

# MESSAGE

Fall/Winter 2020



# 3

## Three ITMT community programs need your help.

King-Bremond Youth Scholarship Fund  
The Safe House Transitional Living Initiative  
Grab & Go Weekly Food Support

# U

## You can make a difference.

Help In The Meantime help our community by making a contribution. ITMT is a grassroots movement, of the people, by the people, for the people.

# 3

## You can donate three easy ways.

Call 323-733-4868.

Visit [www.inthementimemen.org](http://www.inthementimemen.org) and click the donations button.

Send a check or money order to:

In The Meantime, Box 29861, Los Angeles, CA 90029

Make your check payable to In The Meantime and indicate in the note section which program you'd like to support.



Join the Movement. Support In The Meantime.

## 4

Re-imagine  
Community  
by Jeffrey C. King

## 6

BLAC is the New  
Black  
by Gerald Garth

## 8

It's Our Revolution

## 10

Black, Lesbian, and  
American by Rayne  
Blakely-Lopez

## 11

In My Mind's Eye  
by Georgie Oliver

## 14

Ballots Are Dropping  
by Karen Ocamb



## 4



## 6



## 14

Message is published quarterly by In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc., 2146 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018-2039. Mailing address: Box 29861, Los Angeles, CA 90029-0861, 323-733-4868, [inthementimemen@aol.com](mailto:inthementimemen@aol.com), [www.inthementimemen.org](http://www.inthementimemen.org), Facebook @ inthementimemen

© 2020 In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

The slogan "Creating Unity and Affirming Our Common Bond" is a trademark of In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of ITMT. Publication of the name or photograph of a person does not indicate the sexual orientation or HIV status of the person or necessarily constitute an endorsement of ITMT or its policies. Message is designed for educational purposes only and is not engaged in rendering medical advice or professional services. Some photographs in this publication use professional models.

### EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Jeffrey C. King

### ART DIRECTOR

Alan Bell

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Greg Wilson  
Javontae Wilson

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joel Byrd, M.D.  
Gary Houston  
Stewart Jones  
Jeffrey C. King  
Earl Wooten

### ON THE COVER

Gerald Garth

# Re-imagine Community

## There Is a Solution

By Jeffrey C. King

There are no words that can fully explain nor justify what we the human race is experiencing on the planet today. It is clear that many are struggling and fighting for their lives and others have been leveled. Decisions have been made by our trusted lawmakers in an attempt to manage a virus of pandemic proportion. Our simple religious leaders would sum up this happening as the wrath of God on an immoral people, as this has always been their go-to explanation for why catastrophes happen on the planet.

We are in need of real leadership that is qualified to manage this catastrophe, yet we continue to see bandages being placed on gaping wounds. We witness millions, billions, and trillions of tax payers' dollars being thrown onto a raging fire. Again, I say we are in need of real leadership that is qualified to lead.

After Trumpism came into full effect, we witnessed the Pandora phenomenon that has unleashed the hateful and despicable reality of American politicians and laymen/women. We have witnessed the



comfortability of a racist Congress and Senate who openly support racism, bigotry, and the decimation of the poor and underserved and middle class. If you are watching you will clearly see that far too many of our white and dumb Black and dumb Latino Republican leaders are displaying a level of disrespect directed at minority and underserved populations of people who look like them. This is a bizarre phenomenon.

So today, I ask you what are you willing to do to help move the arc of justice in the right direction?

These are several things that I would suggest that we do individually and collectively to positively impact change:

- 1 Vote to ensure that Trump and other sick republicans lose seats of power and influence.
- 2 Develop and/or become engaged in community block clubs and coalitions fighting for reform that push progressive policy change in minority communities.
- 3 Focus needed attention on the middle class, many of whom are Black and Latino and have fought to become homeowners and to maintain small businesses in the midst of a devastating economic depression.
- 4 Become engaged in re-imagining what community policing should look like where you live.
- 5 Compile an inventory of already existing services in communities where Black and Latino people live. Call for an evaluation and accountability of these services to be responsive to the people they are entrusted to serve.
- 6 Call for a more united presence of elected officials in open community forums and town halls as a component of a paradigm shift for how politics happen in America.
- 7 Better engage our Black and Brown millionaires in the

development/redevelopment of the inner cities.

