



# HONORING OUR POWER

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS IN A TIME OF CRISIS

PARTNERS FOR  
DIGNITY & RIGHTS

[dignityandrights.org](https://dignityandrights.org)

# WELCOME

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**LIZ SULLIVAN-YUKNIS**  
Co-Executive Director



**KENYON FARROW**  
Co-Executive Director

## DEAR FRIENDS,

**Let's face it—this is not the 15th anniversary year we had anticipated.**

We began the year with big plans—to rebrand the organization from NESRI to Partners for Dignity & Rights, to host our New Social Contract tour, and to celebrate our anniversary with our comrades across the country.

But 2020 had different plans. The COVID-19 pandemic that has killed at least 1.4 million globally and over 316,000 in the U.S. to date, has amplified inequity and racism in our society, impacting Black and Brown communities at higher rates and deepening economic insecurity. Making matters worse, White House leadership has used the pandemic to politicize science and downplay the seriousness of the virus, all the while undermining public trust in research and public health and promoting armed white nationalist militias to disrupt local orders to social distance and wear masks in public.

Just as we were all settling in for a spring of sheltering in place, the police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery happened, and helped bring about mass mobilizations of people across the United States under the #BlackLivesMatter banner, calling for the defunding and dismantling of policing as we know it in the United States. As communities faced the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and ongoing racial and police violence, President Trump continued to undermine public safety at all levels by making a mockery of COVID-19 public health measures and strongly encouraging white nationalist groups to take up arms against BLM protesters, public health officials and even elected officials.

Leading up to the 2020 election, the Senate broke with their own rule-setting precedent by forcing a Supreme Court appointment, giving conservatives the potential to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the Affordable Care Act, LGBT protections and Civil Rights protections for Black and Brown folks. And since the election, Trump has raised more than \$200 million, fueled by claims that the election was stolen.

But despite these challenges, we've continued to work. And in many ways, this moment represents the 15-year history of work that Partners for Dignity & Rights has done, and will continue to do. It is more important than ever that we're organizing at the local level, building the strength and power of grassroots movements, connecting those local fights together, one by one, to build national movements that can, and are, influencing federal policymakers and inspiring visionary change that creates the space for true participatory democracy. We aim to build a world that values the lives of all people and to create the contexts for human dignity through transforming education systems, removing profit motives from health care, making workplaces more meaningful, just and accountable to the needs of workers and the working class and poor.

# WELCOME

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We may be in terrifying times, where the future is uncertain. But this is the time to knit closer together, to hold steady, and press forward. The forces of power that have tried to rule and shape our existence for the last 500 years are frightened of a new emerging majority. We hope that we, in our 15-year history, have played a role in ushering in that new majority. We plan to continue to play a role in whatever world awaits us in 2021. We are being offered an opportunity to truly change the world, but its direction will depend on our ability to unite communities together to articulate a vision for a new world, to challenge oppressive systems while creating new institutions and modes of relating to one another across differences.

But we can't do it without you. We hope that you will support Partners for Dignity & Rights in our next phase of work by making a one-time gift, or becoming a monthly sustaining partner. We thank you in advance for your generosity, and your continued support of our work, and the communities we serve.

In solidarity,

**LIZ SULLIVAN-YUKNIS & KENYON FARROW**  
Co-Executive Directors

## **Special Thanks to the Partners for Dignity & Rights 15th Anniversary Host Committee**

**We are deeply grateful for the Partners for Dignity & Rights 15th Anniversary Co-Chairs and Host Committee Members for their support and partnership in the fight for justice:**

### **CO-CHAIRS**

Katherine Acey	Michele Lord
Scot Nakagawa	Martha Davis
Rob Robinson	Gay McDougall
Richard Healey	Alice H. Henkin
Kavitha Mediratta	Regan Pritzker
Michael Hirschhorn	Billy Wimsatt
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Jeyn Levison	

### **HOST COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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Rini Banerjee	Lauren Elfant
Gara LaMarche	
Glenn Harris	
Braeden Lentz	



# PARTNERS FOR DIGNITY & RIGHTS



## ABOUT US

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### Our Vision

Partners for Dignity & Rights builds power to bring about a transformation in our country where all people live free and fulfilling lives. Because our current systems and structures breed inequity rather than human rights and democracy, we create and advance solutions and strategies for systemic change that address the intersection of racial, economic, gender and other forms of injustice.

We believe in social movements and community-driven efforts that strive to ensure human rights and democracy. Our vision for human rights and democracy is broad and includes economic, social and cultural rights, as well as forms of participatory and inclusive democracy both within government and in community or worker-led institutions and programs.

### Our Mission

In partnership with communities, Partners for Dignity & Rights works to build a broad movement for economic and social rights, including health, housing, education and work with dignity. Based on the principle that fundamental human needs create human rights obligations on the part of the government and private sector, Partners for Dignity & Rights advocates for public policies that guarantee the universal and equitable fulfillment of these rights in the United States.

