de substancias, y otras condiciones de salud que los pone a extremo riesgo de acoso, citación, detención o violencia por oficiales. La Ciudad tiene que parar el uso de policías como primer resopdo al desalojamiento, en vez de invertir en vivienda y otros servicios de apoyo.
3. Expandir las unidades SMART de LAPD (profesionales de salud mental, y oficiales sin uniforme) y crear un equipo SMART dedicado a ser desplegado al rededor de la comunidad de Skid Row, dentro del coriente presupuesto de LAPD. Se sabe bien la prevalencia de asuntos de salud mental en la comunidad de Skid Row y es bien documentada. Pero no hay un equipo SMART asignado a nuestra comunidad, de echo, no hay despliego de las corientes unidades SMART a Skid Row. Trabajan solamente dentro de la División Central, derotando su proposito de disminuir situaciones, evitar arestos, y evitar el uso de fuerza innecesaria por oficiales.
4. Asignar un fiscal independiente para investigar a los agentes que mataron a nuestro miembro de la comunidad conocido como África. LAPD debe liberar todo pietaje de la cámara de cuerpo, liberar los nombres de los oficiales y colocarlos en licencia sin sueldo hasta que toda investigación/actuacion judicial, interna y externa, se completen.
5. Reconocer y promover los activos a nivel comunitario y la experiencia y las mejores prácticas locales que se llevan en la comunidad de Skid Row é incluir los residentes y sus aliados en todo diseño político y otras tomas de decisiones.

Para mas información o para formar parte, contacte a Los Angeles Community Action Network al 213.228.0024. Amandala Ngawethu, El Poder Al Pueblo.

Nota: Servicio Fúnebre para el hermano África se llevará a cabo el sábado 16 de Mayo, 2015 en la Iglesia Metodista Holman en Los Angeles.

Opinion

It's Only My Opinion

Written by Al Sabo

Former LAPD Officer Henry Solis: Fugitive and disgraced former officer Solis made one vital mistake when he shot and killed a young man in Pomona -- he wasn't in uniform when he shot and killed a 23 year-old man. Given how almost all officers involved in shootings get off scot-free, if he were in uniform the shooting would have mostly likely been ruled within police guidelines and deemed justifiable.

What the !%#@* is Chief Beck saying?: At Police Commission hearings the Chief is always eager to point out incidents where his officers disarmed and arrested an individual without a single shot being fired. However, unarmed citizens have been too often shot and killed by his officers. This makes me wonder and ask: Is Chief Beck suggesting you have a better chance of not being shot by his officers if you are armed? Unarmed citizens beware.

Police guidelines need to be reworked: Under current guidelines and policies of the LAPD, nearly all of the shootings of unarmed citizens are ruled within police guidelines and justifiable. Can there ever be a situation where an individual can be right 99% of the time? Only if we were computers could that be realistically possible. Human beings are fallible and prone to make mistakes. The one way to improve on those mistakes is to be held accountable for those errors in judgment. Policing guidelines are so vague that virtually no officer is ever held accountable for his errors in judgment or even worse an intentional act. Being held accountable will lead to fewer shootings of unarmed citizens.

LAPD non-biased policing: It's not hard to reasonably say LAPD's policing policies are somewhat improved. How could they

not be considering how bad they were in the past? But to infer that today's policing is non-biased is laughable. It's like saying racism no longer exists in America. Though not as overt and visible as it once was, racism still exists - as does profiling and targeting of people of color and the poor by the police. For example, the Safer Cities Initiative promotes racism and biased policing and it needs to be terminated.

A need for universal rules of engagement: Since police shootings of unarmed individuals run rampant in police departments throughout the U.S., the problem appears to be systematic and in need of changes. First, when more than one officer encounters an unarmed individual, under no circumstances should an officer use deadly force. Even when confronted by an individual with a weapon other than a gun, deadly force should only be used when an individual threatens and is within contact range. Finally, whenever an officer errs in judgment and shoots an unarmed individual, he should be suspended without pay for a year, terminated and/or prosecuted for his actions. This accountability should deter trigger-happy or racist cops from using deadly force except when it is truly a matter of life or death and not because he only claims he "feared" for his life. Failure to comply with demands doesn't warrant an individual being shot and killed.