8 Re-envision My Brother's Keeper as a platform to engage a million Black mentors/Big Brothers who are willing to work together and support each other in developing and supporting young Black men heal their generational trauma and their desire to be productive citizens in society.

9 Address policy change that makes it illegal to live on the streets of Los Angeles. 1.) Re-invest in intensive long-term substance abuse treatment; 2.) Re-imagine and invest already existing mental health dollars into programming that will be made available to our people living on the streets; 3.) Move those unwilling to access treatment and services into mass sanitary facilities where clean water, food, shelter, case-management, and medical services are made available, as well as the option of being upgraded into long-term treatment.

10 Affordable housing could look like subsidized housing. It does not have to be at the level of section 8, but rather a way of helping individuals and families who are struggling with a portion of the rent based on current market rates. This idea would require a fair formulary that factors income into one's annual cost of living. This is a policy issue.

11 It is no longer optional that we should question the engagement and empowerment of our generation X and millennials in critical decision-making positions of leadership. This item is the most critical component in the equation. This does not mean that the current senior leadership should be displaced. Our elder leadership now has an extraordinary opportunity to mentor and assume positions as holders of ancestral wisdom, while providing historical context and the importance of strategy.

Jeffrey C. King is Founder and Executive Director of In The Meantime Men's Group.

# BLAC is the New Black

## Change Your Circle Change the World

By Gerald Garth

In May 2020, the murder of George Floyd, a Black man killed on the street in broad daylight by a white police officer kneeling on his neck, was seen all over the world, inciting uproar around the globe. That same week Tony McDade, a Black transgender man, was also murdered by an officer, yet his death received only a small fraction of the same outcry. Tony, like many of our Black LGBTQ+ community members, had to not only overcome injustice, but also invisibility. There was little news within Black spaces or LGBTQ+ spaces about Tony McDade, Nina Pop, Malaysia Booker, or the countless other Black LGBTQ+ individuals who, quite sadly, go forgotten.

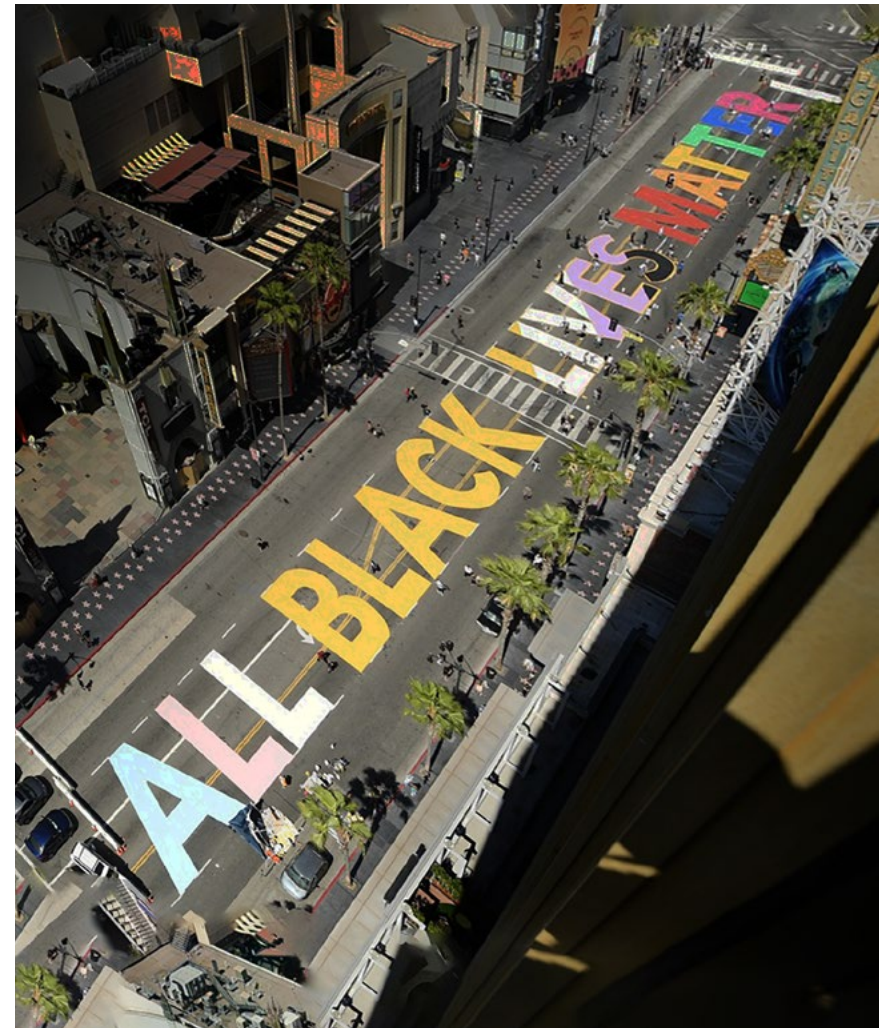
So, with the purpose to highlight, amplify, and prioritize the unique experiences of Black and Black LGBTQ+ communities, Black LGBTQ+ Activists for Change (BLAC) was created. On June 14, 2020, an estimated 30,000+ people gathered at the historic intersection of Hollywood and Highland for the All Black Lives Matter (ABLM) march. The march has since been commemorated permanently on Hollywood Blvd. along the Walk of Fame with a street art installation on the very block the inaugural march was held.