# ABOUT US

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## Board of Directors

**Dr. Susan M. Blaustein**

Founder/Director, WomenStrong International

**James Haslam**

Co-Founder, Rights & Democracy

**Richard Healey**

Founder and former Executive Director of Grassroots Policy Project

**Patrick Mason**

Professor of Economics and Director, African-American Studies Program, Florida State University

**Kavitha Mediratta**

Executive Director, Atlantic Fellows for Racial Equity

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Deputy Chief Operating and Finance Officer, The Atlantic Philanthropies

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Executive Director, The Morningside Center

**Sharda Sekaran**

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**Cynthia Soohoo**

Co-Director, Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic, CUNY Law School

**Monette Zard**

Professor and Director of the Program on Forced Migration at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University

**Thank you to our long-standing Board members who stepped down in 2020:**

**Mimi Abramovitz, Alice H. Henkin and Maria Herminia Graterol.**

## Staff

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Co-Executive Director

**Kenyon Farrow**

Co-Executive Director

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Interim Part-time Coordinator (Dignity in Schools Campaign)

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**Sarah Newell**

Director of Outreach and Communications (WSR Network)

**Virginia Rodino**

Communications and Outreach Associate (WSR Network)

**Rafaela Rodriguez**

Director of Strategic Partnerships (WSR Network)

**Sean Sellers**

Senior Advisor (WSR Network)

**Anja Rudiger**

Senior Advisor

**Imara Jones**

Senior Advisor

**Noelle Damico**

Senior Fellow

**Philippa Rizopoulos**

Fellow





# TIMELINE

## Partners for Dignity & Rights and THE DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

**2005**

Partners for Dignity & Rights and CADRE, a parent-led group in LA fighting criminalization and pushout in schools, form a partnership, eventually contributing to the formation of the national Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC).

**2007**

CADRE wins a progressive and comprehensive policy requiring Positive Behavior Supports in LA schools. Partners for Dignity & Rights releases the report, *Deprived of Dignity*.

**2008**

Teachers Unite and Partners for Dignity & Rights release a joint report, *Teachers Talk*, that opens dialogue with the NYC Department of Education and helps lay the groundwork for the local DSC-NY Chapter.

**2009**

DSC holds its first national conference. Today, DSC has more than 100 organizations across 27 states.

**2010**

FFLIC and Partners for Dignity & Rights release a joint report, *Pushed Out*. A classroom management bill passes in Louisiana that requires school personnel to receive training on positive discipline.

**2012**

DSC publishes the *Model Code on Education and Dignity: A Human Rights Framework for Schools* and launches *Solutions Not Suspensions*, a Call for a Moratorium on Out-of-School Suspensions, with the Opportunity to Learn Campaign.

**2014**

Departments of Education and Justice release *Federal School Discipline Guidance* articulating schools' civil rights obligations to conduct school discipline without racial discrimination.

**2016**

DSC launches our *Counselors Not Cops* campaign, calling for the removal of all police and law enforcement from schools.



**2018**

DSC members work at the state and local level to ensure full implementation of the new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and release *Engage for Education Equity: A Toolkit for School Communities on ESSA*, with NAACP LDF and Opportunity Institute.

**2019**

DSC-NY wins citywide implementation of restorative justice in all middle and high schools in the largest school district in the country, where suspensions have dropped by over 50% since 2010. DSC also releases its *New Model Code on Education & Dignity*, with new sections on culturally relevant curriculum and the rights of LGBTQ+ students and undocumented students.

**2020**

After years of organizing, members in seven cities win campaigns to remove police from schools. DSC also supports members organizing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and releases *Human Rights Guidance on Lessons Learned for Remote Learning and Hybrid Learning in COVID-19 and Beyond*.



# TIMELINE

## Partners for Dignity & Rights and THE HUMAN RIGHT TO HEALTH CARE

- 2008** Partners for Dignity & Rights and the Vermont Workers' Center launch the Healthcare Is a Human Right Campaign in Vermont.
- 2010** We win Act 128 in Vermont, mandating the state to study health care policy options that treat health care as a human right.
- 2011** We win Act 48 in Vermont, the country's first law for a universal, publicly financed health care system. It requires full inclusion of undocumented communities, shifting the goal post for health policies around the country.
- 2013** Partners for Dignity & Rights helps Put People First! Pennsylvania and the Southern Maine Workers' Center launch Healthcare Is a Human Right Campaigns.
- 2015** After Vermont's governor fails to finance Act 48, Partners for Dignity & Rights and the Vermont Workers' Center release a plan for equitably financing universal health care in Vermont.
- The Campaign for New York Health, a Partners for Dignity & Rights ally, passes the New York Health Act in the State Assembly. The Act proposes universal, publicly financed health care in New York.
- Partners for Dignity & Rights, the Vermont Workers' Center, Put People First! Pennsylvania, and Southern Maine Workers' Center form the Healthcare Is a Human Right Collaborative.
- 2016** Partners for Dignity & Rights helps Put People First! Pennsylvania win their state's first-ever public hearing on insurance rate hikes.



- 2017** Partners for Dignity & Rights and the Healthy California coalition pass a universal health care bill, the Healthy California Act, in the State Senate.
- Partners for Dignity & Rights help the Healthcare Is a Human Right Campaigns in Vermont, Pennsylvania, and Maine launch Medicaid campaigns to defend against budget and eligibility cuts and to cover dental care as a fundamental right.
- 2019** We help the Southern Maine Workers' Center block so-called "work requirements" designed to force people off of Medicaid.
- Partners for Dignity & Rights helps Put People First! Pennsylvania launch a campaign to win a new state office, a Public Healthcare Advocate, to protect patients' health care rights and hold health care companies accountable.
- Partners for Dignity & Rights endorses the Medicare for All Act of 2019 and joins the Medicare for All coalition.
- 2020** Partners for Dignity & Rights helps our partners organize to protect people from COVID-19 while pushing forward a long-term, transformative agenda to equitably guarantee health care to all.



# TIMELINE

## Partners for Dignity & Rights and **WORKER-DRIVEN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**2001**

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) launches the Campaign for Fair Food, after nearly a decade of organizing farmworkers in Immokalee.

**2004**

Partners for Dignity & Rights forms a strategic partnership with CIW and coordinates a hearing before the Inter-American Commission on human rights to support CIW's Taco Bell boycott, generating support from every major human rights organization for the campaign.

