

Engage, Organize, Mobilize.



Annual Report 2018

midsouthpeace.org

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Founded in 1982, the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center is a multi-issue, multi-race organization whose mission is to engage, organize, and mobilize communities to realize social justice through nonviolent action. Our existence has been prompted by the chronic problems of social and economic injustice prevalent in the Delta South and especially in Memphis.

For 37 years, the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center has worked to educate and train new community leaders to lead campaigns for racial, economic, environmental and social justice. Current programs of the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center work to assist the diverse needs of impoverished communities to address the root causes of injustice in Memphis.

2018 Highlights

- Hosted Living The Legacy of Nonviolence, a gala event featuring organizer, journalist, scholar, and former Green Party Vice Presidential candidate Rosa Clemente.
- Presented the First Annual Happy Jones Award to #TakeEmDown901 for their successful efforts to remove Confederate monuments from our public spaces.
- Provided hundreds of hours of community service opportunities for students, folks with court-ordered community service, and individuals, who because of new TN State law must complete up to 30 hours of community service per week in order to maintain their eligibility for government assistance programs like SNAP, WIC, and Families First.
- Provided fiscal sponsorship to a number of social justice organizations, including Memphis Voices for Palestine, Musicians United, Co-Operative Memphis, People for the Enforcement of Rape Laws, and more!
- Hosted phonebanking, canvassing, and community events to increase voter turnout in the Binghampton area and build excitement about participation in local and state elections.
- Provided office space for the Save IRV campaign, which successfully worked to educate the public on the benefits of Instant Runoff Voting and defeat efforts to spread misinformation aimed at repealing IRV.



Renters Rights Project (RRP)

Mid-South Peace and Justice Center recognizes that the struggle for decent and quality affordable housing as one of the chief civil rights issues of our time. Low income tenants and renters are often at the mercy of unethical landlords who due to a lack of property oversight and accountability are often free to violate the rights of their tenants. The Renters Rights Project works with tenants in low income HUD subsidized Site based section 8 complexes to help residents document and register complaints as well as form new tenant associations to promote the rights of renters.



2018 Highlights

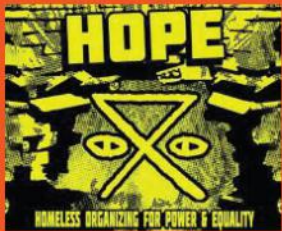
- Worked as member of the Renter's Registry working group with the City of Memphis, THDA, Code Enforcement, and others for legislation in 2019 to establish a registration requirement for local landlords, concerning annual inspections, the appointment of a local representative and triggers for 100% inspections of historically problematic properties.

RRP continued...

- Supported residents at Corning Villages, Serenity Towers, Memphis Towers and Steele Pendleton apartments by advising residents on their rights, aiding in the start of organizing committees, and providing ongoing support to these new grassroots efforts and aiding tenants in filing complaints with HUD, THDA, and Code Enforcement.

- As a registered community service provider with America Works, Shelby County Pre-Trial Services, and Juvenile Court, MSPJC has assisted low income residents in completing hundreds of mandated service hours by performing outreach in their own apartment complexes with activities including voter registration, distributing renters rights information and planning the formation of new resident led tenant associations.

- Advocated for reactivation of the Mayor's Reserve Code Officer program, which was established by City Council ordinance and allows residents to be trained as volunteer Code officers. The reestablishment of this program and training will be a real path forward for low income residents of HUD subsidized properties, allowing them to become the eyes and ears of Code Enforcement and have a real means of holding management accountable.



Homeless Organizing for Power and Equality (H.O.P.E.)

H.O.P.E. is a grassroots group made up of and led by people who have formerly or are currently experiencing homelessness. H.O.P.E. works to challenge & redefine people's ideas about homelessness through grassroots activism, organizing, education, networking, and skills-training. H.O.P.E. provides mutual emotional support to our members and advocates for the rights of the unsheltered community against oppression and discrimination..

2018 Highlights

- Held vigil for Shelley Thompson, who was found frozen to death in front of City Hall in January, spotlighting the plight of those who die on the streets without shelter.

- Participated on the Shelby County Homeless Consortium to make sure the ideas and experiences of people experiencing homelessness are represented.

- Participated with allies like Fight for \$15, in the 50th Anniversary of the Dr. Martin Luther King March.

- Launched H.O.P.E. Summer Survival which distributed lunches to homeless adults and school children at Morris Park, feeding 100 people over 3 months.

