

Liberty Hill's Fourth Decade 2006-2016

President Obama is elected. Americans turn from phone calls to texting. Same-sex marriage is legalized. Obamacare. Dow ascends to more than 17,000. Recession causes foreclosure crisis. Google maps. Mad Men. Frozen. Dreamers. Drones.



2011: Uplifting Change reception (l,r) Liberty Hill CEO Kafi Blumenfield, Nii Quartelai Quartey, Representative Karen Bass, Darryn Harris.

Liberty Hill has been led by two remarkable CEOs in this, our current decade: Kafi Blumenfield, from 2007-2013, and Shane Goldsmith, our current President/CEO, who took over in 2013. They have stretched, strengthened and expanded the foundation's programs while keeping our fiscal health robust during trying times for nonprofits. Liberty Hill provides our grantee partners with three key resources critical to success: Grants. Training. Campaigns. Developing these key resources has allowed community organizations to take root, sustain their efforts over longer campaigns, and build power in coalitions, winning lasting social change.

Investing in Our Communities

Our grantmaking priorities—racial justice, environmental justice, LGBTQ justice and economic justice—advanced the leadership role in these areas that Liberty Hill increasingly exhibited in the mid-2000s. **We worked, on one hand, with individual donor-activists, and on the other, with foundation funders, to increase social justice grantmaking and community-based philanthropy.** For example, as institutions began to face issues of structural racism within their own sector, we were sought out by other California foundations as a partner to help significantly increase philanthropic investment in the low income communities of color where we'd been active for 30 years.



2010: Uplifting Change Summit panelists (l, r) Virgil Roberts, Dr. Robert Ross.

At the same time, Liberty Hill worked with individual donor-activists looking to increase the impact of their giving. For example, we became home to the national Queer Youth Fund, founded by Weston Milliken, funding a rising generation of LGBTQ organizers through multiyear grants that fueled robust youth training. In this same period, Liberty Hill engaged leaders of L.A.'s Black, Latino and Asian Pacific Islander communities through a series of salons and conversations. A direct outgrowth of this series was the creation of our Uplifting Change program in 2010, which continues to bring together Black Angelenos active in philanthropy and social movements for yearly conferences and events.

Our grantees were organizing across boundaries that seem permeable in an ever more diverse L.A. When Prop. 8 passed in 2008, our strategists saw the need to continue building

bridges with communities of color, noting, "Our grantee partner Asian Pacific Islander Equality has been working hard on this issue since 2004."

Our longtime strategy of investing in organizing led by community members who were affected by the injustices at issue was shown to have real impact. A study published in 2010 by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy on the effectiveness of organizing groups in L.A., nearly all funded by Liberty Hill, **demonstrated a return on investment of \$91 in community benefits for every \$1 invested.**



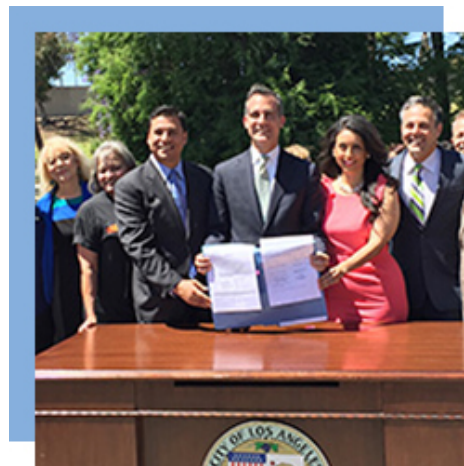
2013: Commissions Training (l, r) Alice Benjamin, Karen Brodtkin.

Training and Campaigns

In 2010, we launched the **Wally Marks Leadership Institute for Change (WMLI)**, expanding and bringing consistency to our workshops, one-on-one coaching, peer training opportunities and on-the-job skills training efforts. Named for the late Wally Marks, a former Liberty Hill Board member and beloved mentor and coach to many, WMLI has helped strengthen and increase the capacity of community-based organizations that have scaled up to lead city-, county- and statewide campaigns. The Institute's innovative **Commissions Training Program**, begun in 2013, brought a fresh perspective to "inside/outside" organizing. Established to focus on policymaking and decisions made by the 300-plus City and County boards and commissions, the program works to ensure that Los Angeles has strong leadership making equitable decisions for all communities. The program trains

community leaders to participate on both sides of the table—to become advocates on issues affecting their communities, as well as to gain readiness to serve.

