



# YOUTH ORGANIZING INSTITUTE 2013 ANNUAL REPORT



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# greetings!

Dear friends,

Movements led by young folks took on the world in 2013, and youth in the US South were at the vanguard. By boldly coming together in creative resistance, we honored those who came before us, like the A&T Four --> but we also walked our own roads by putting new spins on old tactics, like the Moral Monday Movement, the fast food worker walk-outs, and the Dream Defender occupation in Florida.



July 2013: During field trip to Greensboro, group shot in front of statues of the Greensboro Four, A&T students who began the Sit-In Movement of the 1960s.



June 2013: NC HEAT members participate in a Moral Monday demonstration in downtown Raleigh.

We are proud that our staff, hand-in-hand with the graduates of the Youth Organizing Institute, have played key roles in all these struggles. We have been on the ground leading work and being in solidarity with work led by our brilliant sisters and brothers who are stepping up and moving into our legacy as the thinkers and dreamers who will shape the reality of our tomorrows.

## ADVISORY BOARD

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The Youth Organizing Institute  
is a project of  
Action for Community in Raleigh  
(ACRe),  
a 501c(3) organization.

We declare that 2014 will be “The Year of Awesome!” Summer 2014 will mark our **5th Anniversary**. In recognition of all that has come before and all that we want ahead, **we are renaming our summer program Youth Organizing Institute Freedom School.**

Great things are happening and greater things are coming, but it requires each of us to play a role. Together we will create the better world that we all deserve.

~ Elena Everett, YOI Director



September 2013: YOI, NC HEAT and the Education Justice Alliance prepare for the National Week of Action Against School Push-Out.

# 2013 in review

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"we who believe in  
freedom cannot  
rest until it comes."  
-ella baker

## YOI MISSION STATEMENT

The Youth Organizing Institute builds the skills and supports the leadership of low-income, LGBTQ, immigrant, and youth of color to support youth-led organizing. We use popular education to teach history, understand privilege and oppression, and gain political analysis tools. The YOI teaches organizing skills and supports the organizing efforts of its graduates. We foster coalition-building, campaign planning, organizational development, and multi-generational models of social change.

# the youth organizing institute

## what do we do?

### Support Youth-Led Organizing

The Youth Organizing Institute supports youth-led initiatives, such as NC HEAT, and other groups that graduates participate in and lead. We help groups mobilize for events, provide transportation and meeting space, and give support, advice, and trainings when requested.

### Building Bridges Teen Convening

An annual two-day retreat with high school student activists and organizers from across North Carolina. The program, developed by youth, highlights the intersections of the social justice work of the participating organizations (LGBTQ issues, food justice, immigrant rights, cultural work, etc.) and focuses on how to act in solidarity, work together, and support each other.

### Coaching and Building Paths to Leadership

When Summer ends we continue to engage and support graduates by organizing regular opportunities to participate in social justice work. We engage with movement elders or older students who coach and connect young activists to community resources and help them succeed personally, politically, and academically.

Many of our graduates and former staff organizers have moved on to take leadership and staff roles in social justice, labor, and community organizations across the state.

### Summer, Winter & Spring Trainings

Each spring and winter YOI hosts weekend-long trainings. In the summer, our anchor program is the three-week long organizing school. To build the curriculum, we survey young activists to determine the focus and create workshops around what skills are useful for their current work. We bring in trainers and movement leaders to lead and facilitate trainings.

Past year's graduates help with curriculum development, teaching, leading, logistics support, and trainings. Some topics include understanding power, privilege and oppression, racism, sexism, homophobia, the school-to-prison-pipeline, intergenerational movements, movement history, and organizing skills such as outreach, action planning, and organizational development.

# Youth-Led ORGANIZING

## NC HEAT

(North Carolina Heroes Emerging Among Teens)

was founded in July 2010 by YOI graduates as a means to keep their organizing work alive past the summer.