**2006**

Partners for Dignity & Rights and the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights facilitate transnational advocacy in Norway to engage the Norwegian petroleum fund to pressure McDonald's to enter the Fair Food agreement.

**2008**

Partners for Dignity & Rights supports the CIW at a U.S. Senate Hearing on Farmworker Exploitation in Florida Tomato Fields.

**2010**

The CIW and the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange sign a historic agreement, expanding the program statewide to nearly all of Florida's tomato industry; expansion to the entire eastern seaboard comes soon after.

**2011**

Partners for Dignity & Rights becomes part of creating the Fair Food Standards Council, which provides industry-wide enforcement of the Fair Food Program's Code of Conduct.

**2014**

Partners for Dignity & Rights partners with Migrant Justice in Vermont to help expand the Fair Food Program's model to the dairy sector as part of the paradigm shift from Corporate Social Responsibility to Worker-driven Social Responsibility.



**2015**

Partners for Dignity & Rights supports the groundbreaking alliance between the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC)—a key player in the global anti-sweatshop movement and a witness signatory to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh—and the CIW to form, along with three other international and domestic organizations, the Worker-driven Social Responsibility (WSR) Network. This multi-disciplinary collaboration aimed at expanding the WSR model into other sectors and regions is anchored at and coordinated out of Partners for Dignity & Rights.

**2017**

With Partners for Dignity & Rights by their side, farmworkers from the Vermont-based Migrant Justice and the CEO of Ben & Jerry's jointly sign the first-of-its-kind Milk with Dignity (MD) agreement, a legally binding contract that commits Ben & Jerry's to implement a worker-driven human rights program in its Northeast dairy supply chain.

**2019**

WSRN and network members, led by WRC and advised by CIW, support a labor-feminist coalition of Lesotho organizations to secure a groundbreaking WSR program to combat sexual harassment and coercion in garment factories.

**2020**

Partners for Dignity & Rights helps launch the Building Dignity and Respect Standards Council in Minneapolis to bring Worker-driven Social Responsibility to the construction industry.

# TIMELINE

## Partners for Dignity & Rights and THE HUMAN RIGHT TO HOUSING AND TO DEVELOPMENT

**2009**

Partners for Dignity & Rights arranges a visit by the United Nations Advisory Group on Forced Evictions to New Orleans to meet and interview New Orleans residents struggling with affordable housing after Hurricane Katrina.

Partners for Dignity & Rights coordinates a U.S. visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing in six localities, involving 70 organizations and 2,000 residents.

**2010**

Partners for Dignity & Rights produces *Coming Home: The Dry Storm*, a documentary film chronicling the post-Katrina fight of New Orleans public housing residents to save their homes.

Partners for Dignity & Rights and public housing partners defeat PETRA, a HUD-backed plan to privatize financing for public housing, with the Campaign to Restore National Housing Rights.

**2011-12**

Partners for Dignity & Rights supports the call for an end to speculative housing by promoting alternatives with Take Back the Land, whose members took over foreclosed homes.

**2013**

Partners for Dignity & Rights co-facilitates creation of the Housing is a Human Right Roundtable, seeking to transform Baltimore's empty homes into permanently affordable housing.

**2016**

Partners for Dignity & Rights publishes, with the Baltimore Housing Roundtable, *Community + Land + Trust: Tools for Development Without Displacement*, which sets forth a roadmap to public funding for Community Land Trusts and kicks off the Roundtable's 20/20 campaign.



Photo by Rob Robinson

**2018**

Partners for Dignity & Rights works with the Roundtable to create the Baltimore City Affordable Housing Trust Fund through a Citizen Ballot Initiative.

**2019**

Partners for Dignity & Rights works with the Roundtable to pass an increase in Baltimore City transfer/recording tax and secure a City Bonds commitment to provide \$20 million annually to the Trust Fund, a breakthrough model for financing community controlled housing that Partners for Dignity and Rights is working to bring across the country.

**2020**

Partners for Dignity & Rights co-hosts the First National "Affordable For Whom Conference," which brings together 200 grassroots housing organizers committed to community controlled deeply affordable housing to share breakthrough models.

Partners for Dignity & Rights works with the Roundtable to get the Baltimore Housing Trust Fund Commission to commit the largest share of funding to Community Land Trusts.



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# Healthcare As a Human Right

Looking back on the twelve years we've been working on health care, it's incredible to see how far politics have moved. When we started working with the Vermont Workers' Center to help build their Healthcare Is a Human Right Campaign in 2008, Barack Obama was still a Senator, the Affordable Care Act had yet to be drafted, and virtually no one of prominence in politics was talking about health care as a human right!

Back then as wonks, pundits, and Members of Congress started debating the actuarial value of silver-tier insurance plans and optimal tax penalties for insurance mandates, we were helping people in Vermont start a different conversation: a conversation that, I firmly believed, has changed the course of American health care.

Partners for Dignity & Rights helped the Vermont Workers' Center articulate their health care vision and build a campaign around a human rights framework that unabashedly champions health care as an economic right that must be guaranteed as a universal, equitable, and democratically governed public good.

In 2011, the Healthcare Is a Human Right Campaign won the first law in the country setting a state on course toward creating a universal, publicly financed health care system. This victory has inspired a community-driven nationwide movement that is building support for health justice not on narrowly defined economic and technocratic grounds, but as a fulfillment of our deepest values and highest aspirations. Our growing movement has put Medicare for All on the national agenda, expanded Medicaid benefits, fought off exclusionary Medicaid eligibility restrictions, won statewide public hearings, and protected the right of all residents to be guaranteed the same standard of care regardless of immigration status.