Keystone XL Pipeline: This project could permanently damage the water reservoir that feeds the center of our country known as the Bread Basket. There is no reason to build an oil pipeline that will carry dirty, heavy tar sands and oil from Canada to the Gulf Coast. The risks are too great and it would once again allow our government to violate Native American Treaties. What makes it even worse is that this oil will not even be for US consumption, but put on the global market. And don't forget it will be our refineries on the Gulf Coast that will refine this dirty oil.

The risks are too great. The negative environmental impact of the refining alone, even without a spill, is too large a price to pay.

Watering the West: When water becomes a more valuable commodity than oil, it's time for drastic changes. Governor Brown is being reactive with his demand that water districts mandate a 20% reduction in the use of water. Even at this rate California will become dry. We need a solution not an extension. It's time to be proactive. If we can build a pipeline to carry oil from Canada to the Gulf Coast, we surely can build pipelines from the East to carry water to the reservoirs in the West. Every spring when it rains and the snow melts the eastern states are ravaged with floods. Before these rivers reach flood stage this overabundance of water could be channeled to the Western reservoirs by pipelines. No more floods. No more droughts. We have the technology and know-how to do this, but since this plan would not benefit corporations, but rather be a government program, would Republicans in Congress ever allow it to happen? My guess is no. After all, they don't believe humans are responsible for climate change either.

Separation of Church and State: It's almost as if our founding fathers could see the future when they decided that the government and the church should be separate and individual of one another. Once again we see how discrimination can spread when religion and its followers hijack the government or at least one of our political parties. The Republican Party in particular has been hijacked by the religious right. There lies the problem itself: the sanctimonious right. Believing in a Supreme Being or God is an individual's right but not believing is also one's right and neither side's viewpoints should be forced upon others.

These are only my personal opinions. If you want to agree with or counter these positions, send your comments to The Community Connection, Attn: Al 838 E. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90021

The Campaign for a Skid Row Neighborhood Council

Written by Karl Scott

Most people who love and are concerned about Skid Row will tell you about far too many moments of frustration and constant battles with City Officials over Skid Row's lack of adequate housing, restroom and shower availability, limited access to parks and other public spaces, the right to live peacefully without fear of police harassment, and other challenges our community faces due to extreme poverty and public and private disinvestment. Yet we continue to see and read about Downtown's grand openings, thousands of housing units, new restaurants, and clubs to party at - but almost always on the west side of Main Street. East of Main Street, we have to organize as a community to get the most basic of human rights or public services.

The City's Neighborhood Council system was promoted in the early 2000s as a vehicle for residents and stakeholders to have greater voice in their community. Skid Row is a part of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (DLANC), yet our

voices are not reflected in the decisions of the Council or Downtown overall. For this and other reasons, at a Town Hall meeting sponsored by LA CAN and others in February, General Jeff, a Skid Row resident and former DLANC Board member, re-started the demand and the debate around the need for a Skid Row Neighborhood Council (SRNC), separate from DLANC.

After General Jeff passionately and clearly presented the issue, a deeper conversation was prompted at the round table where I was seated and there was a lot of support expressed. At the time I didn't know that this was not the first time the demand for a SRNC had been advanced, but this time support and excitement are building fast.

In 1999, a revision to the Los Angeles City Charter brought forth the creation of neighborhood council system and in 2002 the DLANC started. At the hearing when DLANC was approved by the City's Board of Neighborhood Commissioners was when the first demand was made to ensure Skid Row, Little Tokyo, and other smaller communities did not get attached to DLANC where their distinct voices and needs would be in the minority. Little Tokyo, Chinatown and adjacent neighborhoods were able to get a separate council approved, the Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council. Unfortunately, Skid Row didn't get enough

votes at that time to secure a separate Council.

Other efforts have initiated since 2002 to address the lack of voice and impact for Skid Row within DLANC, and General Jeff and others have picked up the most recent baton to create a brand new SRNC. Skid Row residents are stepping up strong as a community, and researching and implementing the process to withdraw from DLANC and establish the SRNC.

When asked about the need for a SRNC, Coach Ron, a Skid Row resident with a history of interaction with DLANC, said, "A neighborhood council is needed as a form of democratic process to make wholesome changes in Skid Row. For too long it has been ignored."

