



PRINCIPLES OF UNITY

Power U believes that the systems of White Supremacy, Capitalism, and Heteropatriarchy are the roots of oppression in our society. To fight these forms of oppression and win Human Rights, Power U strives to uphold the following principles in ourselves, our organization, and our movement for social justice.

Self-determination for all communities

A community's people should have the right to control their own land, economy, politics and culture. They should be the leading decision makers for their communities.

Solidarity within and between communities of color. All communities of color face racial oppression caused by white privilege and white supremacy. Different communities of color experience racism and discrimination differently. Solidarity within a community of color and between communities of color creates greater power to confront white supremacy and racism.

Women's Liberation

Heteropatriarchy uses sexism and violence to degrade and exploit women. Women should be free from domination by men and have the power to exercise the full range of their human rights. Our freedom struggles have always relied on the leadership of women. However, even our social justice movements have subjected women to a secondary position. Therefore it is essential that the leadership and contributions of women be prioritized, uplifted, and honored.

Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People

The queer community has historically been excluded and forced into silence by a society that assumes the superiority and normalcy of heterosexual relationships and also imposes heterosexual gender and sex roles. The LGBTQ community should share the same rights and privileges as heterosexual people and should be free from humiliation and degradation.

Economic Justice

The exploitation of the working-class and poor people benefits the rich. Global capitalism has left the majority of the world's people in poverty while a very small minority prospers and controls everything. Working class and poor people are at the mercy of rich people and a brutal system that seeks to strip them of their humanity. The resources of the world should be created, controlled, and distributed fairly to the benefit of all people.

Black Liberation

In the United States and across the world, the development of global capitalism and white supremacy has been and continues to be dependent on the exploitation and oppression of Africa and African descended people. Therefore, Black people cannot achieve the fulfillment of our human rights by simply fighting to improve our position within the existing system. In order for Black people to experience true freedom, the entire economic and social system of society must be transformed.

Youth Empowerment

Young people are dismissed, ignored, criminalized, and exploited by adults. Their ideas are not respected and they are denied a voice in determining the future of their communities. Young people have the right to be treated with respect, to have opportunities to develop their skills and ideas and to have a space to enact their visions for the world.

International Solidarity

The United States Government and American corporations exploit the people and resources of other countries for the benefit of Americans. This forces people from other countries to leave their homes and many of them migrate to the U.S. in search of opportunities. People of color and other oppressed people in the U.S. must support the struggles of oppressed people around the world to defend themselves from U.S. exploitation. This includes supporting their right to migrate to and receive equal treatment in this country.

READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE
www.PowerU.org

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POWER U MEMBERSHIP JOURNEY

The Power U membership journey strives to be transformative and uplifting. Through vigor, education, and building connections, members grow their sense of collective power. This past year has been different in so many ways as we adjusted the way membership has traditionally operated to meet the safety standards of the COVID crisis. We relied heavily on our relationship in the community and tasked our continuing members to recruit folk to join our efforts. Despite having our orientation virtual we had an astounding turnout with over 80 folks in the first session. The fruitfulness of these connections reigned true as we welcome our largest incoming class of 35 members. We were so thankful to have a chance to celebrate the achievements of our young folks at our notable Membership Signing Day in February. At this event, members signed their contracts and received their special membership swag embarking on this new journey.



FIGHTING FOR
OUR LAND OUR PEOPLE OUR COMMUNITY



Soon after becoming members, we began to build on skills that would be useful in their upcoming work. We created opportunities for leadership by introducing our Leadership Committee and Canvassing Leads. Close supporters and members themselves began to recognize the impact of their work. Each position held essential roles in the beginning months of membership. Canvassing leads were responsible for helping with group morale, developing communication skills, and helping with report-backs. Our Leadership Committee serves as a year-long position where these individuals would be responsible for leading and strengthening our coordination and organizing work within our membership, continue to be in the practice of governance, and strengthen the collaborative leadership necessary for organizational and social change.



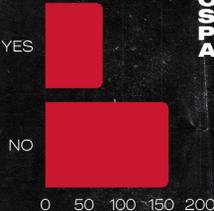
Sometimes you gotta do things that you don't want to do or just not comfortable with. In the end you're gonna be grateful that you built up the courage to try it out.

- SHANAYA WILCHCOMBE

TOP ISSUES/CONCERNS HEARD IN THE COMMUNITY:



"SHOULD YOUTH BE ALLOWED TO VOTE AT SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS?"