All this brings me great hope for the years ahead. But we face tremendous threats too. As I write this, COVID-19 has already killed over 316,000 people in the United States. Racism continues to



exact a devastating toll on the health of Black, Native, immigrant and other communities of color, and is strategically weaponized to divide us and keep us from joining together to meet our shared needs. The delivery of care remains predicated on income, wealth and employment rather than medical need. And health care industries and their right-wing allies are still trying to tank the Affordable Care Act, dismember Medicaid, attack women's and transgender people's bodily autonomy and block Medicare for All and any other policies that so much as hint at publicly guaranteed care and health justice.

The next few years will bring major health policy fights in Washington and every state capital. With the brilliant and tenacious organizing by our community and labor partners and with the strength of the human-rights-based policies that we are advancing together, I know that we can achieve enormous progress toward a health care system that guarantees everyone health care and a more just economy. The opportunity is ours to take.

In Solidarity,

**BEN PALMQUIST**

Program Director  
Health Care & Economic Democracy  
Partners for Dignity & Rights



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# Building Power through Enforcement for Low-Wage Workers

Over the past 15 years, we've remained steadfast in our partnership with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) to help establish and expand one of the only effective models for enforcing low-wage workers' rights not just in the US but globally. This approach, known as Worker-driven Social Responsibility (WSR), emerged from parallel sister movements—the global anti-sweatshop movement and the Fair Food Movement led by CIW in the United States. The first comprehensive WSR program was the Fair Food Program established in 2009. The second WSR program was the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh established in 2013.

We were part of the founding of and today anchor the Worker-driven Social Responsibility Network (WSRN), which emerged out of an alliance between the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) and CIW. WRC and its allies, including WSRN members Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity and Clean Clothes Campaign, played a critical role in convincing brands to sign the historic Bangladesh Accord. WRC continues to play a role in implementing and enforcing the Accord. We are honored to have come together with these movement leaders and other worker organizations, allies, and technical advisors for the purpose of expanding, promoting, and replicating this model in supply chains around the world. Now in its sixth year, WSRN supports a number of groups that are taking on the large corporations at the top of supply chains to win tangible, industry-wide change in the pay and working conditions of the most marginalized workers.

Our momentum is only growing. In 2017, Migrant Justice signed the first-ever Milk with Dignity (MWD) Agreement with Ben & Jerry's, enabling them to launch the MWD Program on dairy farms in Vermont. In 2019, WSRN and network members, led by the efforts of the Worker Rights Consortium, supported a labor-feminist coalition of Lesotho organizations to launch a groundbreaking WSR program to combat sexual harassment and

coercion in Lesotho garment factories. The model is currently being implemented on three continents.

Partners for Dignity & Rights has collaborated with worker organizations to draw lessons from WSR's successes for developing effective enforcement in new industries and geographies. In 2020, we helped launch the Building Dignity and Respect Standards Council in Minneapolis to bring WSR to the construction industry.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the deep, long-standing inequalities that underlie global supply chains and has had devastating impacts on low-wage workers in every industry. The economic structures that enable corporations to act with impunity in the face of human rights violations are the same ones that exploit Black and Brown lives for profit and contribute to white racial violence and police militarization.

Over the next few years, the attacks on the traditional labor movement, on worker centers, and on workers of color are unlikely to stop, but we will stay steadfast in our vision and rooted in our partnerships. We will build new connections among workers across industries and communities, and in the broader field, which will enable us to persist and grow our movement. Already, we can see the fruits of new, unified calls for economic democracy, corporate accountability, verifiable standards, and enforceable workplace protections.

Together, we will be unstoppable.

In Solidarity,

**THERESA HAAS**

Director of Transnational Strategies  
Worker-driven Social  
Responsibility Network  
Partners for Dignity & Rights



**BRITTANY SCOTT**

Senior Research Strategist  
Partners for Dignity & Rights







## Equity and Democracy in Housing

Over the past decade, Partners for Dignity & Rights' equitable development work has focused on exploring, refining, operationalizing, and wrestling with the twin objectives of promoting equity and democracy.

In 2011, the mortgage foreclosure crisis accelerated our examination of alternative housing models that weren't tied to profit and where resident-governance provided security of tenure. Community Land Trusts (CLTs), Limited Equity Co-Ops, and Mutual Housing Associations were immune to market speculation and arbitrary evictions. But our efforts to promote these options were overwhelmed by the exigent needs of households at the time. Mortgage principal reduction and traditional loan modifications eclipsed more transformative solutions.

We brought Community Land Trusts to our work with the United Workers in Baltimore, but this time as a cross-cutting solution to housing and development. Community land ownership was the key to piercing the alignment of developers, politicians, and voting homeowners around increased property values. It was the key to development without displacement. It also enabled communities to be active agents in developing low-income affordable housing. In 2016, our partnership with the Baltimore Housing Roundtable produced Community + Land + Trust: Tools for

Development Without Displacement, a critique of the City's development history and a visionary roadmap to government supported, community-driven development.

Baltimoreans, reeling from the Rebellion after Freddie Gray's death, embraced and mobilized around the report. Within three years, citizen ballot initiatives created a City Housing Trust Fund and \$20 million in annual funding for it—ideas from the 2016 blueprint. In January of 2020, the Trust Fund approved a three-year funding plan that dedicated a lion's share of monies for CLTs, a share that might be higher than any in the 746 state and local Housing Trust Funds that exist in the U.S. For a City that knew little of CLTs four years earlier, this was incredible.