BLAC not only set out to highlight and celebrate Black LGBTQ+ communities, but also to remind the world

that we do not get to choose which lives have value. Brandon Anthony (of Brandon Anthony's Socialite House) and I wanted to work together to create a platform to unite, educate, and inform. We, along with a core group of Black LGBTQ+ community leaders, recognized the very different experiences of those who live at the intersectional identities of race and sexuality. We wanted to bring attention and action to address racism within the LGBTQ+ community and homophobia and transphobia within Black communities.

The collective was first met with some resistance, but BLAC states very boldly that the ABLM march or movement is not and never was designed to take away or divide, but to enhance and amplify. Black LGBTQ+ individuals see very unique and amplified challenges at those intersectional identities. Black transwomen and transmen are murdered at exponentially higher rates. There is constant Black lesbian and bisexual erasure, and Black LGBTQ+ elders. We stand not to divide, but to further showcase and celebrate.

Within our communities, many of us have different approaches, yet I do believe we need us all in this work for Black equity. BLAC looks to continue to work with local partners to stay true



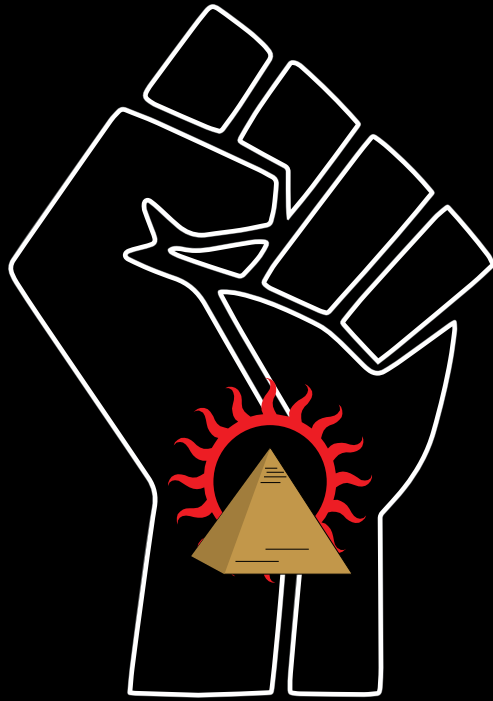
to the purpose—to highlight, amplify, and prioritize the unique experiences of Black and Black LGBTQ+ communities and individuals. We are excited to collaborate with leadership, media partners, agency partners, and community to create informed, sustainable solutions.

I encourage people to inform and affect change in the seats in which you currently sit; that is, your work should begin in the spaces you currently occupy. How do you change the world without changing your circle?