ONLY 43% SURVEY PARTICIPANTS AGREED





Once members were introduced to the budget process and understood their potential to make a change, we were ready to get to work! In March Power U members and supporters began by canvassing neighborhoods near our office in Liberty City to get a sense of who is in the community and what they care about. This canvass cycle was an informative look into how people were thinking. It also gave members great experience in overcoming objections and facing tough conversations. Following the first canvass, members took time to come together as a collective to dissect what they learned and develop stronger tactics for the next cycle. During this time, we also focused on strengthening ties as an organization by having bi-weekly membership meetings and our first-of-its-kind Membership Assembly.



At the Membership Assembly, our young folks were able to explore topics they were passionate about and selected committees to continue their work. Each committee has a primary focus; Civic Engagement, Safe Schools (Childcare and Early Learning For All), and Counselors Not Cops. After forming committees, they began to research these issues deeply to develop campaigns related to the MDCPS Budget.

Our next goal was to prepare to collect the community's understanding of these issues. In June, we began our second canvassing phase with members equipped with knowledge on their issues. This time we sought support from Miami residents who align with our campaigns with the aim to have them give testimony alongside Power U at the Miami Dade County Public Schools Budget Hearings on July 28th.

In the coming weeks, we continue to collectively build support around the budget and bring more people into the Power U space. We welcome those of all ages and locations to join our efforts! Find more information on our website at www.poweru.org



conquered by Zeean Firmeza

if my body was a land,
stretching from miles to miles,
they'd dig their flags in the earth and stake their claim.
in their convenience, this body was ample:
mistreated, mismatched, and misaligned.
(but i never had a say)



if my body was a land,
there'd be no more gold, rivers, and mountains
— for they have stripped away my very existence.
*(please i cannot give anymore,
i am left with nothing)*

if my body was a land,
bound with ropes, i watch in sadness as the last of the trees crash,
and if the wind could talk,
it howls through the sorrow, naked land.
(but it is for their glory)

if my body was a land,
they came uninvited --
putting a hand on my mouth
and laughed at me, then said:
“you don't get to have a say.”

- conquering

...of the Matter II.

by Bk. King

2/24/19

what's it mean to have heart?
the fruit of hearts labor
means breath
means life
808's unending metronome

til' bullets shot
point blank to chest
and back
knee to neck
til' hearts die on passenger sides
walk park playground bench bbq birdwatch
"friendly" neighborhood security-man
watch them skittles in your hand
all it takes is 2.3 seconds

how do i keep from breaking?
how could I stand to live?
In light of how
you interrupt my flow legislate me
debate my tactic
gaslight my resistance
because I dare to stand
not bleed
no longer willing to plead for crumbs
crushing me into tattered glass ceilings
flooding my hoods
crack. heroin. weed. open the cage
Drop bombs on Dreamland
manifest despair
name me
life...less

I ask to you, who be the racketeer?
Who be defined criminal?
See, I got a million or so miles of
civil penalties from combatants
so-called patriots
organized corporate tied and bound
United under dollar signed
copper sined cotton
backed lobbied and influenced
mister Capitol Hill, pull up your garter
your facism is showing

bear witness as hearts
filled with relentless pride
take back the night
take back the day
take back the space
hours
minutes
seconds
reclaim rest
between breaths

please breathe

please breathe

please breathe

Here is a reminder...

Keep.

your.

heart.

Keep.

your.

heart.

Keep.

your.

heart.

Wins



Love

Somatic Resistance

by Nerlande Joseph

Toes remember this cadence
Dancing to let body express joy
free what has been lost in misery
Rhythm vibrate bones
 m o v e m e n t is magic
We been captivating
dripping of iridescent gold

Hips be those truth tellers
Swaying to beats of riots
 the melody of the unheard
 reminiscent of ancient dances
under twinkle of majestic black sky
 the blueprint of revolution made flesh
L'Union fait la force!

