

Marin Voice: MOC ready to practice revolutionary patience with new issues agenda

By SUSAN LEIDER and JAN REYNOLDS | PUBLISHED: October 30, 2019

In her words to a crowd of 700 at Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael last Sunday afternoon, Guadalupe Salgado, a parishioner at St. Raphael Catholic Church, said it well.

“It’s so hard to live in peace in this time of injustice and discrimination. But we see today that we are not alone. Let us move ahead together ... toward the change we are yearning for.”

Ten years after our founding, the **Marin Organizing Committee** convened delegates like Salgado from 22 dues-paying institutions. Together, with our allies, we celebrated a decade of building citizen power and ratified an agenda for the coming years.

Originally scheduled to be held at the Marin Civic Center Exhibit Hall, MOC’s convention moved forward despite power outages across Marin County because we believe in the importance of showing up. And for 10 years we have shown up.

We have made concrete progress on many issues in the last decade of organizing, yet the overarching themes facing our communities remain the same: Families live in fear of homelessness if they can’t make their exorbitant rent. Landlords ignore complaints of mold, cockroaches and glaring safety hazards, while tenants often can’t get little help from their city governments. School counselors are overtaxed, meaning our children can’t access desperately needed mental-health services. Older adults are isolated and in need of services to help them age in Marin.

These are huge, societal problems. How can MOC address them?

This past year we began a campaign toward a renewed agenda of issues. We began, as we always do, with the radical act of listening to our neighbors. Over the last eight months, MOC has held a series of house meetings. These small group conversations are organized for the purpose of listening to hundreds of experiences from a diverse cross-section of Marin’s population. Hundreds of residents sat down with people they wouldn’t otherwise meet and listened to each other’s stories.

As a result of these conversations, MOC established and ratified an expanded agenda moving into 2020. The MOC agenda, as ratified at Sunday’s convention

focuses on mental health for youth, expanded services for seniors, renter protections and affordable housing.

As we head into what will undoubtedly be another emotionally charged, adolescent year of partisan politicking, we have a choice in Marin: What kind of politics are we going to practice? What kind of power are we going to build?

Despite a community-wide power outage, the 700 MOC leaders who showed up on Sunday demonstrated tenacity against the odds and the power of revolutionary patience in public life. Revolutionary patience recognizes that the solutions to the problems we face require creative, long-term and incremental work. We try things, we make mistakes. We try again, we try something new and we do not give up.

Though patient, we feel a sense of urgency consistent with the size of the problems we face. We demonstrate a resilience that meets setbacks with both the hope and determination to remain in the struggle. We understand that public life is for grownups.

We have won changes in policing policy that hurt our immigrant families; advocated a housing-first model of care for those who do not have a home; and won protections for the renters in Marin who are vulnerable in this housing market. We have done this and much more, and we plan to do more in the coming years. We are here to stay. We are here to fight. We are here to build long-term, sustainable power that doesn't give up.

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