

# The Monthly Voice

**June 2014**

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Greetings From ONE DC, Friend

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## **Kelsey Garden Tenants Prepare To Return**

**By Ka Flewellen**

The first Kelsey Garden tenants are excited and planning to move back to their Shaw neighborhood in the fall of 2014. It has been eight years of struggle and adjustment for Kelsey Garden tenants who were displaced from their 54 unit garden style apartment complex at 7<sup>th</sup> & Q Streets NW in the Shaw neighborhood. Their roomy garden style apartments with balconies have been replaced by a new development, Jefferson Marketplace, an eight story, 281 unit apartment building. The Kelsey Garden Tenant Association scored a major victory when they challenged the sale of their building and the tactics owners used to force residents from their homes.



- January 2014 we reviewed floor plans for the new development and discussed the move back schedule
- February 2014 we held a leadership training session for the officers of the tenants association to build their skills.
- March 2014 we ensured the KG Tenants Association had legal representation. The Jefferson Apartment Group provided a list of fees and charges facing tenants as they prepared to move back.
- April 2014 our legal team sent a letter to the Jefferson Apartment Group challenging some of the fees and costs KG tenants would be charged to return to the new development.
- April 2014 we met with the DC Housing Authority to get agreement on a special process for Kelsey Garden tenants to lease their new apartments lessening some of the bureaucratic hassles.
- April 2014 Kelsey Garden Tenant Association Officers tour the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Floors of the building in the construction process
- May 2014 our legal team met with tenant association members to discuss the legal strategy. In a meeting with the Jefferson Apartment Group we were successful in getting over \$250 in fees eliminated.

Over the summer months, final preparations will be made to ensure tenants are able to celebrate and move into the new building in the fall of 2014.

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## **ONE DC Seeks Full-time Housing Community Organizer for Fall 2014**

ONE DC is seeking a creative and dynamic individual with a proven track record to join the ONE DC team as a Community Organizer. The successful candidate will:

1. Take a lead role in building an effective organizing team by collaborating with resident leaders, staff and members of the Right to Housing campaign to develop popular education and organizing strategies to achieve community controlled development, housing policy and income/economic equity outcomes.
2. Work with organizing team to implement said organizing strategies.
3. Support tenant-led campaigns to remain in place or collectively purchase their building
4. Build coalitions with partner organizations to achieve citywide housing policy goals through the People's Platform
5. Conduct 15-25 hours of outreach, leader visits, etc. per week with Organizing Team members.
6. Recruit and develop ONE DC members.
7. Assist in mentoring Organizing Team members and ONE DC member organizers.
8. Increase the leadership capacity of ONE DC members on the community controlled development, housing policy and income/economic equity teams.
9. Secure media coverage of ONE DC organizing work.
10. Assist in the planning and implementation of ONE DC organizational events.
11. Perform organizing campaign related administrative tasks as needed and appropriate to sustaining the organization.
12. Attend regular staff meetings, planning sessions, etc.

[To see the full description & how to apply, click here](#)

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### **What Would it Take to End Displacement?**



**By Rob Wohl**

For the past three months, ONE DC has been organizing a series of community learning forums called "From the Streets to the Rooftops" to bring together long-

time residents as well as newcomers to DC to develop a shared analysis of the processes of gentrification and displacement that are affecting our neighborhoods.

In the first session, we learned about the structural forces driving displacement, focusing on how systematic disinvestment in low income communities of color intensifies poverty while creating opportunities for developers, banks, and other real estate interests to make big profits by buying up cheap land, building expensive housing, and marketing it to wealthier residents. Next, we studied the mythology that drives and justifies the displacement of long-time residents of DC and other cities. We discussed how politicians and academics have masked the problem of poverty, discrimination, and disinvestment in communities of color by pathologizing “concentrated poverty.” When the public is convinced that the city’s main problems result from too many poor people living together, displacing those people and bringing in new, affluent, whiter residents can be treated as the solution.

In our most recent session, we began to study the ways that communities have come together to resist displacement. We brought together a panel of organizers of six community leaders and organizers from DC and Baltimore to draw lessons from fights to preserve public housing, ensure that long-time residents have the right to return when their homes are redeveloped, hold landlords accountable to their tenants, and ensure that our city’s “redevelopment” and “revitalization” plans remain inclusive.