Spirit riding shotgun
High on the hog
Stars spoke of our brilliance
Sung it from treetops
This is is why we move & dance & shake

First step always scariest
But greatness aint eva been achieved without...
 m o v e m e n t
 of soul
Snaking up spine
Dredging up ancestor
We be people of resilience

See us, we tap dance across borders
Blurry the lines
What is yours?
What is ours?!
This be us!
Personal been political

dont confuse chaos with misguidance
Misguidance for lack of direction
Even a black hole is swallowed up before a supernova is born



BY
ASHE
TOM

The mind of depression

By Batistba Louissaint

It funny how I wish to disappear yet cannot because I wish to also exist

What a Paradox

A violent war that exist in my mind

Will my light or darkness win

Can it be decided already

This pain is just aggravating

Annoying and yet necessary

Pain is weakness leaving the body

As it leave my body I become less human

And yet more human at the same time

How idiotic and yet genius

how deranged and yet magnificent it funny because yet the battle between my light and darkness has yet to be decided a balance is at the horizon

funny how when hell arrives heaven follows how the more I suffer the more pleasure I experience what a masochist you thrive on pain yet seek for it to stop

you battle despair yet stay consume by it

you choose not to escape yet you wish for an exit for that is the mind of depression

AN INTERVIEW WITH AFFIRMING YOUTH FOUNDATION, INC.'S SUMMER YOUTH INTERNS

For several weeks throughout the summer of 2021, three interns from Overtown joined the Affirming YOUth Foundation, Inc. (AYF) team in Liberty City, Miami, Florida. The youth have been working on an exciting community needs and marketing campaign geared towards identifying community concerns, such as gun violence, substance abuse, and gang violence. Their social media products were displayed on a bright LED advertising truck driven through the streets during the recent Peace Walk around Lincoln Fields Apartments held July 14. We spoke to them to see how their time at AYF has been going.

● **What were you expecting when you were assigned to work at AYF?**

I was expecting to be doing a lot more physically demanding community outreach work. - **S.W**

When I was assigned to work at AYF, I was expecting to go around the community talking to different people, trying to get them to join AYF. - **Felisha A.**

When I was assigned to AFY, I was expecting to participate in helping with community issues. - **Armani Copeland**

● **What have been your hands-on experiences?**

My hands-on experience has been meeting the members in the office and collaborating with them to gather information, work on flyers, and start thinking of solutions to lasting community issues. - **S.W**

My hands-on experience has been attending different types of meetings, networking, peace marches, working on posters, and getting information for my project. - **Felisha A.**

My hands-on experiences have been collaborating with office members, participating in a march to help spread peace, creating flyers to spread the word, and creating an informative presentation. - **Armani Copeland**

● **What have you learned ?**

I have learned that my community is hurting more than I thought it was, and that it is also in a worse spot than I thought it would be in. - **S.W**

I have learned that there isn't a perfect way to help a community just by spreading the word and getting people to notice these issues are steps to helping your community. - **Felisha A.**

I have learned that it's important to try and help/provide others in the community with resources they may struggle with. Also, spreading awareness could help lift our community. - **Armani Copeland**

● **If you had one message for the next summer intern, what would that message be?**

One message I could give for the next summer intern would be that time management is important and to also not only focus on one task at a time. - **S.W**

One message that I would give to the next summer intern is: Don't be shy or scared to have your voice heard and to focus. - **Felisha A.**

One message I would pass on to another intern would be stay on task, manage your time, and have fun. - **Armani Copeland**



S.W.



Felisha A.



Armani Copeland



Affirming YOUTH Foundation, Inc., (formerly Jonathan Spikes Foundation, Inc.), founded in 2011, is a not-for-profit community-based organization established to provide trauma-informed supportive services emphasizing prevention, harm reduction, mental health education, screening for trauma exposure and related symptoms, and evidenced-based, culturally relevant programs to youth and families in Liberty City, Miami, Florida.

For more information please visit: <https://www.affirmingyouth.org/>

BROKEN BANNER

by Mya Postell



America
O'er the land of the free
Yet terms and conditions vary by race
Decisions not based on morals but by the complexion of your face

A country
With broken promises and false advertisement
And lies that only increase my extremely high level of despise-ment

And although America may be a developed country don't let them fool you
Because ignorance lies
In every uneducated mind
That willingly chooses to be blind
Towards the ongoing cycle of oppression against black folk
People would rather be ignorant than to even be slightly woke

What ever happened to those 40 acres and a mule?
You see America has the funds to give back but to ever invest in a black community to them is a set back

Because even after we got released from working on plantation gardens

They ignored our reparations by distributing property pardons

And that was centuries ago

So, by now you'd think that white folk would come to terms with black skin
Not being something controllable
But being something that comes from deep within
Because my genetic inheritance does not equal a form of sin
So do not judge me for my melanin

Unfortunately
We didn't get to our chose history
Because they chose it for us

Yet this
Is the home of the brave

But I think we need to adjust that notion

Because the amount of hatred that y'all dishing out to black folk for just existing is causing an unnecessary commotion

