

WOOD STREET COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



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UPDATE ON RELIEF EFFORTS

As part of the Coronavirus relief effort, for the past month and a half members of the United Front Against Displacement (UFAD) and Wood Street residents have been working together to install water tanks and hand washing stations for the people of Wood Street. There are now **6 hand washing stations** and **3 water tanks**, with plans and materials to set up more. The water tanks are located **behind the gate at West Grand, on the border of the Caltrans land behind the Wood Street water main, and a new one on the north side of the Caltrans land, in the compound next to the old railroad bridge.**

The water in the water tanks is treated to be **fully potable**. It's meant for residents to drink from. (continued on p. 2)

UPDATE ON RELIEF EFFORTS (continued)

The hand washing stations are also filled by the East Bay MUD tap, but the water isn't treated—they're meant for washing, not drinking. Washing hands frequently is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illnesses like COVID-19, and we want to make sure people are able to do so!



So far, members of UFAD have been coming out to Wood Street to refill water tanks and hand washing stations 2-3 days a week. However, the more tanks and hand washing stations we set up, the harder it is to maintain all of them by ourselves. **Because of this, it's really important that Wood Street residents get involved in maintaining these services too.** Eventually, we want everyone at Wood Street to have convenient access to a hand washing station and potable water. Our hope is that folks can depend on each other as neighbors to keep these services running, and that they can be both by and for the Wood Street community. **If you're interested in helping maintain the hand washing stations and water tanks, or want to help with building them, email us at wewontgo@riseup.net, or call/text (510) 815-9978!**



Since we started these projects, we've received a lot of good feedback from residents about how to improve the designs of the hand washing stations and the tanks. These ideas have been really creative and helpful, and without them we wouldn't have gotten very far. **If you've got ideas for how to improve our hand washing stations and water tanks, or if you have an idea for a new project we can work on, we'd love to hear it!**

Currently, a number of residents are interested in building community showers.

Finally, we will clean up trash every weekend. While there is a lot of trash at Wood Street, we're able to make a good dent in certain areas in just a few hours of work. If you need help with trash cleanup, or want to help us out with it, let us know. Our contact info is above.

LIBBY LIES, PEOPLE DIE!

PROTEST AT MAYOR SCHAAF'S HOUSE

On April 20th, 2020 UFAD activists and residents of Wood st protested Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the virus outbreak, Mayor Schaaf and the City of Oakland have showed very little effort to provide necessary resources like hand washing stations, drinkable water, trash dumpsters, porto-potties, or a pathway to housing to homeless people. **This is unacceptable.** In response, members of the UFAD and residents of Wood st decided to hold a socially distanced demonstration in front of Mayor Schaaf's house in Piedmont.

When we arrived to Mayor Schaaf's luxurious neighborhood, we ran into her just as she was returning home. **When confronted about the action that was about to take place in front of her house, we asked if she would speak to us all she had to say in response was "Is it alright if I go into my house?"**. This is consistent with how she and other city officials have responded in the past to our calls to meet with her to discuss the situation on Wood St.



While Mayor Schaaf hid in her house, protestors were outside speaking on a loudspeaker about the horrendous conditions in which homeless people are forced to live. One houseless person spoke about their experience living in the Tuff Sheds. A resident of Wood St spoke about how her father died while homeless and because of the conditions she lives in, she was unable to attend his funeral. Other protestors held signs, some of which displayed messages from homeless people such as, "Libby Lies, People Die", "4 Empty Homes for Every 1 Unhoused Person", and "It's Actually Very Simple, House People or Kill People".

Protests like these are essential for bringing people together and for demanding that the city does more to meet the needs of the ever-increasing houseless population. **We must organize more protests like these in the future to let the general population and city officials know that people in the streets are struggling, and that much more needs to be done to meet their basic rights.** The city government is not going to all of sudden realize the error of their ways and begin to do more. **It is up to the people, housed and unhoused, to put pressure on the city through political actions to meet the demands of homeless communities.**

POLICE CONTINUE HARASSING RESIDENTS AT WOOD STREET

As of late, residents of the Wood Street Community have found themselves being harassed and bullied by local law enforcement more frequently than ever. Many residents have reported seeing police patrols on at least 2-3 times a day. This has meant an increase in police harassment across the board for all residents of Wood Street, the vast majority of whom are just trying to survive.

Melissa is a resident who recently was harassed and thrown in jail by the Oakland Police Department along with her friend Tony. Tony was just looking for a place to sleep since his RV was stolen in the weeks prior and was thinking about spending the night in an abandoned van. When the police showed up, he approached them and he asked if they could help him find his stolen RV. They responded by detaining him and later ended up throwing him in jail, accusing him of stealing the gutted van.

Melissa and her friend Bobby were nearby and saw what was happening. The police quickly apprehended them, accusing them of being Tony's co-conspirators in stealing the van, which had been laying in the lot abandoned, gutted, and vandalized for months. Melissa put her hands on the dash and asked "Why are you arresting me?", but one of the pigs threatened to tase her if she didn't comply with his orders. In typical piggish fashion, one of the cops twisted her arm and dragged Melissa out of her vehicle. "Don't start being dramatic now!" said one of the pigs who noticed she was noticeably shaken up. At no point in time was she read her Miranda rights.