### NC HEAT IS A YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATION

supported by the YOI adult allies. NC HEAT uses peer education and organizing campaigns to advocate for youth liberation. This often means defending schools against destructive cutbacks, privatization and austerity. It further aims to end to the

*school-to-prison pipeline*, promote safety & security for LGBTQ students, and secure resources and equality for immigrant youth. NC HEAT is currently building a coalition for a Campaign for a

### Moratorium on Out-of-School Suspensions



find us on facebook causes: NC-HEAT



August 2013: YOI, NC HEAT and the NC Student Power Union occupied the Florida State Capitol building with the Dream Defenders.

### YOI & DREAM DEFENDERS

The Dream Defenders is a Florida-based organization directed by Black & Brown youth who confront systemic inequality by building collective power. The organization was founded out of a 60 student, 3 day, 40 mile march in the wake of the murder of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida. Dream Defenders trains and organizes youth and students in nonviolent civil disobedience, civic engagement, and direct action, while creating a sustainable network of youth and student leaders to take action and create real change in their communities. They defend the right of all people to receive a quality education and live free of police brutality, racial profiling, mass incarceration and oppression. Dream Defenders fights the criminalization of youth and defends the power of people to determine the destinies of their own communities.

"Though all may seem lost  
there is a generation

of dreamers and lovers and defenders and builders  
bubbling, bubbling, bubbling beneath the rubble."

-Phillip Agnew

Executive Director, Dream Defenders

# this is for the brown kids

by qasima wideman

This is for the brown kids.  
This is for the free and reduced breakfast club.  
This is for my loudmouth fistfighters.  
My under-the-covers-reading all-nighters.  
My late-shift working in-class nappers.  
My back-of-the-classroom rappers.  
My mother-tongue-speaking back-talkers.  
My always finding death-threats in their lockers.  
My always-late-to-class little sibling caretakers.  
My smartass saggy-pants troublemakers.  
My brown genderqueer hip-switchers.  
My test-anxiety prone class-skippers.  
My outside-agitator walkout organizers.  
This is for my never-meant-to-survivors.

In kindergarten, I already knew not to go anywhere unless I was sure there wouldn't be a check-in  
I was always too chicken to speak to the men with guns on their hips  
And slurs in their snarling lips and I didn't even go to a school where they met me at the door  
So I'm gonna try to compute just how much more afraid I'd be today if the first school club I was introduced to was a billy club  
I'll try to raise the number of panic attacks I've had this year to the power of  
Pepper spray, taser, glocks, handcuffs and a badge  
I'll try to multiply my fear by the number of kids who look like me who had their faces slammed into pavement last semester  
And I know I haven't been good at math since I was told I was a poor tester  
But something about the trauma of going to school under occupation  
seems to add up to walking out with less capacity to trust than we walked in with  
To fear and resistance to authority  
To hyperactivity and needing to get free

Critical Thinking Question: Why were the millions of dollars Wake County spent on police station contracts and security guards somehow easier to budget than even half the recommended number of counselors?

Answer: Because our minds are worth more to them terrified than understood.

See, our schools might look like prisons, but the bars aren't for keeping us in-

They're for pushing us out.

Our schools are factories producing marketable products-not making good citizens, but punishing manufactured misconduct.

There are more of my people incarcerated today than there were slaves in 1850 and black students in Wake county account for 60% of suspensions because their definition of defiance is "looking kinda shifty"

Schools claim to be invested in teaching critical thinking but from us brown kids, asking questions equals dissension which leads to detention, suspension, and apprehension by state henchmen with the intention

to arrest

So ask us again why we don't feel like participating in class discussion

We dare you

Ask us why we'd rather spend 90 minutes in a bathroom stall or wandering empty halls than in your classrooms

We know that when we ask questions we scare you

You thought you were ready for us

You'd already bought us jumpsuits instead of graduation gowns You'd even opened up a whole new prison by shutting some arts programs down

You thought you were ready for us

Us brown kids?