And we’re not done yet. The Streets to the Rooftops series will continue on Friday July 25<sup>th</sup>, when we will come together to envision what a movement against displacement in DC would look like and what we need to do to build it – and we want to hear about your vision! This event will also include the art & video exhibit, "Our Streets," with themes of displacement, gentrification, & resistance.

We’ll meet at 6 PM at the New Community Church at 614 S St NW, and we hope to see you there.

[RSVP Here](#)

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## **Jessica Gordon Nembhard's *Collective Courage* Receives Enthusiastic Reception in DC & Baltimore**

By [John Duda](#), The Democracy Collaborative

Jessica Gordon Nembhard, a member of ONE-DC’s shared leadership team, offered two area talks to mark the release of her long-awaited book [Collective Courage: African-American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice](#). Dr. Nembhard, who is also an Associate Professor of Community Justice and Social Economic Development in the Department of Africana Studies at CUNY’s John Jay College, and a member of the [Grassroots Economic Organizing Collective](#), was the featured speaker in an evening program exploring the intersections of economic and racial justice at the new [Impact Hub DC](#) space on

June 3<sup>rd</sup>, and spoke in Baltimore the next night at [Red Emma's](#), a worker cooperative bookstore and coffeehouse.

At the event on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, which was sponsored by The Democracy Collaborative, Impact Hub DC, and ONE-DC, Dr. Nembhard was joined by local cooperative development advocate and fellow GEO collective member Ajowa Ifateyo for a conversation on the history of African-American cooperatives uncovered in the long years of research that went into the book, as well as the way this history informs attempts to organize



cooperative economic institutions in communities of color today. According to Nembhard, our understanding of cooperatives as primarily something that get created in relatively privileged white communities is by and large a total mistake.

In part, this mistaken impression is due to the consequences of the need to keep cooperative organizing in African-American communities clandestine due to fear of racist retaliation—because co-ops were kept quiet, they also were kept out of the historical record. Despite facing this challenge along with many others, an extensive and vital tradition of African American cooperative activity nevertheless provided a key economic base of support and an indispensable site of leadership training during the long civil rights movement. The hope expressed in the conversation was that this important and formerly unknown history can help guide and inspire today's movements working to use cooperatives to empower marginalized communities.

Indeed, as the updates the audience in DC heard—on ONE DC's [Black Worker's Center](#), Impact Hub DC's new worker cooperative incubator, [Community Farming Alliance's](#) DC-based farm cooperative for people of color and women, and on [Black Belt Justice Center's](#) efforts to expand African American community ownership of land—amply demonstrated, the struggle for economic self-determination so wonderfully chronicled in Dr. Nembhard's *Collective Courage* is very much alive and well today.

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### **ONE DC Organizer Reece Chenault Attends Story-Based Strategy Training**



*Meeting of the Black Caucus*

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## EVENT: Right to Income - Black Workers Center Meeting



**Where:** United Black Fund  
2500 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20020

**When:** July 23, 2014  
6:00PM - 7:00PM

[RSVP Here](#)

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### ONE Bit of Good News

ONE DC members and staff prepare to attend the [Ella Baker Institute](#) hosted by University of Illinois Chicago as part of the Chicago Freedom Summer in July and the GIFT ([Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training](#)) "Money for our Movements" conference in Baltimore in August.

[We are currently seeking donations to cover flights, food, & accommodations.](#)

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### ONE DC Partners With GW's Center For Civic Engagement For Equitable Development Symposium

**By Bianca Valencia, The George Washington University**

From the start of the planning committee, GW's Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service (CCEPS) was excited to have the opportunity to partner with a strong, substantive, community-based organization like ONE DC. The collaboration between Gregory Squires (GW) and Dominic Moulden (ONE DC) in writing the social policy article entitled "Equitable Development Comes to DC" truly initiated a great start. The symposium that occurred on Thursday, March 27, 2014 brought about 120 participants.

It was wonderful to have local residents and GW academic faculty and students all come together for this event. Each of them had the opportunity to learn from one another and grow in their networks. In regards to students, it is essential that they not only learn from books, but also from people within their field of study. In this way, they learn to value the knowledge that comes from the community members' life experiences. This creates a greater sense of pride and connection between their major and the surrounding environment.

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