And this all started when they decided to ship us across the Atlantic Ocean

So, we can clearly see that what happened in the past is still impacting the future

Because our #1 protector is legit our #1 shooter

But now I want you to look
Deep into my eyes and truly understand
Why I no longer rise when I hear the sound of the anthem or pledge

WORDS OF A SOCIAL JUSTICE WORKER

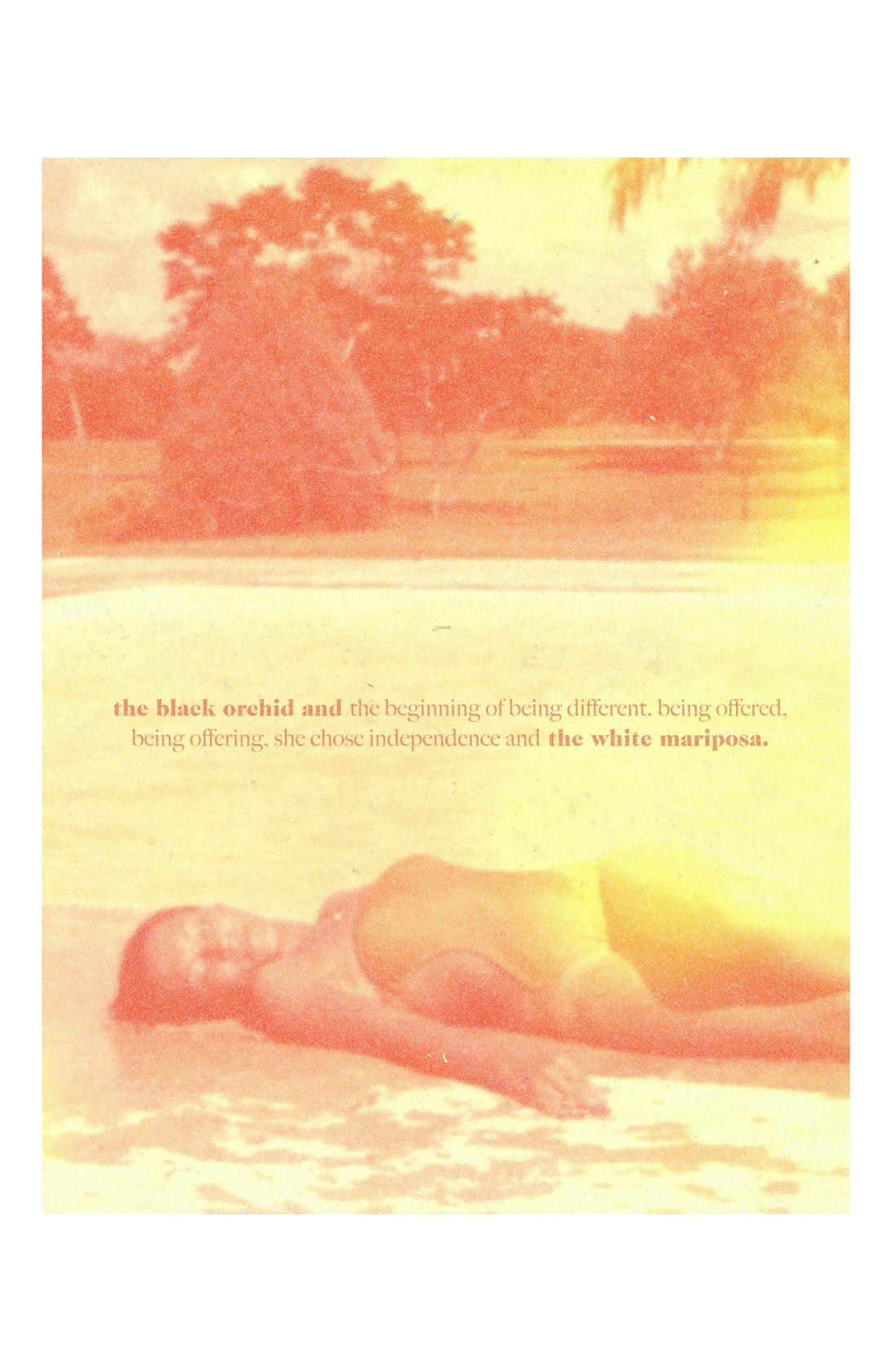
F L V K Z L E L I B E R A T I O N M
S O Y D M S T R E N G T H S V C Q O
O V C O M M U N I C A T E W X V G E
L E N P E R S E V E R A N C E X Z Q
I N T E R G E N E R A T I O N A L U
D C O U R A G E L U P L U Q L F C A
A N D V Q T E S T I M O N Y E U H L
R C O M M U N I T Y N V W F A T A I
I L Q E M P A T H Y U G B K D C N T
T E M P O W E R M E N T U Y E R G Y
Y J O P T I M I S M S N I C R F E I
J J A U I D C O N F I D E N C E D K