We're ready for you, too

We are

Healing our black eyes in peer mediation sessions

Channeling Laila Ali in Second Round Boxing lessons

We are

Staying up all night reading Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow

comprehending all kinds of things we were never supposed to know

We are

working the late shift paying bills to stay alive even though we know we were never meant to survive

We are

rapping about restorative justice and letting our spirits soar spittin' about the day when Central Prison is no more

We are

standing together, from AP English to ISS to alternative schools to Central Prison

We are

teaching you a lesson, and this time you're gonna have to listen

to us

the brown kids

the kids from the back of the bus



October 4, 2013: this poem was originally performed at the 2nd Annual March Against the School-to-Prison Pipeline

# HIGHLIGHTS: 2013



September 2013: Students from iNSIDEoUT, NC HEAT and area schools march in the NC Pride Parade.

## NC Pride

Low-income youth, youth of color, and LGBTQ youth disproportionately affected by the school-to-prison-pipeline. NC HEAT marched with iNSIDEoUT and other youth in the NC Pride Parade in Durham to show our support for LGBTQ youth in our schools. NC HEAT made signs and a banner and led chants.

## Ramiyah Testifies In front of US Congress

On November 21, Ramiyah Robinson, a 14-year-old Youth Organizing Institute graduate, Southeast Raleigh High School student, and member of NC HEAT, joined organizers from across the country to brief Congress about school push-out policies. The Dignity in Schools Campaign organized the speakers for a Senate briefing sponsored by Senators Dick Durbin and Chris Murphy. Ramiyah, a trained peer mediator, discussed the impact of punitive discipline policies on students in North Carolina and nationwide, as well as the efficacy of alternative forms of discipline and conflict resolution in schools.



November 2013: NC HEAT member and YOI graduate Ramiyah Robinson testifies at a US Senate briefing

## YOI ON THE ROAD

### Conferences, Action Camps, Occupations, and More!!

By plane, train, and automobile, YOI staff and graduates criss-crossed the country this year to rep the south and our home state!

Report by Bryan Perlmutter

## WASHINGTON, DC

March 1-3, 2013, the Youth Organizing Institute took a van-load of eight people to participate in the national Dignity in Schools Campaign Membership Meeting. We met great organizational partners from across the region and the country and shared our stories, challenges, and best practices with each other.

July 11-13, 2013, Sanyu Gichee and Beatrice Galdamez represented the Youth Organizing Institute at the Advancement Project's conference, "We Can Do Better: Collaborating to Reform School Discipline and Accountability."

## CHICAGO, IL

Also in July, Carly Campbell, Qasima Wideman, and Ramiyah Robinson were able to attend the "Free Minds, Free People" Conference with a generous travel scholarship provided by the Alliance for Education Justice.

## DENVER, CO

In June of 2013 we sent a six person delegation to a 3-day "Action Camp" sponsored by the Advancement Project. Our youth delegation, led by Markyona Patrick and Haussen Byrd, was able to meet with organizations from across the country working to stop the School-to-Prison-Pipeline. We attended informative workshops about the prison industrial complex, developing media strategies, effective data analysis, and coalition-building.

## TALLAHASSEE, FL

In solidarity with the Dream Defenders, we organized a caravan to Florida to occupy the capital during "Takeover FL." The 6 person contingent slept on the floor in the Capitol Building for three nights. We attended workshops about the Dream Defenders tactics and how they organized against the School-To-Prison-Pipeline.

Notable mentions: YOI staff also spoke on panels and led workshops at gatherings and trainings in **New Orleans, Alabama, Los Angeles, Virginia, Tennessee, New York, and Charlotte**. Check out the photos and reports from our trips at our website: [empoweryouthnc.org](http://empoweryouthnc.org).

# MORATORIUM

## on out-of-school suspensions

### Crisis in Our Schools

Students are under attack and the voices of those most directly impacted are largely absent from the public debate. The Wake County Public School System, the largest in the state and the 18th largest in the nation, had nearly 18,000 suspensions in the 2010-11 school year. This is one of the highest rates in the country. The suspension rate for African-American students was six times greater than for white students. The suspension rate for Latino and American-Indian students was three times greater than for white students. Just up the road in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro School System, suspension rates for students of color are 8 times higher than for white students, despite a lower rate overall.



A cell phone picture captured at Enloe High School of a student thrown to the ground by a member of Raleigh Police Department.