- Hosted Art for H.O.P.E. at Evergreen Presbyterian Church, informing members' knowledge of fundraising.

- Attended regular Emergency Partnership and Homeless Consortium meetings to find out how the funding is distributed to homeless agencies.

- H.O.P.E. Organizing Coordinator Tamara Hendrix was re-elected to the Governing Council for Community Alliance for the Homeless.

- Participated in and recruited 30 volunteers for Project Homeless Connect 2018, an annual event providing comprehensive access to clothing, hygiene products, dental, medical, social, and housing services and hosted an additional volunteer training for Project Homeless Connect volunteers.

- Updated and distributed a new edition of the H.O.P.E Survival Guide, the city's only user friendly guide to services for those experiencing homelessness.





Memphis United

Memphis United began in February of 2013 as a coalition of grassroots organizations, community groups, and Memphis residents working to confront structural and institutional racism when the KKK announced plans for a Memphis Rally. Since then, the group has refocused its mission to encompass a slew of issues under the banner of criminal justice reform and won victories like the re-establishment of Memphis' Civilian Law Enforcement Review Board (CLERB).

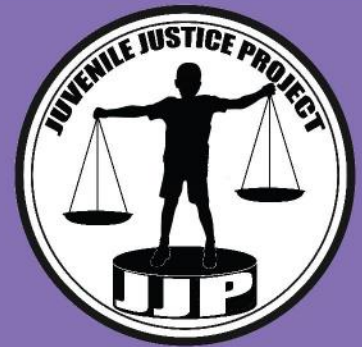
2018 Highlights

- Collaborated in development of new Misdemeanor Citation Process in Memphis/Shelby County where individuals issued misdemeanor citations are processed and go to court all in one day. In the past, individuals had to be booked on one date and then return on a second day for their initial court date.
- Transportation barriers and work absence led to thousands of Shelby County residents receiving warrants for arrest due to missing one of these dates. This new process will reduce this hardship for over 12,000 individuals in the next year alone.
- Printed and distributed 5,000 Know Your Rights handbooks throughout the community at conferences, workshops and other community events.
- Assisted dozens of individuals in navigating MPD's complaint process through Internal Affairs and the Civilian Law Enforcement Review Board.
- Attended monthly meetings of the Civilian Law Enforcement Review Board to monitor progress and connect with complainants to ensure they understand the process.



Juvenile Justice Project (JJP)

The Juvenile Justice Project is working with Juvenile Court to build networks of churches and organizations to address our high number of youth offenders and the lack of opportunities for court-ordered community service, specifically in the areas of Hickory Hill and Bartlett. Studies continue to show that punitive consequences perpetuate contact with the justice system, as opposed to more rehabilitative and transformative opportunities. We believe that youth are the solution, not the problem. We work to help young people find their place in their communities through transformative service opportunities.



2018 Highlights

- Educated over 1700 youth across Memphis about their constitutional rights and deepened participants' skills for navigating encounters with law enforcement through interactive Know Your Rights Theatre workshops.
- Conducted 94 Know Your Rights workshops at churches, schools, conferences, and community centers.
- Fostered partnerships with 27 different organizations in Hickory Hill dedicated to providing meaningful, mentorship-based service opportunities for youth in the area with court ordered community service.
- Hosted a spring Youth and Adult Grassroots Leadership Conference in English and Spanish with over 50 participants.
- Hosted a fall Youth Justice Action Conference in partnership with BRIDGES USA, Project MI, the Juvenile Project, Stand for Children, Project Stand, and Just City.

JJP continued...