Partners for Dignity & Rights took on the struggle for land and housing with a recipe of equity and democracy, and is re-shaping Baltimore's development arc toward justice. The work continues. Praxis makes perfect.

In Solidarity,

**PETER SABONIS**  
Program Director  
Human Rights Development  
Partners for Dignity & Rights



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# Promoting Dignity in Schools

Over the past 15 years, we have partnered with grassroots organizations across the country to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and support a growing movement for education and racial justice. Emerging out of our partnership with the parent-led organization CADRE in Los Angeles, Partners for Dignity & Rights co-founded the Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) in 2006. Working with parents, youth, organizers and educators, we developed human rights-based models that reject a culture of punishment and criminalization in schools, and create positive approaches to school discipline that build strong relationships, prevent and resolve conflicts and provide students with the supports they need.

Today, the DSC has grown to a vibrant national coalition of over 100 organizations across 27 states. Through direct action organizing, public policy advocacy and leadership development, member-led campaigns in over two dozen school districts and states have won campaigns to rewrite discipline codes and change state laws ending suspensions and expulsions for minor misbehaviors, reducing arrests and implementing positive approaches like restorative justice and positive behavior supports in their schools. In 2019, the DSC-New York Chapter won a historic victory when New York City--the largest school district in the country--committed to implementing restorative justice in all middle and high schools and social-emotional learning in all elementary schools.

Despite these victories, all is not well. Racial disparities persist in school discipline, as Black and Brown students are still being suspended and arrested at higher rates, and denied access to the services and supports they need. School districts continue to invest in school policing, while denying the resources needed for counseling, mental health services and meaningful implementation of restorative justice and social-emotional supports. These inequities were amplified in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic shut down schools and low-income families of color already facing illness and economic insecurity were also denied the support needed to access remote learning. DSC provided rapid response funds for member organizations



and developed collective human rights guidance for remote and hybrid learning to support organizing on the ground.

Amidst the global pandemic, communities also faced ongoing racist police violence, which following the police murders of Breonna Taylor in March and George Floyd in May, led to uprisings across the country with calls to defund the police. Youth and parent-led member organizations that had been fighting for years to end the criminalization of Black and Brown youth, won hard-fought campaigns in seven school districts to remove school police. Members in a dozen other districts are engaged in ongoing Counselors Not Cops campaigns to remove school police and fund supportive staff in schools - like community intervention workers, mental health counselors, restorative coordinators and others.

Looking ahead, as schools are navigating remote learning and the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, we recognize that students and families need mental and physical health supports, trauma and healing practices now more than ever. We will continue organizing to win full divestment from school policing and to reallocate those resources towards guaranteeing the human rights of every young person to a quality education and to be treated with dignity.

In Solidarity,

**RUTH S. IDAKULA**  
Program Director  
Dignity in Schools Campaign  
Partners for Dignity & Rights





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# Permanent Racism and Police Murder

## Non-economic liberalism is a non-solution to the problem

Recent murders of African American citizens by local police and white vigilantes are the proximate cause for igniting and sustaining national and international protests against police violence, injustice and inequality, and permanent racism within the US. Three of these murders have made their way to center stage of America's conscience.

Broad daylight, Memorial Day, May 25, 2020. George Floyd is murdered, live on camera, by a crew of four within the Minneapolis Police Department. The primary murderer is nonchalant; he stares straight into the camera with his hands in his pocket as he calmly manipulates his knee on the neck of Mr. Floyd. Historically, after a lynching, the white mob often posed next to the Black body and stared nonchalantly straight into the camera.

Around midnight, March 13, 2020. Breonna Taylor and Kenneth Walker are asleep in bed. Unidentified persons break into their home and murder Ms. Taylor. Mr. Walker is charged with a crime because he tried to use his gun to protect his family. Apparently, the 2nd Amendment was not written for African Americans. The murderers were plainclothes Louisville police officers who entered the home of this African American couple without knocking or bothering to identify themselves as law enforcement officers. December 4, 1969, 4:45 am, Fred Hampton was executed by the Chicago police department as he and Deborah Johnson (more than 8 months pregnant) lay in bed sleep.

Midday, Sunday, February 23, 2020. Ahmaud Arbery is out for a leisurely jog through a white neighborhood in Brunswick, Georgia. He is hunted down, cornered, and murdered by a white vigilante gang of a family and a friend. The father of the family is a former police officer and investigator for the district attorney. It takes 3 months for the police to arrest the murderers, who admitted to killing Mr. Arbery on the day of the murder. This armed white vigilante crew, like the murderer of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida on February 26, 2012, viewed themselves as an extension of the local police.



The three murders of 2020 and their historical antecedents are not disconnected events. Permanent anti-black racism is the historical force binding these events together. Anti-black racism means devaluation of Black life; the absence of sufficient oversight, accountability, and democratic control of policing; and, the permanent absence of social justice and the permanent presence of white supremacist hostility to African Americans striving to live dignified lives. Permanent anti-black racism is the institutional and social reality our historical political economy has made for us; it does not have to describe the future we are making. We must exercise the option to exorcise permanent anti-black racism for our social relations, our public policies, our institutions, and our political economy.

Dr. King warned that moderate reform will not give us a different future. A just future where all persons live dignified lives requires an egalitarian distribution of wealth and power. To borrow a phrase from historian Harold Cruse, non-economic liberalism—moderate reform of the police and public policies that ignore centuries of racial inequality in wealth and power—will not produce a fundamental structural transformation away from permanent anti-black racism to a just political economy with dignity for all.

