



Housing Justice League Newsletter

June 2018

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check www.housingjusticeleague.org/events/ to confirm time, location, and event details!

Tuesday June 26 BeltLine4All Petition Drive at Ponce City Farmers Market 5:00 - 8:00 pm BeltLine Shed, Eastside TrailAtlanta, GA, 30308 Join us to collect signatures for the #Beltline4all campaign. See HJL website for more information.

Sunday July 1 BeltLine4All Petition Drive at BeltLine Free Yoga 1:00 - 4:00 pm Foundation / Old 4th Ward Skatepark 766 Willoughby Way NortheastAtlanta, GA, 30312 Join us to collect signatures for the #Beltline4all campaign.

Tuesday July 10 Tenant Association Training 1083 Austin Ave NE 30307 6:30 pm. Build a Tenant Association, Stop Displacement! How to start a tenant association and protect tenant rights. Please email housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com to RSVP! Free parking!

Tuesday July 17 HJL Mass Meeting: 7:00 pm, 6:30 orientation for newcomers 1040 Crew St SW 30315. We will discuss the current status of all campaigns, the organization, and have breakouts for tenant associations, the BeltLine for All campaign, and outreach!



Housing Justice League (HJL) is a community-led organization. Our mission is:

"to empower renters and homeowners to self-organize and defend their right to remain. We fight to preserve affordable housing, prevent gentrification, and build neighborhood power for an Atlanta-wide housing justice movement."

We are always looking for ways to work with and support community members dealing with housing issues. We are excited to hear your ideas and for new leadership. Come to our monthly meetings to join or start your own tenant association, volunteer for a campaign, or help with community outreach.

Go to www.housingjusticeleague.org to sign up to volunteer, make a donation, learn about membership, or check out our upcoming events!

Follow us at facebook.com/housingjusticeleague to keep up to date with what's going on in the organization and housing-related politics.

TENANT ORGANIZING

HJL TENANT ORGANIZING TRAINING

On Tuesday evening June 5 Housing Justice League held its monthly tenant organizing training session in the Emmaus House Chapel in Peoplestown. In attendance were residents from the Forest Cove, Capitol Towers, Columbia Senior Mechanicsville, Stanton Oaks, and Rosa Burney apartment complexes, as well as three students from Georgia Tech working to organize a neighborhood tenant union.

In the trainings we cover why tenant organizing is needed in a rapidly gentrifying city, beginning steps to starting a tenant association, and legal rights. We work with participants to set up next steps to move forward in starting or strengthening their tenant association. If you or someone you know is struggling with their housing conditions, please spread the word about these training sessions which happen on the first Tuesday of the month! There is strength in numbers! **The training for July will be held on July 10th however due to holiday schedules the week before.**

A highlight of the evening's session was an interactive activity called "The Beloved Community." In the activity, participants worked in

groups to create drawings of their ideal community and came together to defend themselves and their resources in the face of an aggressive and extractive developer. Organized teams were able to stop the



developers from building private prisons and massive parking lot wastelands in their communities. Some groups went as far as venturing over to other groups' communities to share ideas of community power and organizing. Latreas Chaney from Forest Cove commented, "I found making a blueprint of my community and then having a developer try to buy it out helpful to understanding the process [or organizing]."

HJL EVICTION DEFENSE PROJECT UPDATE

Housing Justice League's Renters' Rights Team has been working on our new eviction defense manual. We hope to release a first edition of the manual



next month for preview at the Homes for All National Assembly! Last week, Renters' Rights team members met with tenant leaders to review our current draft and get feedback on the flow of the writing, content, and how the storyline fits (or not) with their own experiences. A huge THANK YOU to all the tenant leaders who are helping to make this project powerful. It is our intention that the manual can serve as a tool to reduce the harm caused by an exploitative housing market and legal system, and thereby act as a launching point towards stronger tenant networks and organized communities. A GA-specific Renters Rights manual and tenant organizing manual are forthcoming as part of this work as well.