Thirteen years later, with residents wanting to take voice and charge of their quality of life, what could be the holdup? Could it be all about the power of the "new" Downtown and the continued overlooking of Skid Row's resident voice? It's not clear yet, but it will be our duty to stay armed with information to move this forward and also understand this is not an overnight process, but it definitely can and will happen. Stay strong and active Skid Row!

Homeless Bill of Rights

The Right to Rest Act Stays Alive

Written by Eric Ares

On April 7, almost 100 Homeless Bill of Rights supporters representing organizations from across California convened at the state capitol for a Senate Transportation and Housing Committee hearing on Senate Bill 608, also known as the Right to Rest Act. SB 608, introduced by Senator Carol Liu who represents parts of Los Angeles County, would protect the rights of homeless people to move freely, rest, eat and perform religious observations in public space as well as protect the right to occupy a legally parked motor vehicle.

A recent report by the UC Berkeley School of Law Policy Advocacy Clinic documents how the number of anti-homeless laws passed by California municipalities has risen sharply in recent years. In total, the 58 cities researched in the study have enacted at least 500 anti-homeless laws - nearly nine laws per city on average. Supporters of the bill pointed toward the exponential increase in anti-homeless laws across the state, their devastating impacts on homeless residents, and their ineffectiveness in addressing homelessness in any way. Senator Liu echoed these sentiments in her statement, "It's time to address poverty, mental health, and the plight of the homeless head-on as a social issue and not a criminal issue. Citing homeless people for resting in a public space can lead to their rejection for jobs, education loans, and housing, further denying them a pathway out of poverty."

Despite excellent testimony from LA CAN member General Dogon and another formerly homeless resident from Northern California, as well as passionate statements from the dozens of people in the hearing room and Senator Liu herself, the Committee decided not to vote on the bill and instead many members requested amendments before hearing the bill again. While this was not the desired outcome of Homeless Bill of Rights Supporters, the lack of a vote keeps the bill alive this year and next year, so there is still time - and a great need - for more organizing to ensure the votes needed for passage.

"Everyone sleeps, eats, and sits, but only some get tickets or go to jail for it," says Paul Boden of the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP), which coordinates the coalition of 140 organizations across the state that is supporting the Right to Rest Act. "Criminalization only makes things worse for people living on the streets. And by not having to enforce crimes of status, law enforcement can focus on real public safety issues. We applaud Senator Liu's leadership and look forward to working with her and others over the next year to protect the civil rights of homeless individuals and refocusing attention to solutions that end homelessness."

The fight for the Right to Rest may be temporarily delayed in California, but parallel Right to Rest bills have also been introduced in Oregon and



Above: Right to Rest supporters from across the state rallying out front of the California State Capitol building on April 7; Below: Coalition members pack the SB 608 hearing room and prepare to voice their support for the bill, which was not voted on and will be heard again next legislative session.

Colorado. WRAP and other California supporters are providing support for these bills in a variety of ways, and many supporters will be attending a hearing in Colorado in late April as well as strategizing with groups from other states about improving our chances of success. It will be a long and hard fought battle to reverse the widespread criminalization of homelessness, but these bills show that progress is possible and cities soon will have to change their approach and uphold the civil rights of all of their residents.

Despite the hold up on SB 608, Assembly Bill 718, which would prevent cities from criminalizing people for sleeping in a legally parked vehicle, is still moving so far. The right to rest and sleep in a vehicle, if it is your only form of shelter, is one of six policy goals of the Homeless Bill of Rights coalition, and we will now focus our efforts on this bill to ensure that at least one strong protection for homeless residents is enacted this year. Contact LA CAN to get involved in passing AB 718 and to continue to work toward passage of SB 608 next year.



NEW CalFresh Rules!

Do you have a prior drug conviction?
You may now be eligible for CalFresh!
(also known as "Food Stamps")

Starting **April 1, 2015**, if you have a felony drug conviction, and you are complying with your probation or parole, or have completed probation or parole, you may be eligible for CalFresh! As of **March 1**, you can apply for CalFresh in order to receive benefits in April 2015!

To apply:

- Go into your County Human Services Agency
Find a location: myfoodstamps.org/apply.html
- Call toll-free English: 1-877-847-3663
Spanish 1-888-926-6432
- Apply online at www.benefitscal.org

Downtown Womens Action Coalition
Presents:

ADOPT-A-MOM

Variety Show Fundraiser


7-9 pm
Cielo Galleries
3201 Maple Ave.
Los Angeles,
90011

Join us on this spectacular night as we showcase some beautifully talented people and launch our ADOPT-A-MOM campaign. Together let's celebrate moms in Skid Row and honor the tremendous work they do in our community.