Pre-eminent legal scholar Derrick Bell made the case that racism is permanent because "it is a

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critically important stabilizing force that enables whites to bind across a wide socio-economic chasm.” Decades before Bell, W. E. B. DuBois, founder of American sociology, alerted us to the permanent white racial contract—white workers willingly tradeoff racial inequality in labor market outcomes and higher profit for capital in order to obtain a racially advantageous social wage for themselves. Speaking of Philadelphia in the 1880s, but applicable to all American cities and any time, DuBois observed that,

“White workers were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials, and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect on their personal treatment and the deference shown them. White schoolhouses were the best in the community, and conspicuously placed and they cost anywhere from twice to ten times as much per capita as the colored schools. The newspapers specialized on news that flattered the poor whites and almost entirely ignored the Negro except for crime and ridicule.

“On the other hand, in the same way, the Negro was subject to public insult; was afraid of mobs; was liable to the jibes of children and the unreasoning fears of white women; and was compelled almost continuously to submit to various badges of inferiority.”

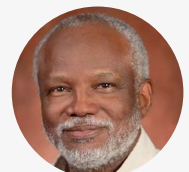
There are nearly 48 million persons of African descent within the US. We have been in America for four centuries. Yet, any African American can be murdered by the police and the investigation will begin with the media publishing information fed to them by the police questioning the character of the murdered African American and asserting that “police have a tough job.” The confluence of events and minutiae leading to a particular individual being murdered by a particular officer at a particular point in time in a particular location

cannot be readily mapped to particular degrees of inter- and intra-racial inequality in the distribution of wealth and power. Rather, it is the origination and sustained presence of their inequities that created a continuous demand for and supply of religious, economic, political, psychological, historical, sociological, criminological, and other pseudo-scientific explanations of putative African American inferiority, excess criminality, absence of stable families, and other racist nonsense that becomes part of the mental framework governing police interactions with African Americans. Professor Billy R. Close has labeled this “black crimmythologies,” the racist and systemic conflation of blackness and criminality and blackness and inferiority. We end black crimmythogy by accurately identifying and abolishing the intellectual theories and structural inequalities which perpetuate permanent racism.

Universities—most especially, Tier 1 very high research universities, such as Florida State, University of Florida, University of Central Florida, and University of South Florida—cannot share in the blamelessness God ascribed to Job. The police reflect the society from whence they are recruited. If too many police officers have too little respect for the sanctity of Black life, too great of an adherence to permanent anti-black racism, one must reasonably ask from whence did they acquire such racist pre-dispositions? Research universities produce, distribute, evaluate, and popularize the ideas and information used to govern society. The racist origins, content, and implications of these ideas and information are often ignored or discounted. Ending permanent racism will not be a series of sprints, or even episodic marathons; it will be the continuation of an interconnected chain of multiple marathons contested over decades to come. Research universities can do their part to end permanent racism by producing ideas and information that contribute to establishing an egalitarian distribution of wealth and power and that argue relentlessly for the dignity of life.

Sincerely,

**PATRICK L. MASON**  
Chair of the Board of Directors  
Partners for Dignity & Rights





## **CATHY ALBISA** **FOUNDING DIRECTOR**

Cathy co-founded Partners for Dignity & Rights (formerly National Economic and Social Rights Initiative) along with Sharda Sekaran and Liz Sullivan-Yuknis in order to build legitimacy for human rights in general, and economic and social rights in particular. She is committed to a community-centered and participatory human rights approach that is locally anchored, but universal and global in its vision.

Cathy has a background in constitutional and human rights, and significant expertise in reproductive justice, corporate accountability and economic and social rights. She has published extensively and served on boards as diverse as the Center for Constitutional Rights, the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, the International Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Network, and the Center for Social Inclusion, among others. She clerked for the Honorable Mitchell Cohen in the District of New Jersey. She received a BA from the University of Miami and is a graduate of Columbia Law School.



## **Thank You**

Partners for Dignity & Rights will remain forever grateful for the exemplary leadership of Cathy Albisa, one of our founders and our original Executive Director. For 15 years she has nurtured the growth and development of Partners for Dignity & Rights from an inspiration to an important human rights organization. One of the most important tasks of leadership is to establish a transition team and plan for the time when new leadership must guide the helm of the organization. Cathy established an energetic and talented staff; hence, even as Partners for Dignity & Rights is rightly proud of our past 15 years, we are also enthusiastic about what we plan to accomplish over the next 15 years. We thank Cathy Albisa for her dedication, leadership, and team preparation.

**PATRICK L. MASON**  
Chair of the Board of Directors  
Partners for Dignity & Rights







**LIZ SULLIVAN-YUKNIS**  
**CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Liz recently transitioned from Education Campaigns Director to Co-Executive Director at Partners for Dignity & Rights. She shares her time continuing to support our education work with the Dignity in Schools Campaign, while also supporting organizational development, operations and management at Partners for Dignity & Rights. With the Dignity in Schools Campaign, she works with youth, families, organizers and advocates to promote policy change in public education to guarantee students' rights to dignity and a quality education. She has carried out research projects to document human rights violations in U.S. public schools, and has provided trainings to parents, youth and organizers about how to incorporate human rights standards and strategies into their advocacy. She has previously worked as a consultant with Human Rights Education Associates and as Project Coordinator at the Center for Economic and Social Rights. She holds a B.A. from Brown University and a Masters degree in Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.



**KENYON FARROW**  
**CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Kenyon Farrow is an award-winning writer, activist, and strategist. He has worked on campaigns large and small, local, national, and global on issues related to criminalization/mass imprisonment, homelessness, health justice and LGBT rights.