BELTLINE FOR ALL CAMPAIGN

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY - #BELTLINE4ALL PETITION DRIVE

The petition drive “Tell Policymakers: The Beltline Should Be For All Atlantans” is starting off again, although it has been underway for a while. Recently the Beltline4All Campaign has made it a priority to get as many signatures as possible. The petition drives now involves being physically on the Beltline with volunteers to gather signatures from people passing by. On the weekend of June 16–17, volunteers gathered hundreds of signatures from people attending the Forward Warrior event on the Beltline. Further plans to gather signatures include being around the Ponce City Farmer’s Market on Tuesdays and Yoga in the Park. YOU can sign up to volunteer and lead a petition drive – just email us at housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com and we

will help find volunteers and supply the materials!

With only 30% of the online signatures being signed by people living in Georgia, getting out onto Atlanta’s Beltline is important in order to obtain a critical mass of signatures from people actually living in Atlanta and the surrounding area. Policy makers need to know that people in Atlanta care about affordable housing and prioritizing affordable housing. Further, this petition drive is important as way to take up space and have a presence on the Beltline.

Lastly, an important aspect of this petition drive on the Beltline is public education. While on the Beltline, many people asked us questions about the nature of the Beltline’s plan and were curious about how to become more involved. On other hand, there were a few people who doubted whether affordable housing was “even possible”, as well some people who did not seem to have a problem with gentrification. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of individuals were interested in signing and learning more when asked “do you care about affordable housing in Atlanta?” We hope to continue to be out on the Beltline gathering signatures at least every other week, if not every week.



MEET KIMBERLY BURLEY, NEW MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR WITH HJL

"I think of Housing Justice League as a diverse and inclusive organization that is truly representative of Atlanta. For me it has been really difficult to watch the gentrification that is occurring in Atlanta. Gentrification represents the wall that is being built around Atlanta choking off access to the city. Access to the city is being bought and sold as we speak. Bringing in new and high end development to the city is not a bad thing – there are some economic benefits, but there is a problem when that sort of development is overly represented in Atlanta's housing market. It is a problem when it

means that certain groups of people will be priced out of the city. It's a problem when the prevalence of high end and luxury is blindly justified through the market principle of supply and demand. While gentrification does have its benefits, it's pervasive and systematic ability to radically transform a city's landscape to exclude certain groups of people cannot go unchecked. Atlanta was once a place where everyone could make it and where everyone could belong.

The people of Housing Justice League still carry

that consciousness of everyone having access. As the Membership Coordinator I want to organize our members in such a way that that voice cannot and will not be ignored. I find the people within



HJL to be very brave. Gentrification is a huge system that has to be conquered within our lifetime. It's a phenomenon that is occurring all across the United States. But the men, women, and non-binary people of Housing Justice League will be the way-makers that fuel Atlanta to tell a different story. When this is all said and done, Atlanta will still be a culturally, racially, and economically diverse city where everyone has access, where everyone can still make it. It means being more intentional on how to protect and include our most vulnerable populations in Atlanta. It means holding Atlanta's leaders accountable and asking them to be more intentional too. The current members and volunteers of HJL will make sure of this, and as the fight continues more people will join and fight for a more intentionally and inclusively built Atlanta.

Affordable housing is a human right and I am so happy to be just one more person among our ranks who can organize and defend for our right to remain."

HJL-SPONSORED EVENTS

Thursday March 28 3:00 pm Online Tenant Union Training with Homes for All:

Are you and your neighbors facing rising rents? Is your landlord threatening you with eviction, deportation or retaliation? Are you and your family forced to live in bad conditions? Now is the time to organize a tenants union to fight back! Join Homes For All's Monthly Tenant Union trainings. Each month we'll dive into the basics and next steps of organizing tenants unions in your building, your neighborhood and across your city!

Each training will have space to take your questions about how to organize with other tenants, and have other renters and organizers on to provide peer feedback and advice!

These trainings are ideal for tenants and/or local organizers who are either just starting to organize or who have been organizing tenants unions and want to get support and training.

go to <https://homesforall.org/tenantuniontrainings/> to register!