One incident in Raleigh typifies many of our concerns. In May 2013, just before the end of the school year, students at Enloe High School brought water balloons to school as part of a harmless senior prank. They planned to throw them at lunch to mark the end of the school year. In response to the prank, instead of calming the students or waiting it out, the principal and SRO (School Resource Officer) called the Raleigh Police Department. When the police arrived they brutalized seven African-American male students, throwing them to the ground, handcuffing them in front of their peers, and dragging them into police cars. The brutality was so severe that one student was diagnosed with a serious head injury.

During the incident an African-American parent who had come to pick up his daughters saw the students being brutally arrested. But when he went to the school to ask for intervention, the principal had him arrested for trespassing. The parents of those arrested were not notified by the school and could not find where their children were being held. The students had to spend the night in jail before being released. Mass media attention was brought to the story as parents, community members, and students came together to demand justice and talk about the criminalization of young people.

Students began that day at school and ended it in jail. This is part of the trend of increasing suspensions and police presence as the way to deal with perceived poor behavior, but our data and our lived experiences tell us that this is not the way.

### The Campaign: Solutions Not Suspensions

In response to the crisis in our school system, the Youth Organizing Institute, NC HEAT, and the Education Justice Alliance have come together to form the NC Coalition for Education Justice to demand transformation of school discipline practices. The campaign is advocating for an end to out-of-school-suspensions and for the implementation restorative justice models. We believe that every student should be treated with dignity in their schools.



YOI teaches a workshop on the School-to-Prison Pipeline at UNC-Chapel Hill

Restorative Justice is working for many other school systems across the county. This campaign is modeled after successes in districts in Miami and Denver and is a part of a national effort to transform discipline policies.

When youth unite with parents and community members, the power profound. This multigenerational coalition will bring together people across age, gender, and race. The coalition has held joint events, including campaign planning, attending school board meetings, and helping to host candidate forums.

### Week of Action!

Each year organizations around the country participate in the Dignity in Schools Campaign's National Week of Action Against School Pushout. Dignity in Schools Campaign is a national organization helping local groups on their campaigns for a moratorium on out-of-school-suspensions.

## Campaign Launch

The coalition organized a press conference and direct action in advance of the October Wake County School Board meeting, drawing attention and applying pressure to decision makers. The press conference marked the official launch of the coalition and the campaign. After the press conference, students, parents and advocates flooded the meeting, many with prepared remarks, which they entered into the public record during the meeting. Speakers reiterated that it is unacceptable that Wake County students received 1,222 out-of-school suspensions for poor attendance. Students at Garner High School alone received more suspensions than all the public high school students in Forsyth and Guilford counties (the third and fourth largest school districts in the state) combined.

## School Board Candidate Forums

YOI, along with El Pueblo, the League of Women Voters, and Great Schools in Wake, sponsored a series of forums for the candidates running for the Wake County School Board. YOI worked with NC HEAT to prepare questions to find out where candidates stood on discipline issues. We also create fact sheets and graphics to spread the word and held a get-out-the-vote phone bank.

## Ending the School-To-Prison Pipeline

The last event of the Week of Action was the Second Annual Youth-led March to End the School-to-Prison-Pipeline, beginning at Washington GT Elementary School and ending at Central Prison in Raleigh. Youth also used this event to bring attention to the low number of counselors in Wake County Schools. The National Association of School Psychologist's recommended ratio of students per school counselor is 600 to 1, but the Wake County ratio is well over 1,600 students per counselor. Youth wore orange jumpsuits and backpacks as they marched, in protest of the system that criminalizes young people.

## ONGOING

### School Board Mobilizations

The coalition mobilized for many school board meetings throughout the year, speaking in public comment forums, participating in task forces, and providing insight on what is needed to create inclusive schools. These events helped bring people together and will continue to be used to apply pressure to local officials.

With extensive planning, mobilization, and people power, the coalition is engaging the community, and lawmakers are responding. Keith Sutton, the former chair of the Wake County school board, recently said that he would consider a moratorium on suspensions on level one infractions, while other school board members made statements on the need to lower suspension rates. While this is a good start, it is only the beginning as we advance our agenda to end the school-to-prison-pipeline, not only in Wake County, but across the region and the nation. The coalition will be holding several more events in the upcoming months, including trainings, fundraisers, and mobilizations to school board meetings. Please see our website for more information.