CHANGE
COMMUNICATE
COMMUNITY
CONFIDENCE
COURAGE
EMPATHY

EMPOWERMENT
EQUALITY
INTERGENERATIONAL
LEADER
LIBERATION
LOVE

OPTIMISM
PERSEVERANCE
SOLIDARITY
STRENGTH
TESTIMONY





the black orchid and the beginning of being different. being offered,
being offering, she chose independence and **the white mariposa.**

Dissolved by Zeean Firmeza

dissolved were the fruits of her labor.
falling apart, coming together like a deceitful painting.
the dark crescents shaped, the mirror cracked.
in this, they ripped her through the seams --
picturesque of a marble stone breaking,
slipping through the ends of time,
with not one, not two, not three
but thousands of jumbled, scattered words:
was she ever the perfect marble stone that people revered?
in this, the world moved around her.
but she could not speak,
she could not move.
admired the way in which she posed with the bright torch.
touched by the flames of her passion, burned by the downfall of herself.
but is it so wrong to reach for the stars?

dissolved were the fruits of her labor.
they eyed her form and whispered:
isn't she so great?
her marbled shoulders high, holding the weight of the world.
but little did they know that she trembled and gulped down the scorching tears.

dissolved were the fruits of her labor.
as she seamlessly reaped what she sowed,
the fruits of her labor, in the end, were cherry-picked
and chipping away the marble statue that she was.
when a precious jewel-like her no longer shines bright,
they can only bury her deep as if she never shone.

dissolved were the fruits of her labor.
when her form trembled, they thought:
but wasn't she supposed to be perfect?
in this, they compared the other marble statues to her,
and shook their heads to find a new sight to admire.
with her lips sealed and her nonexistent heart screams,
she can only fall down as they demolish her.
replaced, ripped, and tore her apart.

Dancing in a Circle of Love

by Brittany Frizzelle

Family is like dancing in a circle of love
Can you feel the beat
Amplified by laughter and hugs
Each move precise and unjudged
This is the power of love
Family means nobody left behind
So when the beat rises
And temptation tries us
We are reminded
That somewhere out there beyond the noise
There is yours
Your family
Filled with love joy and empathy
Singing out to you
How beautiful
And wonderful
And amazing you are
A piece of me
My family
Keeping my spirits high when the world is low
Holding my hand thru prayer everywhere I go
Raising my chin high so I may sing thanks to the sky
Beating the drums to my song
So that I may find my dance
Surround by Family
Surrounded by love

Repetitive History

by Mya Postell

Claiming land that's not yours
And taking our goods
Leaving us with nothing but starvation and deprivation is just the first situation
That led to taking us to the America's to do labor in your favor which was never an Agreement that somehow led to wrongful treatment

Then had the nerve to compare us to monkeys and throw us into human zoos to be shown to a subjective world for the benefit of your scientific theories

Dear William John McGee,
American inventor, geologist, anthropologist, and ethnologist
Who attempted to make a contribution to the scientific evolution by forcing Africans out of Africa to show the resemblance between Africans and Monkeys at Human exhibitions to enhance Darwin's Theory

For someone to be so educated you didn't know much about the world if you had truly believed that African ancestry derived from the creation of an orangutan and humanistic swirl
The Charles Darwin theory states that all humans evolved from monkeys
And that may be true
But if he said all humans that includes all white people too

Now leading to the stereotypical time of the black face because in the eyes of your race we look like clowns
With red lips and skin that's 10 times darker than brown
A face you felt was so humorous you had mock
That continued in the 21st century with Gucci that left the black community in overwhelming shock

But black history in our textbooks isn't the black history that actually occurred

How can we go by a book that's written and edited by a white person's Word
The issue isn't just what's included in the textbooks but what's left out and that's classified as "un-used"
Just because I'm black doesn't mean I should be physically and mentally abused

But everything that happens in the past still has its effects on the future
We live in America where we are so called a nation but from 1619-2021 us blacks still receive no justice
Leaving superiority in the hands of the whites who obtain all trust for it