He is currently the Co-Executive Director of Partners for Dignity & Rights, a national organization that partners with communities to build a broad movement for economic and social rights, including health, housing, education and work with dignity. Previously, he served as Senior Editor with TheBody.com and TheBodyPro.com, and serves on the board of NY Transgender Advocacy Group (NYTAG), PrEP4All, and Global Black Gay Men Connect. He also served as U.S. & Global Health Policy director with Treatment Action Group (TAG) and is the former executive director of Queers for Economic Justice. He's also worked as an organizer and communications strategist for groups like Critical Resistance, FIERCE, and Housing Works.

In addition to his political work, Kenyon is a prolific essayist and author. He is the co-editor of the book **Letters From Young Activists: Today's Rebels Speak Out**. His work has also appeared in many anthologies including **Spirited: Affirming the Soul of Black Lesbian and Gay Identity**, **For Colored Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Still Not Enough**, **We Have Not Been Moved: Resisting Racism and Militarism in 21st Century America**, and **Black Gay Genius: Answering Joseph Beam's Call**. His work has also appeared on websites and in publications such as The Atlantic, TheGrio, Colorlines, ReWire News, BET.com, The American Prospect, and AlterNet.

Kenyon's work has been recognized by many institutions including Out Magazine's "Out 100" and The Advocate magazine's "40 Under 40." He was also named a "Modern Black History Hero" by Black Entertainment Television.

# 15TH ANNIVERSARY HONOREES

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## KATHERINE FRANKE

### People's Scholar Award

Katherine Franke is the James L. Dohr Professor of Law at Columbia University, where she also directs the Center for Gender and Sexuality Law and is the faculty director of the Law, Rights, and Religion Project. She serves on the Executive Committees of Columbia's Institute for Research on Women, Gender and Sexuality, and the Center for Palestine Studies. She is among the nation's leading scholars writing on law, sexuality, race, and religion drawing from feminist, queer, and critical race theory. Franke is also the founder and faculty director of the Law, Rights, and Religion Project, a think tank based at Columbia Law School that develops policy and thought leadership on the complex ways in which religious liberty rights interact with other fundamental rights.

Franke's most recent book, *Repair: Redeeming the Promise of Abolition*, makes a powerful case for reparations for Black Americans by amplifying the stories of formerly enslaved people and calling for repair of the damage caused by the legacy of American slavery. Franke unpacks intergenerational, systemic racism and white privilege at the heart of American society and argues that reparations for slavery are necessary, overdue and possible.



## THE LIBRA FOUNDATION

### CRYSTAL HAYLING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Movement Philanthropy Award

Crystal Hayling is the Executive Director of The Libra Foundation, a family foundation that brings a racial justice lens to its grantmaking in the areas of gender justice, environmental justice and criminal justice reform. Previously, she was the managing director for the Environment Leaders Fellowship of the Aspen Institute. Prior to that she lived for six years in Asia, where she advised families and foundations on strategic philanthropy to tackle the region's most pressing social challenges. Crystal was CEO of the Blue Shield of California Foundation. At BSCF she directed over \$100M in strategic grants focused on achieving universal healthcare. In that role she created Clinic Leadership Institute to turn top talent into robust senior managers at community health clinics. Along with a focus on leadership, Crystal has experience scaling high-impact programs. She led the team that created the first on-line Medi-Cal application which reduced approval time from months to days and she was part of the start-up teams that launched three \$1 billion foundations: the California Wellness Foundation, the California HealthCare Foundation, and the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Crystal has served on national and international boards including the Center for Effective Philanthropy and Asian Venture Philanthropy Network. She has won numerous awards and for three years running was named one of the Most Influential Women in Business by the San Francisco Business Times. She was honored to receive the James Joseph Award from the Association of Black Foundation Executives. Crystal is a graduate of Yale University and Stanford's Graduate School of Business. She is a 2007 Henry Crown Fellow of the Aspen Institute and a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network.

# 15TH ANNIVERSARY HONOREES

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## **UNITED WORKERS** **ADRIANA FOSTER, LEADERSHIP ORGANIZER** **Frontline Leadership Award**

United Workers Association (United Workers) was founded in 2002. We are a human rights organization led by the poor to end poverty. Since our beginning we understood the need for organizing directed at political and economic structures that perpetuate poverty, structural racism, and failed development. From 2004–2008 we organized homeless temporary workers who cleaned publicly owned Camden Yards stadium. We succeeded at raising wages from \$4/hr in 2004 to the current living wage of \$14.24/hr. and developed a large grouping of low-wage worker leaders. The United Workers' all member Leadership Council then decided on a strategy to extend our organizing to other low wage sectors and importantly establish human rights committees beyond workplaces to neighborhoods and faith communities to connect to a broader base and across issues of work, housing, environment and other community needs. In the Fall of 2008 we launched the Fair Development Campaign and since that time have won significant victories across these issues including:

- Stopping what would have been the largest trash burning incinerator from being built next to a public high school. Destiny Watford, a leader in the campaign, won the international Goldman Environmental Prize garnering international media coverage of the campaign and established relationships with major leaders in environmental justice and sustainability. Destiny was named a Time Magazine Next Generation Leader.
- United Workers and the Working Matters coalition it co-founded passed state legislation granting more than 700,000 low wage workers the right to earn paid sick leave. We are currently developing new models for workers' rights enforcement of this new expanded right as well as other protections.
- In 2016 as the anchor institution of the Baltimore Housing Roundtable (now called the Fair Development Roundtable) spearheaded a coalition that succeeded at passing a charter amendment ballot initiative to create the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. In 2018 this coalition succeeded at winning a commitment from Baltimore City to annually invest \$20 million into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. And most recently the city approved a proposal that will grant 40% of these resources to community land trusts, estimated to be the largest public commitment to this community-led permanently affordable housing model in the country.