Changing your circle begins with changing yourself.

During these heightened times, BLAC and ABLM remind our community and the world that we must prioritize and protect all Black people—all of us and all of who we are. We need us all, and as Black people, we are better together.

*Gerald Garth is President and Lead Strategist of the Garth Management Group, LLC. He can be reached at [www.geraldgarth.com](http://www.geraldgarth.com) and [www.thegarthgroup.com](http://www.thegarthgroup.com).*



# #ItsOurRevolution

*“The revolution has always been in the hands of the young,” Huey P. Newton, the co-founder of the Black Panther Party, once said. “The young always inherit the revolution.”*

In The Meantime is excited to launch its latest social justice campaign aimed at elevating the voices of young revolutionaries. The word revolution has many definitions; however, we see revolution as a dramatic change in thinking or power. The revolutionaries of yesterday are solidified in history. Now, we are asking for the revolutionaries of today to speak up.

“It’s Our Revolution” is an interactive campaign asking the community to engage in discussion via Facebook and Instagram with the hashtag #ItsOurRevolution. The goal of the campaign is to ignite a fire of activism amongst younger generations, but also acknowledge the older generations who fought and died for the rights to freedom, dignity, and the pursuit of happiness.

The campaign will include images and text that pose the question, “What does ‘It’s Our Revolution’ mean to you?” We ask people to respond via Instagram or Facebook and be as creative as possible through video and images. If you respond via Facebook, use @ITMT and hashtag #ItsOurRevolution. If you respond via Instagram, use @ITMT and hashtag #ItsOurRevolution.

As The Revolution continues, we challenge you to stand up, be counted, and lend your voice to “It’s Our Revolution.”

# Black, Lesbian, and American

By Rayne Blakely-Lopez



**B**eing Black and successful requires strength and endurance. It means facing continued struggles, standing up and making yourself heard in the room when no one wants to listen, and staying true to who you are no matter the obstacles thrown at you. Being a Black woman in America is one of the biggest struggles that I have had to face thus far, because Black women are known to be at the bottom of the barrel. I know the royalty that flows within my people and our blood, but oftentimes America has a hard time

comprehending. Black people have it hard, but other communities face hardships as well.

Furthermore, I would like to discuss the aspect of being a part of the same-gender-loving youth. I have taken courses and read articles about the obstacles that people of the LGBTQ community have gone through, such as being murdered and harassed for walking down the street or wanting to participate in daily activities like everyone else in this world gets to do. There have been thousands of stories that go unheard because their stories are not considered to be “click bait,” especially if they are about Black people of the LGBTQ community. It was not until recently that I experienced what it feels like to be a Black woman who is with another Black woman and have personally undergone some of the hardships and fears.

**M**y girlfriend and I have been dating for a year now, and I remember going to the beach with her, holding her hand, and receiving these dreadful looks as if we were wrong for loving one another. Experiencing and going through that moment with her made me nervous, but it also made me want to stand up confidently and be proud of who I am. Being a same-gender-loving woman and being successful do not go hand in hand, but I plan to make it a part of my life.

Being a successful, Black, same-gender-loving woman means

standing up and protecting the love that is shared between me and my girlfriend. It means showing up and being present in every setting, ensuring that people know who you are, and making them hear the importance of what you have to say. It means pushing through the dreadful looks

of disdain, as if you are less than any other person in the world. To me, being a Black, successful, same-gender-loving woman means continuing to be Rayne and standing firmly in my beliefs no matter what is to come in the future. Thank you for this opportunity to express myself.

# In My Mind's Eye

By Georgie Oliver



**B**eing a successful Black lesbian in America means having the resilience to endure the obstacles that life puts forth. I am Black, a woman, and a lesbian, as

well as a single parent who raised two young Black men, while trying to find self-identity in the midst of it all.

When I was a child we lived in Northern California, with French bay windows and lots of fruit trees. It was a middle-class neighborhood, where I witnessed the death of my little sister by a car accident. During this time I was losing what little light my soul had and began existing in a place of pain and fear. I was often sad and lonely, and life was dark for me.