1 for \$20,
5 for \$50

No one will be turned away for lack of funds. We will work with you.

For more information and to RSVP contact: Ariana (213) 228-0024



Arts, Culture, and Community



Jackie Robinson participating in a boycott picket line.

Jackie Robinson, Unsung Civil Rights Hero

Written by Gerardo Gomez

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball's color barrier line – a moment that not only changed baseball forever but planted seeds for the Civil Rights Movement. Jackie was not your ordinary baseball player. He was not your ordinary individual. Jackie Robinson was a gifted athlete and a Godsend – an extraordinary man who made it his life mission to fight for equality and justice. As we celebrate the 68th anniversary of Robinson breaking baseball's color barrier line, let us also be reminded of what a true American revolutionary he was, especially since he does not get the recognition that he deserves as a Civil Rights leader. He transcended sports - single handedly opened a new chapter in American history.

It has already been chronicled how Jackie Robinson struggled during his first year in Major League Baseball. However, Jackie introduced a very exciting way to play the game. His approach to getting on base and stealing bases were very unique. The way he danced on the field when taking his large shuffles down the sidelines was breathtaking. Jackie Robinson's first year with the Brooklyn Dodgers had huge impact: He was given the Rookie of the Year Award, an award that bears his name, and led his team to the World Series. The Dodgers lost the series to the Yankees, but they also won a whole country. Many people outside of Brooklyn, especially Black Americans, became Dodger fans simply because of Jackie.

Jackie Robinson's legacy does not begin in 1947, however. From being UCLA's first 4 letter athlete in Baseball, Basketball, Football and Track and Field, to becoming a respected leader in the military for standing up on behalf of Black American soldiers who were not being treated fairly, and ultimately dedicating his life to the values of justice and equality for all of humanity, Robinson is a true American hero.

When Jackie Robinson was in the military, he was joined by Joe Louis, the Heavyweight Boxing Champion of that era. During their time together, Joe Louis and Jackie advocated for equal rights of Black American soldiers. In July 1944, Jackie Robinson was riding a military bus when he was asked to sit in the back of the bus and clear his seat for a White soldier. Jackie refused and as a result received a court martial. Like Rosa Parks, Jackie was unwilling to sacrifice his dignity for the status quo of discrimination and inequality.

After retiring from baseball, Jackie played a tremendous role in American politics. He continued to fight for the rights of Black Americans in all sectors. He criticized the New York Yankees for being a team that only hired White people. He protested companies who didn't hire Black Americans. In 1963 he joined workers who were picketing the construction site of Downstate Medical Center for allegations that Black people were being discriminated from the hiring process. He became great friends with Martin Luther King, Jr., who once said, "Jackie Robinson was a legend and a symbol in his own time." In 1964, he co-founded and became Chairman of Freedom National Bank, a commercial bank owned by Black Americans and operated in Harlem, New York. Robinson also championed equal rights in housing, which led to the Jackie Robinson Construction Company, which built housing for low-income families. So as much of a sports hero he was, we must remember that he was a Civil Rights leader as well.

For these reasons, I think we should celebrate Robinson even more than we already do. He deserves a monument in Washington D.C., and April 15 should be a national holiday during which we all engage in community service – Jackie wouldn't have it any other way.

Jackie Robinson is not only my hero but a source of inspiration. As a sports fan and fighter for justice and equality, I can't help but admire his accomplishments, courage and unbending spirit. He lived his life with a purpose, and understood that our lives are meant to make the world a better place. As Jackie said, "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

A.F.R.I.C.A.

Written by Khalif Anderson

At first we formed for freedom to just be.
Free - recognizing what's surprisingly, untrue.
Intelligently, we now navigate these city streets.
Avoiding gun shots, from you.
All of us in together now, birds of a feather now no longer chit,
chatter now.
All lives matter now.
How can you resist the persistence of change, why are you
resistant when we insist we came in Africa's name...
Peace!

Can't Kill Africa

Written by Suzette Shaw

Brotha Africa came to Skid Row 'cause he had no other place to go.
Whether you sleep in an SRO or a tent on this concrete flo,
You'll find that although we broke, lost our way and hope,
We still just common folk.