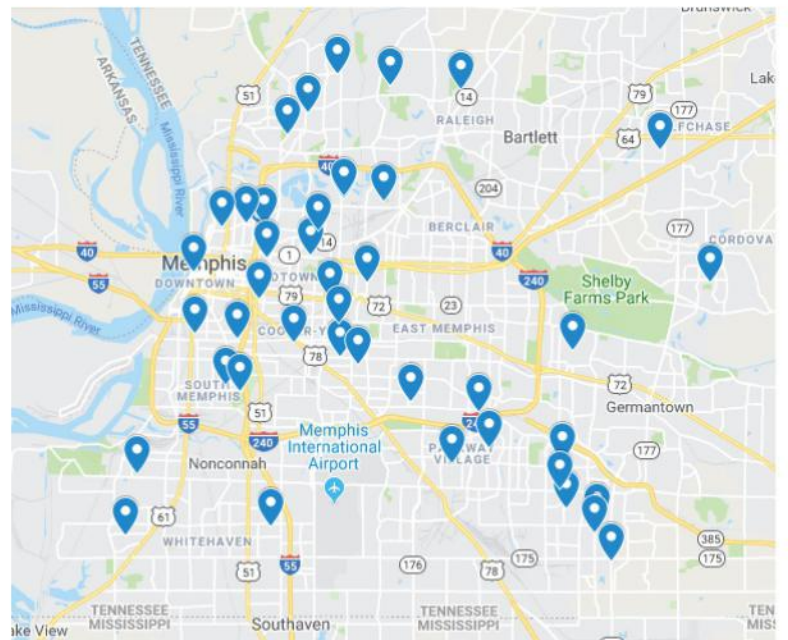
- Engaged youth and adults in workshops on youth centering; Know Your Rights; non-violent conflict resolution; immigration advocacy; sexual assault, consent, and trauma; and grassroots organizing skills. Guest speakers discussed topics such as entrepreneurship, as well as activism and self-care through art.
- Collaborated with Shelby County Juvenile Court to connect over 50 young people to service opportunities in their own neighborhoods.
- Hosted regular lunch meetings with community service partners in an effort to work with youth to develop strategies for addressing issues in Hickory Hill community through community service initiatives.
- Worked with the Shelby County Sheriff's Office to facilitate monthly workshops with 10 youth being held as adults at Jail East, focusing on self care, processing emotions, communication and connecting emotional responses to needs.



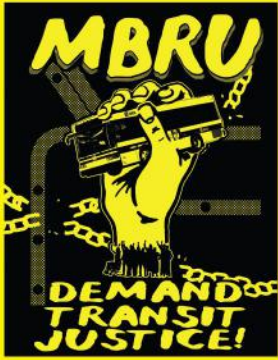
To date, MSPJC staff have engaged over 3,000 young people at schools, churches, community centers, libraries, and youth conferences across the City of Memphis. Early on in the project, we began conducting surveys with participants following the workshops to gather feedback and input and gauge the workshops' effectiveness.

Out of 2,938 Total Survey Respondents:

- **98.5%** said they had a better understanding of their rights
- **75.8%** Identified as Black/African American
- **2.25%** Identified as White/Caucasian
- **4.8%** identified as Latino or Hispanic
- **3.7%** Identified as Multiracial, Mixed, or Other
- **42%** Identified as Male
- **45.4%** identified as Female



Map shows the locations of Know Your Rights Theatre Workshops across the Memphis area.



Memphis Bus Riders Union (MBRU)

MBRU is comprised of people dependent on public transportation and their supporters who organize to improve transit services for all Memphians. In Memphis, 90% of bus riders are African-American, primarily women; and 60% have annual incomes of \$18,000 or less. Therefore, cuts to bus service disproportionately affect low-income residents and communities of color, as well as people with disabilities, students, and the elderly. MBRU seeks to restore bus service to underserved communities and increase the number of buses in the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) fleet to decrease wait times and potentially dangerous bus overcrowding.

2018 Highlights

- Participated in Memphis 3.0's Transit Vision process, aimed at forming a long-term development plan for MATA.
- Hosted town hall meetings in South Memphis, Frayser, Whitehaven, and Orange Mound; over 50 residents attended and gave feedback on MATA service.
- Created a survey in both English and Spanish to document riders' experiences and priorities around neighborhood bus service.
- Featured in a short film by the Watch Love Work video project, which profiled Outreach Coordinator Charles Johnson and MBRU Organizer Justin Davis.
- Successfully fought service cuts in low-income communities of color that would have eliminated 7 bus routes, cut night and weekend service, and reduced frequency on many others (affecting almost 30 routes) through public comments at meetings and hundreds of calls to Memphians who then contacted City Council and MATA leadership.
- Raised \$1,087 in monthly membership dues and individual donations to purchase 24 monthly bus passes for MBRU organizers, food for monthly meetings, and to co-sponsor United Campus Workers' Juneteenth Celebration.
- Garnered media coverage from the Commercial Appeal, Daily Memphian, Memphis Flyer, Memphis Business Journal, Tri-State Defender, WLOK and WUMR radio stations, Fox 13, Local Memphis 24, and WREG's Live @ 9 morning show.
- Spoke at the Klondike-Smokey City Neighborhood Council, Rhodes College Advocacy & Activism Panel, Our Grass Our Roots' Participatory Budgeting Forum, the Coalition of Community Unions' MLK50 rally, and Voices for Justice in the Mid-South's march to City Hall.
- MBRU Leadership was appointed to the City/County Ad Hoc Committee on Transit, aimed at finding dedicated funding solutions for MATA. MBRU has two representatives on this committee and proposed several potential funding sources.
- Led outreach at bus stops and door-knocking with students from Purdue University, the University of Kansas, and Wellesley College. MBRU also hosted interns from Rhodes College and Memphis Theological Seminary, and interviewed with several Rhodes students doing research on public transit.
- Supported the Martin Luther King Day march, I AM 2018 march on MLK50, and XPO Logistics workers' campaign for better workplace treatment and wages.
- Wrote to MATA CEO Gary Rosenfeld demanding security reforms after a guard shot an unarmed bus rider.