Our Common Agenda **campaigns in this past decade have been Clean Up Green Up; Brothers, Sons, Selves, and Stand Against Neighborhood Drilling- L.A.**



2016: On Earth Day, Mayor Eric Garcetti (center) signs the L.A. City Clean Up Green Up initiative into law with Liberty Hill staff, grassroots leaders and City Councilmembers in attendance.

In 2008, we began work on the Clean Up Green Up initiative by bringing together organizations in far-flung highly polluted neighborhoods of L.A. to work with scientists and academics documenting disparities in environmental justice. In 2010, we published "Hidden Hazards," a report combining academic and participatory research findings with innovative policy recommendations. **Eight years later, in 2016, Mayor Eric Garcetti signed into law the Clean Up Green Up ordinance**, establishing Green Zones in the pilot "Toxic Hot Spot" communities of Boyle Heights, Pacoima and Wilmington.

In 2014, Liberty Hill published "Drilling Down: The Community Consequences of Expanded Oil Development in Los Angeles," relating the stories of residents and documenting the ineffectiveness of a patchwork of regulatory agencies. In 2015, with Liberty Hill's support, groups in five neighborhoods formed

a game-changing coalition, **Stand Together Against Neighborhood Drilling- L.A.**, bringing worldwide attention to the health and human safety hazards of L.A.'s thousands of oil wells near homes, churches and schools.



2013: Brothers, Sons, Selves youth leaders and youth organizers meet to discuss campaign issues.

The **Brothers, Sons, Selves coalition**, a strategic partnership with the California Endowment, has, thanks to the energy and talent of its young participants, amazed observers with its transformative power. Each year, young high school students representing a number of Liberty Hill grantee groups come together and work on policy campaigns to address problems they face in their own environments and schools. In the very first 2012-13 school year, the participating BSS students won an end to punitive, discriminatory discipline policies in Los Angeles and Long Beach school districts that have since resulted in a 92% decrease in days lost to suspensions in the LAUSD. At the same time, as these young men participate in training through the Wally Marks Leadership Institute and journey to Sacramento to relate their stories to legislators, they **are empowering themselves at a rate of 100% to graduate** and go on to college or military service (this in a country that graduates only 72% of its students of color).

Coalitions & Pooled Funds

Our fourth decade kicked off with the blossoming of the immigrants' rights movement in **2006, when millions across the U.S. demonstrated in March, on May Day, and beyond**. Liberty Hill grantees, including Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Los Angeles (CHIRLA), were instrumental in the local and national coalitions and brought half a million people to the streets in downtown L.A. on May 1. In 2011,



2006: Coalition for Humane Immigrant Reform Los Angeles and other Liberty Hill supported organizing groups turn out a massive May Day parade crowd to call for immigration reform.

"Dreamers" from CHIRLA, as well as Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA), Pilipino Workers Center, Californians for Justice and Korean Resource Center, **helped pass the California Dream Act II**, and their visibility helped convince President Obama to order "deferred action for childhood arrivals" (DACA).

Today, immigrant workers are a backbone of the strong worker center movement in L.A., as well as leaders of the successful 2015-16 local and statewide campaigns against wage theft and for raising the minimum wage. To help the strongest community organizations scale up to lead effective statewide coalitions, Liberty Hill Foundation and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) joined forces to create the Fund for Economic Equity and Dignity (FEED) to advance work against wage theft (the criminal flouting of labor law that costs workers in L.A. \$26 million per week) and to support a broad, diverse



History

movement uniting low income workers, people of color, immigrants and their allies. The Rapid Response Fund for Racial Justice, administered by Liberty Hill, pools resources from California funders including the Liberty Hill Foundation, Rosenberg Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation, The California Endowment, and The California Wellness Foundation to support grassroots organizers working to establish proactive policies to address police violence.