Can't kill Arica!

For some having a toke on some dope allows them to cope,
escape from this downward slope of life...of hope.

Can't kill Africa!

Some even drink so they don't have to think,
lost hopes of the so called American dream,
can make your heart sink.

Can't kill Africa!

Even if you are someone who is a war vet
and served this great nation, if you are now living in
Skid Row you might as well be an illegal Haitian!

Can't kill Africa!

If figgas....YOU wanna think of us ALL as just niggas,
so YOU have an excuse to pull the trigga.

Can't kill Africa!

Really, five to one...YOU needed a gun?!
YOU take his life. He never had a chance to put up a fight.
Then, they have the nerve to say....why shed a tear,
he shouldn't have been endeared.
He was just another black man that society feared.

Can't kill Africa!

Why not look at the bigga picture.
Why a brotha living in strife would dare his and our life to pull
a quick heist?!

Can't kill Africa!

Why not look at the bigga picture.
Why we are a society so full of hate that we'd rather incarcerate.

Can't kill Africa!

Face it, we are a murderous state.
We placate the life of each poor man, by summing them all up as the
"Son of Sam".

Can't kill Africa!

Brotha Africa came to Skid Row 'cause he had no other place to go.

Can't kill Africa!

You wanna call us all pimps, thieves and hos,
then use that as the reason to murder us on these concrete flos?!
Well, we say NO MO!

Can't kill Africa!