Grassroots Organizer Training for Power is committed to building our community's capacity through building skills in grassroots organizing, providing support to people doing community work and offering anti-oppression and liberation education.

Our method: **Direct Education** means education that directly confronts and challenges the current system of injustice, which includes traditional education. Direct Education invites the expertise of the people themselves. It's about liberation and empowerment -- going to the direct source of wisdom: the community itself!

2018 Highlights

- Held 8 public workshops, including 2 in-depth community organizing skills trainings, as well as several private trainings personalized to the needs of different organizations.

- 167 participants attended GOT POWER trainings.

- 82 training participants attended workshops for free through our community scholarship program.

- Adopted new curriculum into our training program, including an advanced version of our Privilege & Oppression Awareness, and our Self-Care workshops, involving movement and sound.

- Adapted our organizing skills workshop curriculum for youth.

- Partnered with several groups who are deeply committed to working for social change, such as the Texas Christian University Inclusiveness & Intercultural Services Department, Christ City Church, Momentum Nonprofit Partners, and Community Lift, just to name a few!



- Conducted public trainings, like Facilitation Skills and Campaign Planning, once a month, in addition to 2 in-depth, 3-day trainings that covered important skills for successful community organizing.

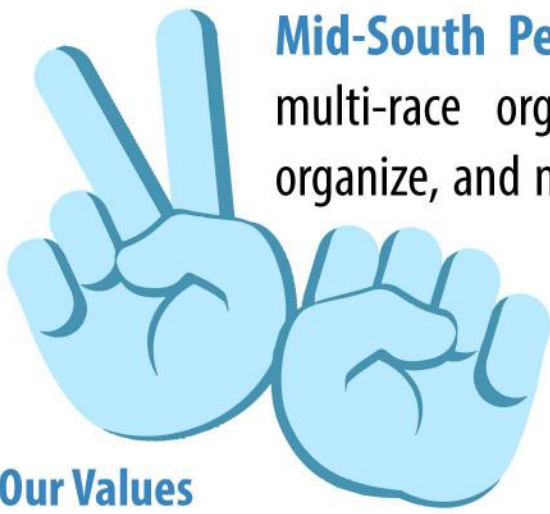
- Provided private trainings for groups, businesses and other organizations specifically tooled to their needs, based on consultation with them.

- Offered all of our public trainings on an affordable

sliding scale to ensure that cost is not a prohibitive factor for members of our community seeking to deepen their skills as organizers.

- Training activities explored community issues relevant to participants that want to raise awareness and equip organizers, facilitators, activists, workers, and volunteers with tools for outstanding community work.

- Facilitated weekly hour-long workshop sessions throughout the fall semester with a class of 20 freshman students at Kingsbury High School, covering topics like Privilege & Oppression, Power & Rank, Community Organizing Skills, and more—tying these topics back to Kingsbury's World History curriculum.



Mid-South Peace and Justice Center is a multi-issue, multi-race organization whose mission is to engage, organize, and mobilize communities to realize social justice through nonviolent action.

Our Values

The Inherent Power of the Individual-We know the people we work with hold the power to initiate and advance positive change in their communities, and it's these people who must be the leaders in campaigns to improve their lives.

Communities of Liberation-We work to create a world without oppression. We recognize that the roots of oppression run deep systemically and within ourselves. We implement strategies of anti-oppression within every facet of our organizing and within our organization itself.

Achieving Nonviolent Solutions Using Nonviolent Strategy-MSPJC was founded on the nonviolent principles of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. We know that the most powerful change can only be brought about using nonviolent means, and we are dedicated to practicing and teaching nonviolent action.

A Word of Thanks

We are extremely grateful to all of our members, volunteers, community partners, donors, and other supporters and collaborators, without whom we would not be able to operate, grow in our work, or accomplish as much as we do. **Thank you!**

STAFF

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