



ORGANIZING for
HEALTH and JUSTICE

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Clean Air Connection

FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

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Clean Air runs deep

This letter comes directly from Clean Air staff members Linnea Brett, Emily Terrana and Julia White — three badass, strong, talented women who are committed to carrying the Clean Air torch forward.

During the month of December, we had the pleasure of re-introducing ourselves... who we are, our beliefs and visions, and why we wake up each day and organize for a better world. You can see our bios on Clean Air's staff page (www.cacwny.org/about/staff) and our letters on Clean Air's blog (<https://www.cacwny.org/blog-2/>).

By now, you have likely heard the news that our friend and leader, Rebecca Newberry, accepted a national job with The BlueGreen Alliance. As we doubled down at the end of 2020 to prepare for Rebecca's departure, at every turn we were struck by the strength, adaptability and resilience of our organization, the depth of our shared leadership, and the clear and bold path forward.

Over the years, but in particular, over the past few months, we have seen over

and over again that we are not a four-person team that has become a three-person team; we are much bigger. **Clean Air runs deep.** We have six Campaign Teams, more than 350 Members and Supporters, and dozens of partners across the country that not only have our back, but are leading the work hand-in-hand.

If 2020 taught us anything, it's that we have the ability to adapt and shift. In 2020, we did what we always do: We came together to care for one another through hard times and build a more beautiful and clear vision for the world that we all deserve.

Change is part of our work — and so are the growing pains that come with it. We know change can be a force for good if we shape it. So, rest assured, over the next months and years ahead, our hard work will continue. Together, we will continue to create solutions, build power, and win.

In solidarity, love, and motion,

Linnea, Emily, & Julia

WHO WE ARE

As a working-class, queer and women-led organization, our passion for and experiences with fighting for environmental justice and liberation colors all that we do. We know what it is to create community, care for one another through hard times and build a more beautiful and clear vision for the world that we all deserve.



We cannot meet this moment with apathy

On Wednesday, Jan. 6, the nation watched in horror as armed white supremacists stormed and occupied the U.S. Capitol building. As we watched this coup unfold, we can't say that it was a surprise. What happened on Jan. 6 wasn't a random event.

The coup was set over years with the courting of and seeking the support of white supremacist groups by President Trump, telling the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by," fueled with the kindling of lies and conspiracy theories about the integrity of the 2020 election, and was finally ignited by the sitting president of the United States of America. *If we are surprised by what happened, we were not paying attention.*

While insurrectionists stormed the Capitol building, they had no fear of accountability. They filmed themselves and posted on social media. They spoke to Capitol police as if they were on the same side and took selfies. They came ready to inflict violence on elected officials, erected gallows outside of the U.S. Capitol building, and brought confederate flags into the halls of Congress. It is painful to think of what could have happened if these people reached their intended targets.

We cannot ignore the complete dichotomy between how a seditious mob and this past summer's Black Lives Matter demonstrators were treated by the police, National Guard, and elected officials in Washington and around the country.

While armed insurrectionists breaching a federal building were somehow able to make it to the floor of the Senate and Congress to take photographs behind the speakers' podiums, Black and brown protestors over the summer were met with arrest and violence by the police during peaceful and lawful protest for the dignity of Black life. The reality of white supremacy in our country is clear, and the coup highlights the stakes.

It is also clear to us that this violence is not unique to Washington, D.C. In December, members of the Watchmen and Proud Boys, known white supremacist groups, held a rally with local elected officials in Niagara Square in Buffalo. At least 110 Western New Yorkers traveled to Washington for the Jan. 6 attack.

For many of us, we know these people well. They are our siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, neighbors, and maybe even our friends. We cannot close our eyes to the extent of this crisis in our communi-

ties.

We cannot meet this moment with apathy. As people committed to organizing our communities for racial justice, it's important that we understand this incident is part of a long history of white-organized backlash to Black-led struggles and victories. We must understand that our action or inaction against white supremacist terror at this moment will be written in history books and shape the course of our country for the next 100 years.

We call you now to join us in action. We have the power to decide how we move forward. *How will you join us? We hope that you will deepen your commitment to anti-racist organizing and resourcing our communities with the skills, analysis, and practice that we need to face what is to come, to heal what has been done to our people, and to move forward on the long road towards justice and liberation for all of us.*

Here are two actions that you can take today:

1. Join Showing up For Racial Justice (SURJ) Buffalo. You can learn more about SURJ's work, including training and action opportunities at facebook.com/surjbuffalo.
2. Keep an eye on Black Love Resists in the Rust's Facebook page for upcoming meetings: <https://www.facebook.com/BLRRbuffalo>.



Throughout the month of December, Clean Air's six Campaign Teams shared their work with the Clean Air community through emailed letters. Our leaders looked back on all that they accomplished in 2020 and celebrated the strength, unity, and determination that carried us forward.

We hope that you visit Clean Air's blog at <https://www.cacwny.org/blog-2/> to read their stories, and stay tuned for updated campaign pages on Clean Air's website in the coming months!

In the meantime, here's what our Campaign Teams are saying:

American Axle Campaign Team: "On our team, we believe in making this community whole. Making a community whole means full remediation of the former American Axle site and cleaning up all contamination that may have spread into the property of families living near the site. Making a community whole means the ability to garden, the ability for children to play in the dirt in their backyards and the ability to be confident that where we live doesn't make us sick."

Tonawanda Coke Campaign Team: "If 2020 has taught us anything, it is the truth in Octavia Butler's wisdom that 'the only lasting truth is change.' This year has brought with it a number of changes and shifts in how and at what speed we do our work, but the one thing that has remained constant is the passion that we have for grassroots community organizing for environmental justice. This year we organized against the impossible to make our demands inevitable, and we won."

Huntley & Tonawanda Tomorrow Team: "For our team, the beacon of hope for a fair and just transition lies in the shell of the former Huntley power plant in Tonawanda. We see beyond the chain link fence and red tape, envisioning a community and environmental asset

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to our futures. We see the possibility for new life, new family sustaining green jobs and the hope of a better future for all of our people."

Tesla Team: "We are committed to this fight because it is bigger than what happened to any one of us: When workplaces are allowed to abuse their workers with low wages, harassment, discrimination, and exploitation, and without consequence, we all suffer the consequences. And when the government gives \$959 million of our public money to companies owned by multi-billionaires in order to do so, we are all responsible for holding them accountable."

Seneca Babcock & Diane's Land Team: "We deserve better than abandoned land. Our neighborhood has been exploited and neglected for too long. We created Diane's Land because we are fighting to take over the abandoned land and transform it into a remediated, community-owned Land Trust."

Membership Team: "At Clean Air, we are in the business of building a movement for justice that cannot be defunded, broken or stopped. That's why Clean Air's Membership Team is building out Clean Air's grassroots movement for health and justice. We bolster Clean Air's campaign teams by creating intentional and welcoming space for people in our community and beyond to join us as we reimagine a world that works for all of us."

On Dec. 1, 2020, we set a goal to raise \$60K to Fight in Flight in 2021. Y'all rose to the occasion, and two weeks in, we decided to up our goal to \$75K. We are excited to let you know that 328 of you made it possible for us to raise \$82,806! No matter what 2021 brings, we are ready to take flight together so we can fight together. Together, we will create solutions, build power, and win. Thank you for believing in the power of organizing. Every day, we are filled with gratitude for the connection and strength that has come from our community.



WE DID IT!
328 OF YOU MADE IT POSSIBLE

**TO FIGHT
CLEAN AIR
75K
IN FLIGHT**

FOR US TO RAISE...

\$82,806

THANK YOU!