The American flag means nothing if you burn it or cut it in half
As blacks we're still treated terribly even after all the laws have been passed

In 1861, Lincoln was elected
And he was passive about abolishing slavery in the first place and had slaves himself
Bet those books never taught you that Lincoln didn't officially free slaves until 1865 when the conversation began 4 years before because he needed all the slaves to fight for him in the Civil War

Then from 2016-2020 we have one worse than Lincoln ever was
We have someone sitting in the office that didn't have any experience in the political world

Another thing the books never taught you was worldwide slavery ended a year before 1982 that means 117 years of us being so called free in America
In our home countries of Africa
Our people were still chained up getting beat till they were bruised and overused

America you have to make up your mind
How just because of my skin color do I get more time?
Right now, in 2021 trained officers can panic and attack on us and untrained civilians must remain calm and not move a palm but to me that's just racism in its most inadequate form

Still not realizing how slavery never ended it just evolved into segregation into now what we just call racism
But although you don't physically own us you still mentally torment us until the blood in our bodies boil and we react causing you to believe we have horrifying souls and a heart made of coal
To all white people, you'll never understand unless we took all your ancestors and brought them to a field of unfamiliar land
Forced them to work, beat them all night, wake up the next morning and do it all over again until it felt right
And 401 years ahead
Still treated you like you mean nothing to the society that lies right here in our own very hands

To all white people,
We're not asking you to apologize for what your ancestors did
We're asking you to demolish the system of oppression from their construction that you preserve
Which led to the disruption of the African home
Now leaving us in the American soil and the continuation of the toil deep in our souls
Because of the miscommunication between our ancestors and yours



Power U Center For Social Change (Power U) was co-founded in 1999 by renowned organizers, Denise Perry and Sheila O'Farrell. Being originally based in Miami's Historic Black Community, Overtown. Much of our early work centered on environmental justice, affordable quality housing, and fighting gentrification. Currently, our central focus is on organizing young people to fight for safe and supportive schools. We are building Power U chapters in different high schools and fighting for schools that prioritize human development over profit, where all youth have the resources, access, and opportunity to reach their full potential and where they are treated with dignity, regardless of race, gender or economic situation.

READ MORE ABOUT POWER U'S HISTORY AT [HTTPS://WWW.POWERU.ORG/ABOUT](https://www.poweru.org/about)

(F)empower

In the summer of 2017, before becoming a collective, (F)empower originated as a zine and speculative photo story, depicting a post-apocalyptic Miami run by a revolutionary girl gang. Uniting under radical Black femme leadership was our only hope for surviving the future. This imaginative story birthed the artist collective, then liberation book club closely followed. Since 2017, (F)empower has hosted dozens of cultural events and programs. Now it is comprised of several branches: the fairy garden, the community bond fund, masisi, liberation book club and the artist collective. (F)empower is made up of artists, activists, organizers, djs, event producers, gardeners, healers and witches using their unique powers to reign in a new, breathable world.

READ MORE ABOUT FEMPOWER AT [HTTPS://WWW.FEMPOWERMIA.ORG](https://www.fempowermia.org)



SCAN TO LISTEN TO OUR JOINT PLAYLIST

Everyday, our country reveals the structures and practices of status quo that treat Black and brown people as disposable, and while our schools get privatized and defunded as millions of dollars for policing abounds, there is also a clear rejection to this as the only possible world. Miami is not just a playground for the elite. In many ways, this knowing is being affirmed and led by the work of working-class youth.

For nearly four years, the duration of a presidential administration, I have been involved in building out two organizations, (F)empower and Power U. In this time, I have met dozens and dozens of people who felt re-invigorated by being involved in their communities, meeting their neighbors, and having a space to not only discuss all they see wrong, but solutions and strategies to get it right. I have seen young people come into their full selves and embody confidence in the realities they know to be true. I have sat through healing circles where I am reminded: the oppressive systems want us to shrink and deflate, and we say no. There is countless hours that goes into every meeting, every workshop, and every member's leadership. There is risk taking and there are no shortcuts to this work.

Millions of people are waking up to a reality that our current economy does not work for most of us, and that even in times of pandemic and crises, most politicians choose to turn a blind eye for the needs of our community, but the organizing work in South Florida creates ripples of resistance that are felt across the country. These two political homes have taught me that not only is a new society possible, but it is very much so on its way.

We will win.

Niki Franco

Co-Director, (F)empower

Civic Engagement Organizer, Power U

THANK YOU

TO OUR SUPPORTERS & CONTRIBUTORS



