



July 2017

When the Organization for Black Struggle celebrated its 37th Anniversary in January, the theme was a continuation of the re-affirmation of our values and a re-commitment to our legacy of struggle for Black Liberation. The anniversary theme, “Appreciating our History to Make Black Lives Matter” was a deliberate choice to focus us on what it would take to successfully navigate the Ferguson Uprising aftershocks in our racial justice movement. What has really helped us to get grounded is our working-class roots in the Black community.

This month is the annual fundraiser for OBS and its youth component, the Youth Council for Positive Development. And while we urge you to make a generous donation during the phone-a-thon, it’s not just about the money. Many of you have selflessly shared your time, talents and connections to support our two organizations, especially during and after the murder of Mike Brown by Ferguson cop darren wilson. That financial, political and spiritual support is deeply appreciated and still very needed as we move through this transitional phase to re-create OBS for the current times and conditions.

Because you have our back, OBS continues to move forward. We have the battle scars to prove it and some victories to celebrate. Here are a few of them:

- ▶ *OBS continues to expand its base-building work from the photo ID ballot initiative where we made nearly 20,000 contacts to convince Black voters of the dangers of the bill. The initiative passed statewide in November but Amendment 6 was crushed by St. Louis City voters.*
- ▶ *OBS and its allies have intensified our organizing and agitating around issues of state repression and court exploitation. In St. Louis, progressive forces elected the first African American prosecutor who ran on a platform shaped from the demands of a community determined to make Black lives matter. The St. Louis Police Chief was fired and an unprecedented selection process has been established to engage the community.*
- ▶ *ArchCity Defenders and its legal partners won a historic settlement against of the City Jennings for its debtors’ prison targeting Black folks. OBS worked with the legal team to ensure the \$4.7 million got to the victims of Jennings’ racist practices.*
- ▶ *As a founding member of the Coalition Against Police Crimes & Repression, OBS has been active in the Coalition’s 2-year campaign to “Re-Envision Public Safety.” Citizens are being educated at Town Halls and in Organizing Circles about the investment in people and in our communities as part of collective efforts to change the narrative that safety can only rest in the hands of an occupying police force.*
- ▶ *OBS launched our “Black Jurors Matter” Campaign to educate Black citizens on the importance of serving on juries so that Black defendants are guaranteed a jury of their peers.*

Looking ahead, OBS is hosting National Night Out for Safety and Liberation. Along with our coalition partners, the organization is readying for Round 3 in the fight to raise the minimum wage by collecting signatures to put the issue before voters. In collaboration with the National Black Workers Center, “Working While Black” is our next campaign. OBS is on the M-O-V-E—see you on the battlefield!

Forward Still!

Jamala Rogers

Interim Executive Director