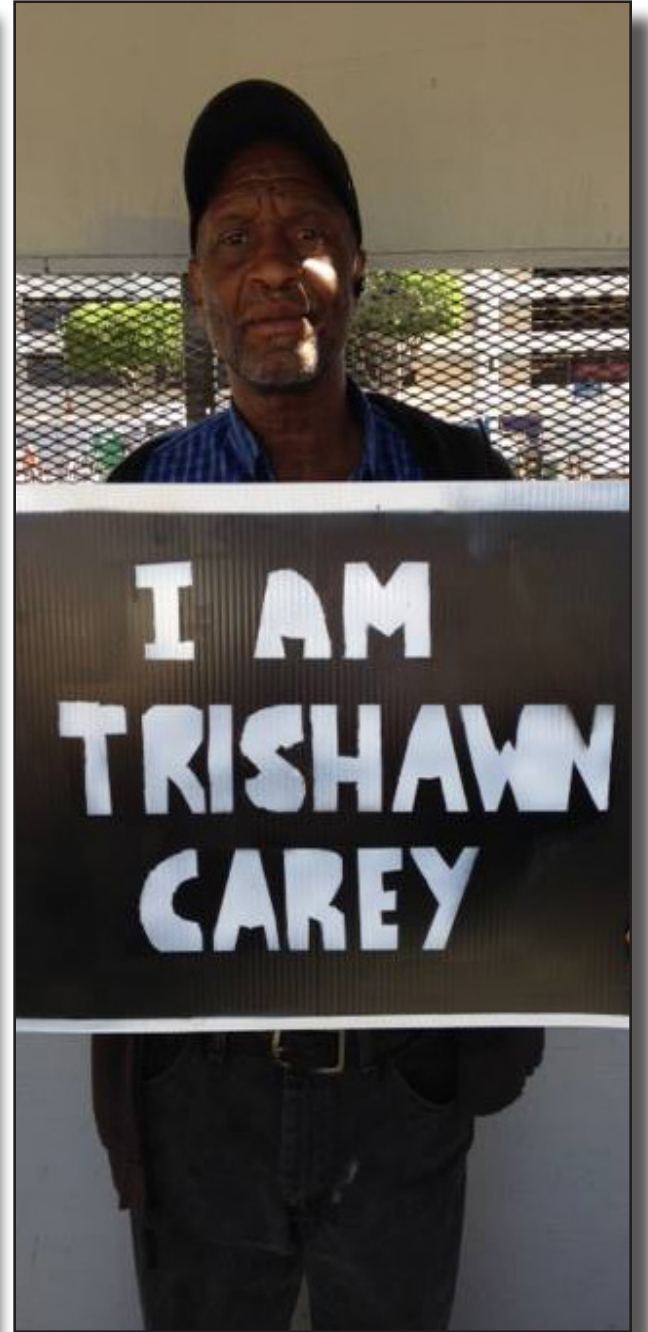
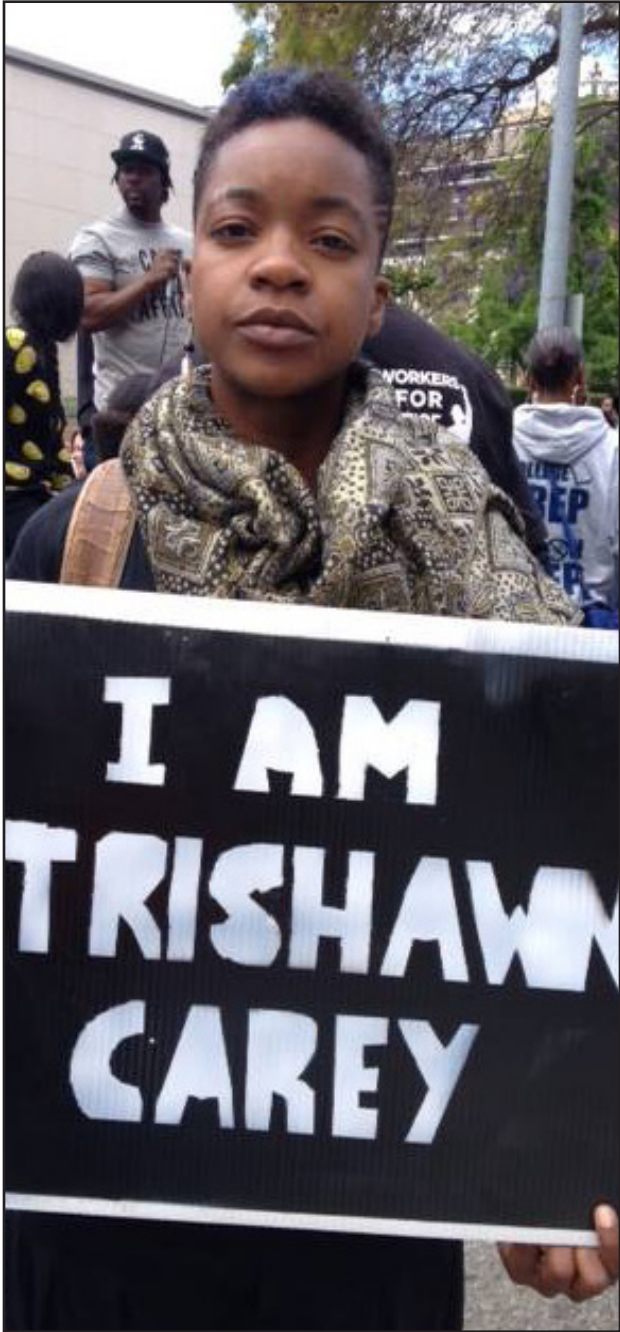
There's a roar throughout Skid Row,
day to day our soles hit this concrete floor while our souls scream -
NO MORE!

Can't kill Africa!

We are your brothers and sisters.
You want to sum us up as beggas, whores and thieves?!
Go ahead, that's your maker you'll have to meet.

Can't kill Africa.

Free Trishawn Carey



FREE TRISHAWN CAREY, One of the few who survive

Written by Ariana Alcaraz

In the most recent incident of police brutality on Skid Row, brother Africa was killed by police officers in broad daylight. The brutal conflict was captured on camera and as soon as brother Africa took his last breath, the LAPD went into damage control. If you happened to see the video or were there to witness this live, you would have also noticed a woman who was roughed up by police at the same time. Her name is Trishawn Carey and she was grabbed by several officers and handcuffed just moments before gunshots were fired into Africa's body. The 34 year-old unhoused resident of Skid Row has been sitting in jail ever since the March 1st incident with bail set at \$1,085,000. That is more money than the government is offering for Assata Shakur. She is considered by many to be a political prisoner, being held at unreasonable bail to prevent her from speaking out about what happened to both her and Africa on March 1st.