## GET THE FACTS:

Suspension rates in U.S. public schools have more than doubled since the 1970s. The rate of suspension has been increasing for all of children in the K-12 public school system, but far more significantly for students of color. A conservative measure estimated that 2 million students were suspended in 2009 alone. Students are commonly forced out of school by suspension for non-violent behaviors such as disobedience, disrespect and tardiness. Mounting evidence shows that schools with higher rates of suspension also have lower standardized achievement tests scores across demographic lines. Commonly, suspensions rates are used as predictors of dropout rates.

Unfortunately, the Wake County NC public school system is part of this alarming trend. Wake County has the highest long-term suspension rate in the state. In the 2011-12 school year, 1 in 17 Wake County students were suspended at least once, 1 in 9 middle and high school student were suspended at least once and, 1 in 6 middle school students were suspended at least once. Overall, Wake County handed out a whopping 26,312 suspensions in 2011-12. The 11,686 students serving in-school suspension spent 16,000 schools days confined to an ISS room. More than 400 students were given long-term suspension, which lasts an average of 43 days. Similar to the nationwide trends, data shows that the Wake County schools with the highest suspension rates also score the poorest on end of grade tests.

Students from disadvantaged communities are the most severely affected. Black students in Wake County had the highest short-term suspension rate at 23.6%, followed by American Indians at 13.5%, and Hispanics at 10.1%. Black students were 24.7% of the total student population, yet they served 60.2% of suspensions. Thirteen percent of Black students were suspended at least once while only 2.5% of white students served a suspension. Students with disabilities also suffer disproportionately. In the 2009-10 school year, students with disabilities were 12.7% of the student population, yet they were 29.9% of the students suspended. After 2009 the population of disabled youth in the Wake County Public Schools decreased, but they represent an even higher percentage of suspensions. The same pattern exists with economically disadvantaged students, who make up 33.3% of the student population yet were 63.3% of the students suspended during the 2010-11 school year.

Source: "Wake County's School to Prison Pipeline," by Advocates for Children's Services of Legal Aid of North Carolina

## The First Building Bridges Teen Convening at the Stone House



October 2013: Julia Nieves of the Push-Out Prevention Project speaks at a press conference hosted by the YOI, Education Justice Alliance and NC HEAT to announce the Campaign for a Moratorium on Out-of-School Suspensions before a WCPSS school board building.



February 2013: the first Building Bridges Teen Convening held at the Stone House in Mebane, NC.



October 2013: Members of NC HEAT donned prisoner mupsuits for the 2nd Annual March Against School Push Out.



May 2013: Sanyu Gichie, Q Wideman, and Elena Watts at a Wake County School Board meeting where there was a review of renewing the SRO contracts in Wake County schools.

On Feb 1-2, teen activists and adult allies organizing on a variety of issues, from ending the school-to-prison pipeline, to fighting racism, to working for LGBTQ liberation, to achieving food justice, held a gathering to chart out the next steps for the building a stronger youth movement in North Carolina.

High school students talked about issues affecting them in their schools and communities. With time to make new friends and connections, students discussed the challenges of organizing as youth and within their communities. This was our first-ever retreat for high school students - it was completely planned by the youth. There was an adult ally support committee that was charged with logistics, food, and transportation, while the youth created their own programs, set the goals, and designed the activities.

As part of the convening, youth members of various organizations participated in an activity with their adult allies where they filled out an organizational evaluation of the programs they are a part of, and then gave their assessments and feedback to the adults staff. The evaluations helped to inform potential changes adults could make in their programs.

Adult staff at the convening created an "adult ally caucus" that now meets periodically over potlucks to talk about best practices for keeping projects youth-led as well as challenges working with underfunded youth programs and in a climate of widespread criminalization of young people. The teen convening was extremely successful and we decided to make it an annual event. This coming year we are hoping to increase the size by adding two organizations and an additional 10 participants.