My parents separated, and all 10 remaining children were dispatched to distant family members. My brother Charles and I were sent to live with my grandmother's brother on his farm in Brush Island Arkansas. I did not know these people and had never met them. I only knew that they called me “Gal” and what it meant to be called “Gal” living on a farm in the deep delta South. It meant being insufficient, small, not of much value or of no value at all. During this time I was grieving and did not know. I had lost my voice and regressed to stuttering. I had no language to connect to my feelings, and my

environment did not support me in any way.

One evening while watching television, the Ed Sullivan show was on and the featured guest was Gladys Knight and the Pips. This was not my first time watching television, but it was the first time I saw in my mind's eye myself on television. I remember thinking, she is Black, and a woman, and she is beautiful. She is alive and not sad, and I wanted to be like her. Throughout the years I had become more and more intrigued with the entertainment industry, "theater" in particular. From middle school all the way up to college I had been involved in some aspect of the arts and had been a part of many performances.

I had my children in my teens and 20s. Life showed up in a very different way for me, and I could no longer be a struggling on-and-off actor; I had to get a real job. I began my career as a project coordinator at Schein Pharmaceutical in Danbury, Connecticut. That was 39 years ago. It saddened me to leave something I loved and knew beyond a shadow of a doubt was the "thing" that I should be doing.

My corporate career provided security, safety, and the means to raise my kids. My wife at the time would always remind me of my dream that was being deferred. In the past 30 years, not a week has gone by that I didn't think about what I had walked away from. So, five years ago I walked away from another safe job and I jumped into something I once knew

and loved—theater—to develop into the actor I know I am.

I started taking master classes, adding myself to local casting boards, and then I enrolled in LACC as a film major. There, I had to take an acting class, which I thought would be a breeze because it was familiar. Well it wasn't. It sparked and set the blaze that now burns inside of me. I was offered the opportunity to join the LACC Acting Academy conservatory based on the work I had done at LACC. I did not have to audition or even ask, they invited me. At that moment, I saw the little girl that I had been seeing for the past 30 or so years looking into a black-and-white television set on a farm watching Gladys Knight and the Pips perform on the Ed Sullivan show. She was dressed in tattered clothing with pig tails, and her name was "Gal." I said yes to my fate, and I am now a first semester acting student.