# ***Thank You to Our Partners and Funders***

We are grateful for the support of individual donors and funders over the years, as well as the dedicated network of partners, allies, staff, advisors, volunteers, advocates and organizers we are honored to work alongside.

## ***Funders***

Andrus Family Fund  
Anonymous  
Brooklyn Community Foundation  
Chrysalis Fund  
Communities for Just Schools Fund  
Edward W. Hazen Foundation  
Emergent Fund  
Ford Foundation  
Humanity United  
The Libra Foundation  
Nellie Mae Education Foundation  
NEO Philanthropy  
NoVo Foundation  
Oak Foundation  
One World Fund  
Open Society Foundations  
The Overbrook Foundation  
Penney Family Fund  
Porticus North America  
Public Welfare Foundation  
Redlich Horwitz Foundation  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Schott Foundation for Public Education  
Trinity Church Wall Street  
W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation  
William & Flora Hewlett Foundation  
World Education Services

Thank you to Scot Nakagawa, Senior Partner and Co-Founder of ChangeLab,  
for moderating *Honoring Our Power: Community Solutions in a Time of Crisis*.

## ***Congratulations***

to Cathy for 15 years of visionary leadership toward building a world with dignity and rights for all.

## ***Congratulations***

to the Dignity in Schools Campaign for groundbreaking victories. As our country goes through a racial reckoning, your sustained advocacy and organizing show the power of community-driven solutions to advance human rights and justice—now more than ever.

### **Cassie Schwerner**

*Executive Director, Morningside Center  
and Board Member,  
Partners for Dignity & Rights*

## ***From all of us at MADRE,***

congratulations to Crystal Hayling on achieving the Movement Philanthropy Award on behalf of The Libra Foundation.

Thank you to Katherine Franke for your scholarly service in the field of gender rights and congratulations on being honored for your work with the People's Scholar Award.

We also extend our appreciation and gratitude to Cathy Albisa for her commitment, leadership and advocacy over the past 15 years at Partners for Dignity & Rights.

Thank you to everyone at Partners for Dignity & Rights for continuing to advocate for a world in which all people enjoy individual and collective human rights, and build resilience in times of crisis and beyond.







For decades, Cathy has been a light for us at the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, illuminating new paths previously unknown to us.

Together we have navigated many turbulent waters, and come out floating. We would not be where we are today without her. She will forever be a member of the CIW family, no matter where she goes.

***The Coalition of Immokalee Workers***



**As our Founding Executive Director Cathy Albisa transitioned out of the organization in 2020, our Staff, Board, and Partners thank her for her incredible 15 years of leadership.**

**From Partners for Dignity & Rights Staff,  
Cathy is...**

***Northstar***

***Transformative***

***Visionary***

***Bold***

***Indefatigable***

***Fearless***

***Trailblazer***

***Devoted***

***Selfless***

***Inspiring***

***Strong***

***Pivotal***

***Dedicated***

***Urgent***

***Cathy is a precision missile  
shooting wisdom, love,  
brilliance and humor.***

# *From Our Board of Directors*

No one has impacted me more than Cathy. I would likely never have founded Rights & Democracy back in 2015, but after working with Cathy and NESRI for the previous decade I understood how critical organizing using a human rights framework is for building powerful people's movements. She demonstrates what genuine leadership looks like and I have never met a more humble powerhouse.

***James Haslam***

*Board Member*

*Partners for Dignity & Rights*



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Cathy,

You inspire us every day!

You have never forgotten that

If you Dare to Struggle You Dare to Win!!

***Mimi Abramovitz***

*Silberman School of Social Work, Hunter College, CUNY*

*Board Member (2005 to 2020) Partners for Dignity & Rights (formerly NESRI)*

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Dear Cathy,

I considered so many fitting tributes that I could make to you  
as you transition to your new role.

But then I decided that no tribute could be better than saying  
that Rhonda would be so very proud of you.

With admiration,

***Gay McDougall***

*Former Board Member, Partners for Dignity & Rights*

# *From Our Board of Directors*

Cathy, in the words of Maya Angelou, is just a phenom, phenom, phenomenal woman.

Whether marching with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida, sitting at the table in New York thinking through how to bring human rights to the United States, or discussing the wonderful grassroots work being done in communities across the United States, Cathy pulled off the virtually impossible—smart, fierce, brilliant, warm, and caring. To know her, is to be blessed. Truly blessed.

I know. I have been for being in her presence.

***Carol Anderson***

*Former Board Member, Partners for Dignity & Rights*

Cathy, you have been a key part of more than a third of my life on this planet. It's unthinkable that I struggled to find a photo of us together. We need to remedy that at our next possible opportunity!

What I do have to offer is this photo from the Katrina/Asia disaster survivor exchange. This was both a devastating and enlightening experience. In so many ways, it continues to haunt me and feels like a precursor to

so much of what ails the US today. I've stayed in touch with the amazing LaTosha Brown, and did some media work with her for the Black Voters Matters Fund. She is a beautiful and mighty force.

I am sending this because even though you aren't physically in it, Cathy, I feel like your spirit is in this photo. I can't think of anyone else in the world with the audacity and tenacity to deliver this wildly hopeful and idealistic project, not to mention all the other work we have done together through the years. You never cease to amaze me with your fearlessness, your determination, and your willingness to take righteous risks in the face of daunting odds.

With all my love and gratitude,

***Sharda Sekaran***

*Co-Founder and Board Member, Partners for Dignity & Rights*





A background pattern of pink polka dots of varying sizes, arranged in a grid-like fashion that tapers off towards the bottom right.

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