# Moral Mondays

## WITNESS WEDNESDAYS

### Moral Mondays

In 2013 the North Carolina General Assembly passed some of the most regressive legislation in the country. This included: massive cuts to unemployment benefits, refusing to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, cutting education funding, making NC teachers the second lowest paid in the country, approving a school voucher plan to further privatize schools, gutting environmental regulations, and passing a “monster voting law” that ends same-day registration, eliminates one week of early voting, ends pre-registration for 16 and 17 year olds, requires a photo ID to vote, and increases the maximum campaign contribution someone can make.



June 3, 2013: NC HEAT members hold banners and signs at Moral Monday in Raleigh in front of the NC Legislature

In response, the people of North Carolina took to the streets.

On April 29, the first “Moral Monday” was held in opposition to the avalanche of regressive legislation. YOI staff member, Bryan Perlmutter, and YOI intern, Molly McDonough, chose to take a stand against these policies by participating in civil disobedience. They were the only two youth in the cohort of 17 who were arrested that day, including the Rev. William Barber, president of the NC NAACP. The subsequent months saw over 930 voluntary arrests of a diverse array of NC residents and allies who put themselves on the line. Molly and Bryan inspired youth across NC to take action. The Youth Organizing Institute also mobilized our base - university & high school students, and community members concerned about schools.

NC HEAT organized students to participate in every Monday protest and raised issues relevant to youth, including a proposal to worsen the existing laws that allow 16 and 17 year olds to be tried as adults. Building off the momentum of Moral Mondays, YOI helped call a youth-led “Witness Wednesday” on the 50th anniversary of the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

