

Displacement Disrupts Peace

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International Day of Peace, a United Nations initiative, is celebrated across the globe on September 21. This year, Campaign Nonviolence (a program of Peace e Bene) connected it to a global week of action to rally for peace and nonviolence. The Oakland Peace Center partnered

with both by hosting a "Displacement Disrupts Peace" event, focusing on the way that our communities preserve peace by showcasing their culture, artistic skills, and other gifts of the community even while in the midst of turmoil. This culture that makes our community great is being pushed out due to gentrification, and that destabilizes so many communities. So, we showcased those talents as part of our active contribution to disrupting displacement.

Many dedicated and talented people were involved with the event. Two powerful spoken word artists (Marvin K. White & Demetrius Burnett) performed pieces that hit on the internal struggles of the displaced and identity. We hosted a collaborative photo exhibit (curated by Anu Mandavilli) on internal and external displacement in countries such as Colombia, India, and the Philippines, as well as right here in the Bay Area. For musical talent, we had original Hip-hop musical selections by Leo and Erik from United Roots Oakland - DetermiNation Black Men's Group. Their songs amped-up our moods though verses about spreading peace and uplifting the community. Lastly, two videos were shown from Salupongan International: the first was a video titled "Bakwit 101" - which was about evacuation camps due to displacement in the Philippines, (a reminder that this is a global phenomenon as well as a local one). To close our conversations on displacement and give a touch of inspiration about resisting displacement; we showed this video: <https://youtu.be/FjxB9sWxO3Q>.

Finally, we screened *City Rising* (<https://www.kcet.org/shows/city-rising>), a documentary featuring local Oakland activists. Included were many of our friends at First Congregational Church of Oakland around the corner and their story of a community demanding justice for low-income residents. Sometimes we win!

At times, it feels like we can't make headway against the forces of violence and destruction, especially with an issue like gentrification, which at face value doesn't seem to intend any harm. To join our voices in the act of creativity, support, and connection between our local struggles and the struggles of those across the globe allows us to resist, but also celebrate and encourage. At this moment, with so much violence around us, this event felt like peace in a tangible and inspiring way.

The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at nbacares.org/incubate or by contacting Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, at awatkins@nbacares.org.