Trishawn Carey is currently incarcerated at the Central Regional Detention Facility in Lynwood. She is facing two felony charges for allegedly assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest. LA CAN members attended her arraignment and reported some disturbing news. Aside from the excessive bail and charges she faces, her arm was bandaged up raising questions about how she was injured and whether it is a result of officers' use of force. Also in the court room, Carey pleaded to the judge, "They keep saying I did stuff that I didn't do!" LA CAN members also visited Ms. Carey in jail and met her public defender, who was assigned to the case just hours before her arraignment. Trishawn does not want to plead guilty to any charges and maintains her innocence. She is living with mental health conditions and is grateful to know that LACAN is fighting for her on the outside.

The Los Angeles Police Department has had a long and violent history when interacting with homeless women and particularly with those who suffer from mental illness. Margaret Mitchell was a homeless woman with a mental illness and was gunned down by police in broad daylight in 1999. The LAPD's System-wide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) was added to the Department's Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) following a report from the Police Inspector General that found police officers were at fault for the death of Margaret Mitchell.

Continued on page 12

LIBERAR A TRISHAWN CAREY, Uno de los pocos que sobreviven

Escrito por Ariana Alcaraz | Escrito por Carmen Vega

En el más reciente incidente de brutalidad policial en Skid Row, hermano África fue asesinado por agentes de policía en plena luz del día. El conflicto brutal fue captado en cámara y tan pronto que el hermano África tomó su último aliento, la LAPD entró en el control de daños. Si llega a ver el video o estaba allí para presenciarlo en vivo, usted también habría notado una mujer que al mismo tiempo fue maltratada por la policía. Su nombre es Trishawn Carey y ella fue agarrada por varios oficiales y esposada justo antes del momento que disparos fueron despedidos en el cuerpo de África. La residente desalojada de 34 años de edad, de Skid Row ha estado en la cárcel desde el incidente, el 1ro de marzo con la fianza fijada en \$ 1,085,000. Eso es más dinero que el gobierno está ofreciendo para Assata Shakur. Ella es considerada por muchos como un prisionera político, que se encarcela bajo fianza irrazonable para impedir que hable sobre lo que le sucedió a ella y a África el 1ro de marzo.

al corriente Trishawn Carey esta encarcelada en la Central Regional Detention Facility en Lynwood. Ella se enfrenta a dos cargos de delito grave por presuntamiento, agredir a un oficial de policía y resistir el arresto. Miembros de LA CAN asistieron a su audiencia de encausamiento y reportaron algunas noticias inquietantes. Aparte de la fianza excesiva y los cargos que enfrenta, su brazo estaba vendado que plantea preguntas acerca de cómo fue herida y si fue a consecuencia del uso de fuerza por los oficiales.

También en el tribunal, Carey declaró al juez, "¡Ellos siguen diciendo que hice cosas que no hice!" Miembros de LA CAN también visitaron a la Sra Carey en la carcel y se reunieron con su abogado de oficio quien fue asignado al caso apenas unas horas antes de su comparecencia. Trishawn no quiere declararse culpable de ninguno de los cargos y mantiene su inocencia. Ella vive con condiciones de salud mental y agradece que LA CAN está luchando por ella en el exterior.

El Departamento de Policía de Los Angeles ha tenido una larga y violenta historia al interactuar con las mujeres desalojadas y en particular con aquellas que sufren de enfermedades mentales. Margaret Mitchell era una mujer desalojada con enfermedad mental y fue abatido a tiros por la policía en plena luz del día en 1999. Se añadió al departamento a lo ancho del sistema el Equipo de Respuesta de Evaluación Mental (sigla SMART) de LAPD luego de un reporte del Inspector General que determino que los policías tenían la culpa por la muerte de Margaret Mitchell.

Continúa en la página 12

Free Trishawn Carey



Left: Trishawn Carey being arrested by LAPD right after officers shot and killed an unarmed Charly Keunang; Right: Free Trishawn Carey Committee members and Downtown Women’s Action Coalition leaders Suzette Shaw and Ariana Alcaraz raising awareness and support for Trishawn.

Continued from Page 11

FREE TRISHAWN CAREY

It is ironic because that very same response team could have responded to the scene on March 1st, as SMART teams are supposed to be used when officers discover a mental health crisis and are designed to prevent force and violence. Had they been early responders, brother Africa may still be alive today and Trishawn might be free.