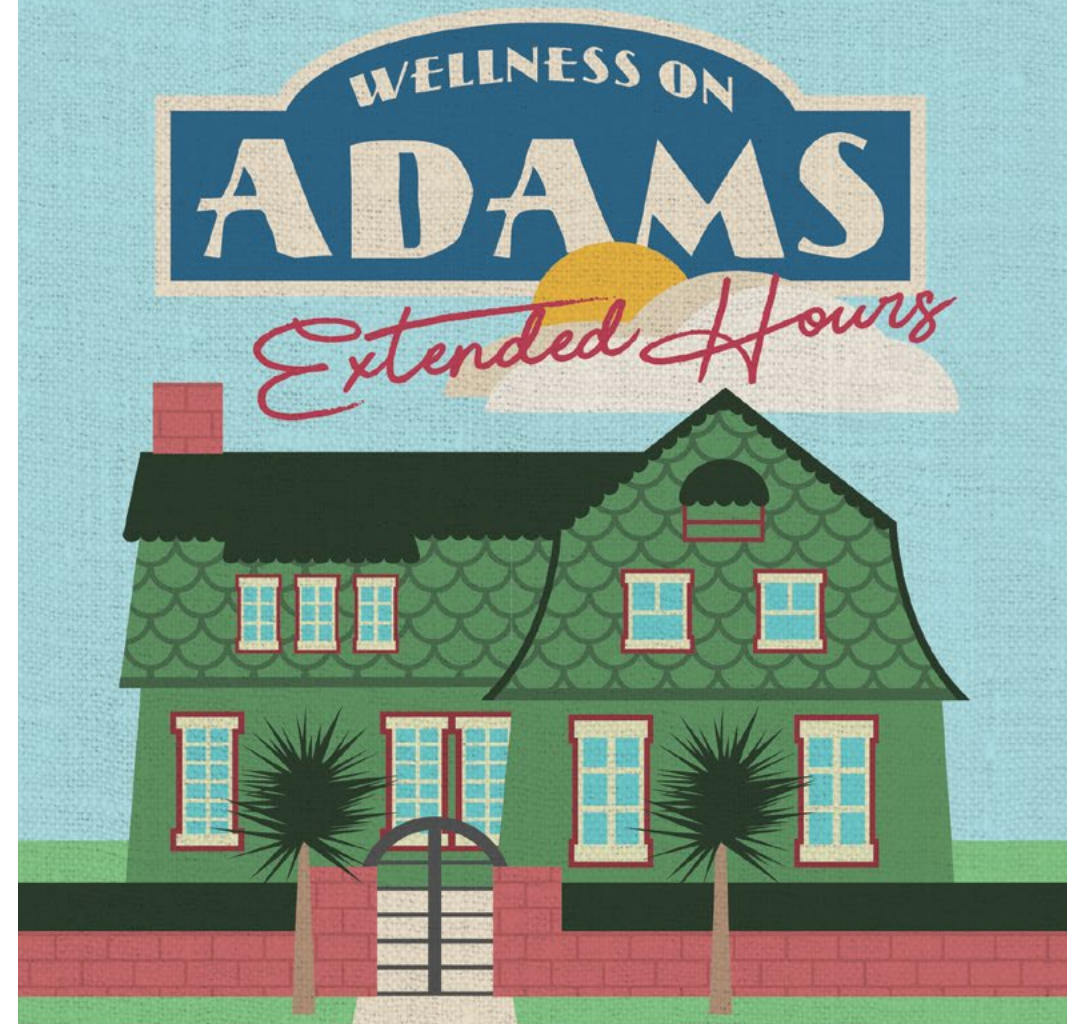
The classes are pre-chosen for me because it is the Academy. I have classes every day and lots of homework. I have chosen to make this commitment for myself because it is my time. Having said that, there is little time to work and meet my living expenses without taking away from my studies. Receiving this grant would be immensely helpful and appreciated.

Success also means having a picture in my mind's eye, a dream, a desire to be better. To reach my full potential for the betterment of everyone, where we all have the opportunity to enjoy it on this table of life.

---

*Each quarter, ITMT supports deserving young people with King-Bremond Scholarships as they pursue academic or trade-focused higher education. Named after Jeffrey King, Founder of In The Meantime Men's Group, and Duane Bremond, Founder of Los Angeles Black Pride, the King-Bremond Scholarship Program was established to assist deserving Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in Los Angeles County by offering financial assistance to help meet educational expenses. Once selected, awardees write a short essay on what it means to be Black, LGBTQ+, and successful in America. The preceding essays were written by this quarter's scholarship recipients. Students who would like to be considered for future scholarships should visit [inthemeantimemen.org](http://inthemeantimemen.org), download the application, and contact In The Meantime at 323-733-4868 for further instructions.*

## Free STD Screening & Treatment, HIV Testing & Linkage to HIV Care



### 2146 W ADAMS BLVD

Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri: 12pm-8pm

Sat: 9:30am-5:30pm

[freeSTDcheck.org](http://freeSTDcheck.org)



PUBLIC HEALTH  
DIVISION

# Ballots Are Dropping

## Courage California on What to Do Now

By Karen Ocamb

The year 2020 just gets curiously and curiously. With the shocking news that the

President of the United States tested positive for the coronavirus, questions about what might happen to the Nov. 3 elections. As of now, Election Day will be held as usual. But, warns the Yes on Prop 21 coalition, beware of dirty tricks and lies being spread by greedy billionaires to foment confusion and suppress the vote through egregious propaganda.

But the top of the ticket is not the only race that matters. California candidates and creators of down ballot initiatives such as Proposition 21, the Rental Affordability Act, are counting on voters to mail in their ballots or drop them off at voting centers, or mask up and walk in to cast that precious ballot in person.