### Witness Wednesday

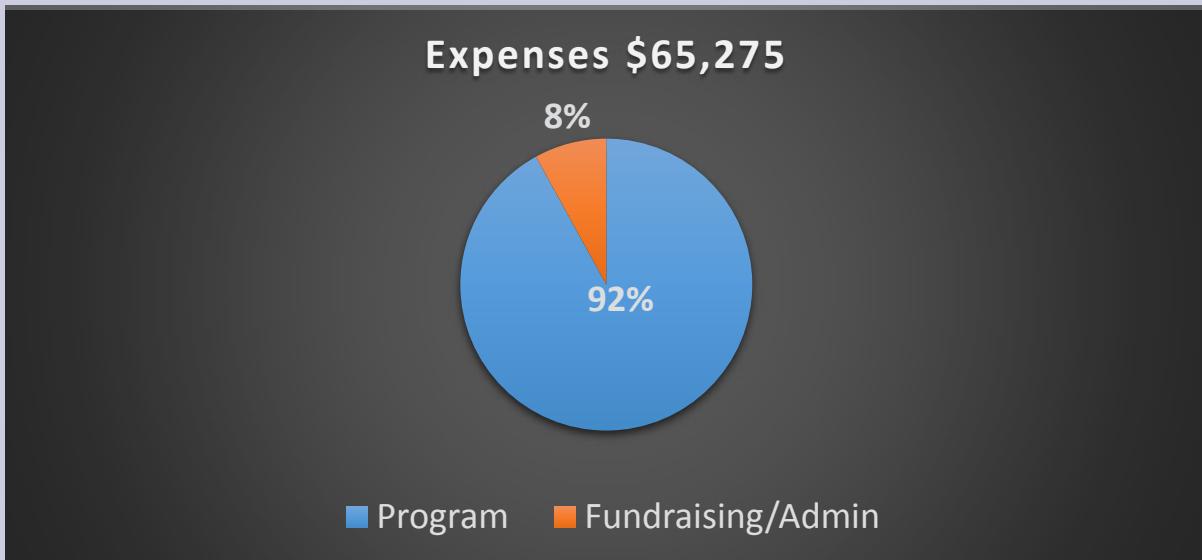
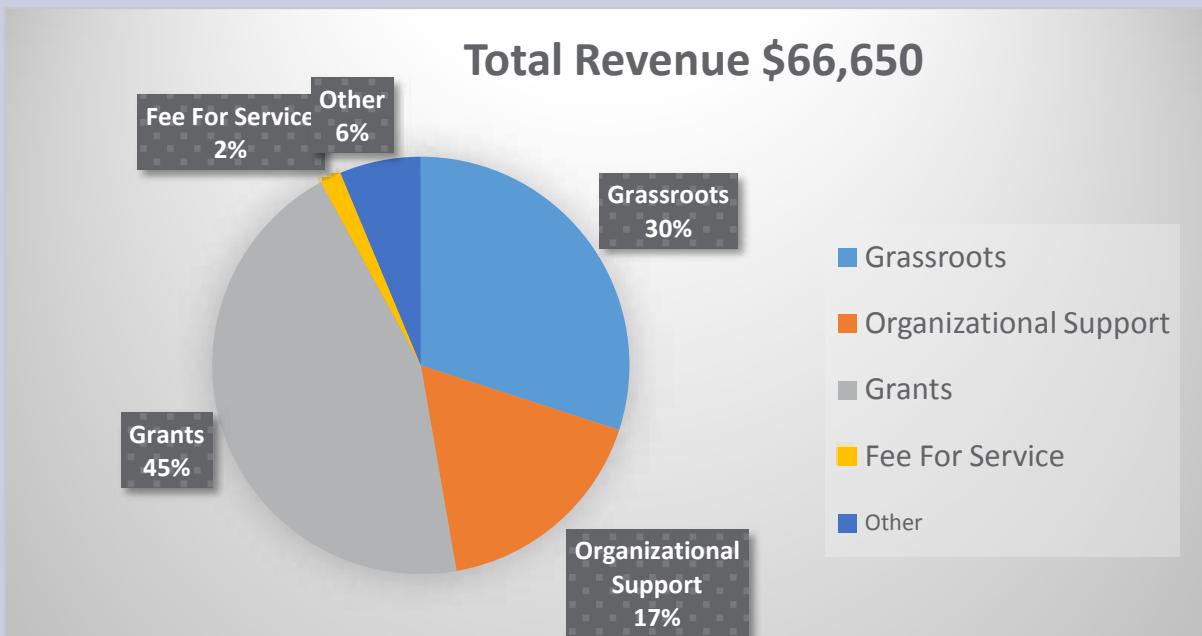
On June 26 and July 3, 2013, YOI graduates and NC HEAT members Markyona Lanae, Beatrice Galdamez, and Q Wideman spoke at Witness Wednesdays describing the North Carolina General Assembly’s war on youth of color, queer, disabled, and immigrant youth. Beatrice and Markyona spoke on cuts to the education budget, exorbitant spending on SROs, and disparities in suspension and incarceration rates.

“McCrory, you’d better watch out, because today we are all raising our hands- and we want to know why Wake County can spend so much money on untrained security guards, but can’t hire even half the recommended number of counselors per school,” said Markyona on the Witness Wednesday held to mark the 50th anniversary of the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist that left four young girls dead.



June 26, 2014: Q Wideman and Beatrice Galdamez speak at Witness Wednesday

# FY 2013 FINANCIAL REPORT



# THANK YOU!

*To all of our Donors, Sustainers and Supporters*

## **Groups & Organizations:**

- All Lies in America
- Beloved Community Center
- Ben & Jerry's Foundation
- Black Workers for Justice
- Coalition of Concerned Citizens for African American Children
- Dignity in Schools Campaign
- Dismantling Racism Works
- Durham Solidarity Center
- Durham Workers World
- EDSTAR Analytics, Inc.
- Education Justice Advocates
- Education Justice Alliance
- El Pueblo, Inc.
- Feminist Students United at UNC
- FIST- Fight Imperialism, Stand Together
- Fund for Southern Communities
- Fund 4 Democratic Communities
- Game Changer
- Inter-Faith Food Shuttle's Youth Farmer's Training Program
- Law Office of Gabe Talton
- Law Offices of Edelstein and Payne
- Legal Aid Advocates for Children Svcs
- LGBT Center of Raleigh
- Muslims for Social Justice
- NC AFL-CIO
- NC Raise Up
- NC Vote Defenders
- Pauli Murray Project
- Public Interest Project's Just and Fair Schools Fund
- Public Schools First NC
- Pullen Memorial Baptist Church
- The Resist! Foundation
- Southern Workers Assembly
- Southerners on New Ground
- The D.I.G. Program at SEEDS
- Tierra Negra
- UE Local 150, the NC Public Sector Workers Union
- UNC Center for Civil Rights
- Vision 2.0
- Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

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|                      | Elizabeth Perkus      |                          |

December 7, 2013

The first honorees at the Youth Organizing Institute's Ella Baker Gala were Bridgette Burge (pictured closest to the right) and Erin Dale Byrd (pictured on the far right).