Because of the lack of social media and other technological advances since 1999, it was hard to get the stories of the Margret Mitchells and so many others out to the public. Getting the word out now is much easier, and the community plans to take advantage of that to blast the story of Trishawn Carey and build solidarity for her release. LA CAN and the Downtown Women’s Action Coalition are working diligently to bring attention to Trishawn Carey’s case and will be using social media to share her story. Remember that the video of what happened on March 1st was seen by over nine million people.

As our community still mourns the death of Africa, we must not overlook the idea that the attack that took place on that Saturday afternoon on March 1st could have claimed the lives of more people and has devastated the life of Trishawn Carey. She is not only a witness that is being kept from the public and the media, she is a survivor of police brutality and we need her out to tell her story!

To get more involved in the campaign to FREE TRISHAWN CAREY, come to LA CAN’s civil rights meetings every Monday at 1 pm and follow us on Facebook (search FREE TRISHAWN CAREY) and Twitter (@LACANetwork).

April/May 2015 Community Connection Team

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Ariana Alcaraz | John Raphling |
| Khalif Anderson | Adam Rice |
| Eric Ares | Al Sabo |
| Becky Dennison | Karl Scott |
| Steve Diaz | Suzette Shaw |
| General Dogon | JoJo Smith |
| Gerardo Gomez | Carmen Vega |
| Sean Gregory | Wesley Walker |
| Thelmy Perez | Pete White |

LA CAN Meeting Schedule

- Civil Rights Committee Meetings - Every Monday at 1 pm at LA CAN
- Housing Committee Meetings - Every Monday at 10:00 am at LA CAN
- Downtown Women’s Action Coalition Meetings
Second Tuesday of every month at 3:30 pm at LA CAN.
- Team Food and Garden Meetings - Every Thursday at 10:00 am at LA CAN
- Pueblo Del Rio Tenant Meetings -
Every Second Wednesday at 5:30 pm at James Slauson Park Rec Center

Viene de la página 11

LIBERAR A TRISHAWN CAREY

Es ironico porque ese mismo equipo de Respondo podría haber respondido a escena el 1ro de marzo, ya que se supone que los equipos SMART se utilizan cuando oficiales descubren una crisis de salud mentale y están diseñados para prevenir la violencia y fuerza. Si hubieran llegado tempranamente, hoy el hermano África pueiese seguir vivo y podría estar en libertad Trishawn.

Por la falta de Medios Sociales y otros avances tecnologicos desde el 1999, fue duro llevar la historia de Margret Mitchell y muchos otros, al publico. Diseminar informacion ahora es mucho más fácil y la comunidad planea sacar ventaja y explosivamente difundar la historia de Trishawn Carey y crear solidaridad para su liberación. LA CAN y the Downtown Women’s Action Coalition trabajan diligentemente para traer atención a el caso de Trishawn Carey y utilizaran los Medios Sociales para compartir su historia. Recuerde que el video de lo que paso el 1ro de marzo lo han visto mas de nueve mil personas.

Mientras que nuestra comunidad todavía esta de luto por la muerte de África, no debemos pasar por alto el hecho de que lo que ocurrió en la tarde de el sábado 1ro de marzo pudo haber reclamado mas vidas y que arraso la vida de Trishawn Carey. Ella no sólo es testigo que mantienen fuera de alcance del público y los medios de comunicación, jella es sobreviviente de la brutalidad policial y la necesitamos afuera para contar su historia!

Para involucrarse más en la campaña para LIBERAR A TRISHAWN CAREY, venga a reuniones de derechos civiles en LA CAN todos los lunes a la 1pm y siguanos en Facebook (FREE TRISHAWN CAREY) y Twitter (@LACANetwork).

To contact LA CAN or find out more about our work and how to support us, write or visit us online:

838 E. 6th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90021
(213) 228-0024

www.cangress.org
WEBSITE
cangress.wordpress.org
BLOG



BECOME A
FAN OF LA CAN



SEND US A TWEET
@LACANetwork

Editorial Policy:

The Community Connection is a street newspaper and a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers. The Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) is a membership organization comprised of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless residents living in Downtown and South Los Angeles, and surrounding communities. LA CAN’s staff and core members write many articles that appear in the Community Connection.

Articles by contributors who are not LA CAN core members and/or personal opinion/experience articles receive a byline. These articles do not necessarily represent the views, opinions and perspectives of the Los Angeles Community Action Network.

All articles and artwork may be reproduced with permission only; please contact Eric Ares @ (213) 228-0024 or erica@cangress.org.