Prop 21 is the November ballot measure that puts limits on unfair, sky-high rent increases, reins in corporate landlord greed, and prevents homelessness. Top experts at USC, UCLA, and UC Berkeley agree that sensible rent limits are key for stabilizing California's housing affordability

crisis. That's why U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, labor and civil rights icon Dolores Huerta, Congressmembers



Maxine Waters, Karen Bass, and Barbara Lee, the California Democratic Party, and the Los Angeles Times, among many others, have thrown their full support behind Prop 21, especially with so many unemployed facing eviction during the COVID-19 crisis.

Recently, Courage California Institute and ACLU Northern California (both of which have endorsed Prop 21) joined Black Women for Wellness, Common Cause, the California Native Vote

Project, and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) for a virtual voter education town hall.

Courage launched a new website—Your Power is Your Vote!—featuring information to help voters register to vote.

“Your power is your vote’ is Courage California Institute’s initiative to support young people, people of color, and all high-potential voters to register and vote with confidence,” says Communications Director Jay Chotirmal. “We all deserve to live in a world where everyone can easily find information about decisions that impact our communities. But right now, we are flooded with misinformation that is meant to keep us from exercising our democratic rights, both at the ballot box and in the streets.”

Chotirmal notes that “there are a bunch of races and ballot propositions that will be decided by a few thousand votes this year. So, we can’t take even one vote for granted together.” Courage’s site has a Ballot Tracker that lets you know when you should receive your ballot—on or shortly after Monday, Oct. 5—then after you mail it, “allows you to track your ballot on its way back to your County election official to be received and counted.”

The voter registration deadline was Oct. 19. The deadline to vote in person and mail in your ballot is midnight on Nov. 3rd.

The Secretary of State website has all this information, as well, including more information about ballot drop-off locations. Regional county clerks, including the L.A. County Registrar-Recorder, have “how-to” information and maps.

The Courage California tele-town hall also discussed how to reach voters who may not even know they can vote and those for whom there are huge obstacles to voting, such as precarious financial

conditions that could lead to housing issues.

Nourbese Flint says Black Women for Wellness has a voter education project that includes explaining why voting matters. “People only try to steal things that have value, and people are trying to steal your right to vote now,” she says. “People wouldn’t be working that hard if it didn’t have any value, right?”

ACLU/NorCal’s Ashley Morris notes that while there are obvious eligibility requirements like citizenship and age, “the only people who can’t vote because of conviction are people who are currently in federal prison serving a felony sentence, or currently in state prison, serving felony sentence, or who are on parole.”

That means “if you are in County jail, awaiting trial, you can vote. If you’re in County jail, serving a misdemeanor sentence, you can vote. If you’re in County jail, as a condition of your probation, you can vote. If you’re serving a felony sentence in County jail, you can vote. I mean, there’s this long list of people who are eligible to vote, and it’s really important that they know that they’re able to update their registration and actually get their ballots and vote.”

After the tele-town hall, Courage California Executive Director Irene Kao said: “We endorsed Prop 21 because what we see and feel firsthand is a housing crisis in California,” which has been heightened by COVID-19. “We see Prop 21 as a key part of the solution to making sure we have more people who are housed. We also believe that housing is a really key part of health, of economic justice, all different parts of people being able to live healthy and equitable lives. And so being able to tackle housing helps to also tackle some of these other issues that also need to be addressed in California.”

*Karen Ocamb is an award-winning journalist writing for the Yes on 21 campaign, where this story first appeared.*



# Re-Imagine



IN THE MEANTIME'S  
**23RD VIRTUAL  
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

AN EVENING OF  
ART, ENTERTAINMENT, AND AFFIRMATION

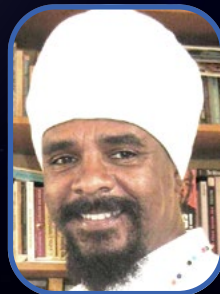
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2020  
5 P.M.-6 P.M.



**Ombrey DeGrate**  
Song Stylist



**Lawrence Dotson**  
Vocalist



**Noor Singh**  
Gong Master

Live Streamed on In The Meantime Men's Group Facebook Page  
Watch Party Hosted on Jeffrey King Facebook Page