These strong, brilliant women received the first-ever "Spirit of Ella Baker" Awards.



YOI Associate Director Monse Matehuala and YOI Curriculum Director, Carly Campbell lead the audience in the closing song for the Ella Baker Gala, "Solid As A Rock."

The theme of this year's gala was "Honoring Our Ancestors."

In tribute to that theme, 15 centerpieces were created with photos and bilingual biographies of women and men who we consider our "movement ancestors."



Youth under the age of 12 who attended the Gala were awarded "Rising Revolutionaries" badges, designed and handmade by Q Wideman



THE YOUTH ORGANIZING INSTITUTE'S FIRST ANNUAL

# Ella Baker Gala

HONORING OUR ANCESTORS

## Ella Baker was a Civil Rights

activist, feminist and North Carolinian. A graduate of Shaw University in Raleigh, she became involved with Civil Rights in the 1930s when she joined the Young Negroes Cooporative League, a group dedicated to collectively bolster black economic power. In 1940, she became involved with the NAACP, serving as a field secretary and as a director of different branches from 1943 through 1946. Baker participated in the Montgomery Bus Boycotts of 1955, and in 1957 she helped organize Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). After the famous Greensboro Woolworth's sit-ins, sparked by the actions of four North Carolina A&T University students, Baker became interested in the power of youth organizing in the Civil Rights movement.

In April of 1960 as SCLC director, Baker called for a meeting of student activists at Shaw University, where the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded. In 1961, SNCC joined with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to organize Freedom Rides, which challenged interstate travel segregation by organizing desegregated bus trips throughout the South. SNCC was dedicated to voter registration and protest, registering first-time voters, organizing against segregated public facilities, and supporting those affected by White Supremacist violence.

Due in part to Baker's influence, SNCC was based on participatory democracy, discouraging heirarchical structures and instead using consensus to make group decisions. Baker is famously quoted as saying "strong people don't need strong leaders," insisting that collective power can be stronger than cults of personality.

Nicknamed "Fundí," a Swahili word for one who teaches the next generation, Baker was a crucial adult ally for the youth in the 1960s, and her activism continued until her death on December 13, 1986.



# what's coming

## SOUTHERN ORGANIZERS EX- CHANGE - JANUARY 17-20, 2014

NC HEAT, YOI, and the Education Justice Alliance travel to Atlanta and Miami to meet with other education justice community organizations to exchange ideas and best practices

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SUMMIT JANUARY 25-26, 2014

The Education Justice Alliance and a team of Campbell law school faculty are teaming up with the YOI to train students, parent and educators about effective Restorative Justice practices.

## HISTORIC THOUSANDS ON JONES STREET (HKONJ) FEBRUARY 8, 2014

HKonJ.com

## 2ND ANNUAL BUILDING BRIDGES TEEN CONVENING - MARCH 2014

# up for 2014?

## YOI SPRING TRAINING (Date TBA)

## YOI SUMMER FREEDOM SCHOOL July 2014

Our 5th Annual Youth Organizing Summer Institute.

## WEEK OF ACTION AGAINST SCHOOL PUSH-OUT & THE 3RD AN- NUAL YOUTH-LED MARCH TO END THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE OCTOBER 2014

## YOI WINTER TRAINING (Date TBA)

## 2ND ANNUAL ELLA BAKER GALA December 2014

Come eat, mingle and dance with activists in the community at the Ella Baker Gala to Celebrate Youth Organizing and Honor Adult Allies!

Youth organizing institute 2013 annual report

804 Old Fayetteville St  
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