"I didn't feel human" Melissa said about her experience. During the entire process of being detained, arrested, and thrown in jail, no-one had bothered to explain to her why any of this was happening. It wasn't until after she was released that someone bothered to tell her she was being accused of stealing the abandoned van Tony was attempting to get some shut eye in. "Imagine how frustrating and terrifying that is. The whole time I'm in jail not even knowing why, not even knowing if I'm innocent or not". This is the reality that many people face on a daily basis. This happens not just on Wood Street, but in cities across the nation.

In cities across America, people have shown they are fed up with the police and the terror they bring to communities everywhere. Early in May, we saw many people in Indianapolis spontaneously break out in protest to speak out against police killing 3 people within 24 hours, one of whom was pregnant. In Glynn County, Georgia, hundreds of people marched to the doorstep of the McMichaels family who were responsible for the lynching of Ahmaud Arbery. Gregory McMichael, the patriarch of the family, was a former police officer and is good friends with the local District Attorney. People demanded that they be held accountable for their crimes after footage of Ahmaud's murder surfaced on social media.

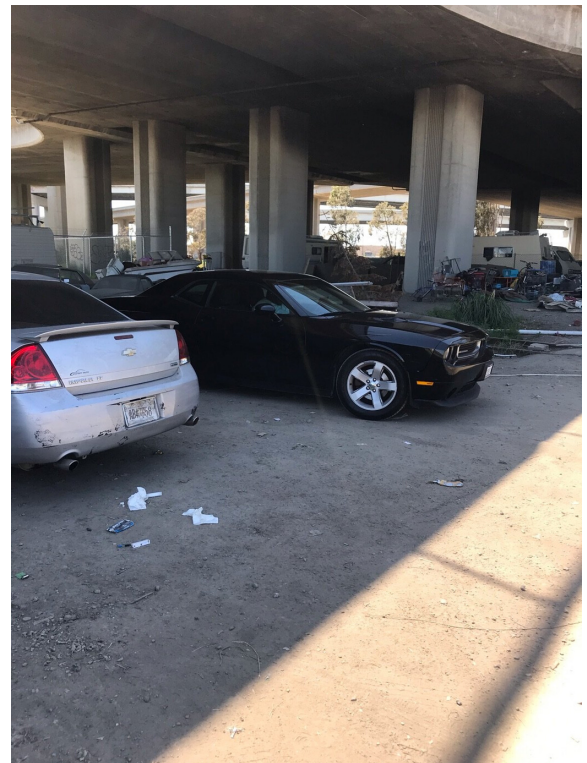
Now is the time for people to come together to demand an end to terror at the hands of the police. With the shelter in place has come an increase in police activity in the area, and there is good reason to believe this is only going to get worse as the virus continues its path forward. The only way to push back against this is for residents and their allies to come together and demand an end to this injustice!

WHAT'S UP WITH THE VACANT LOT ON WOOD STREET?

In 2016 Fred B. Craves bought an “abandoned” lot in West Oakland on Wood Street. Craves is a billionaire based in San Francisco that made his fortune in biotechnology. In order to buy the lot discreetly, he created a shell company called Gamechanger LLC. Craves plans to develop the lot into a biomedical research facility that would comprise mostly of office and retail space.

However, when Fred bought the lot, many people called the “abandoned” lot home. At the time of purchase, some people had been living on the lot for over half a decade! In order to get rid of folks on the lot, Craves hired the law offices of Alan Horowitz and attorney Patricia (Pat) Smith to displace residents in the area.

Fred Craves uses his lawyer Pat to hire contractors to complete tasks for them and threaten the residents. **Fred Craves uses one main subcontractor to help them manage the site as they work to evict the tenants. This man can often be seen sitting in his Black mustang just behind the fence onto the property by West Grand & Wood St.** He is normally around many weekday afternoons and also pays a small amount of money to a couple residents to “keep watch” at night and on weekdays. This is all done so that Fred Craves can spy on residents eventually hopes to evict residents. **Fred Craves is worth over \$1.6 BILLION and he pays some residents on Wood Street \$50 a day to spy on each other!**



Craves has tried to clear the lot twice in the last two years, but each time residents of the Wood Street Community and their supporters have protested. To be clear, residents in the area don't have anywhere else to go and neither the city of Oakland or Fred Craves has offered long term housing. There was some vague promises made about some residents being given preference to a new safe parking lot program for up to 18 months as Craves prepares to begin construction on the lot which he eventually will close in order to make way for his long term development plans.

The resisting residents were supposed to be in court almost two months ago, but then coronavirus pandemic happened. Now the courts are closed and will stay closed for several months and Fred and Pat will not be able to “legally” remove residents.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE VACANT LOT ON WOOD ST.? (CONT.)

Fred and Pat know that they are in a tough position. They have tried to use pitiful gestures and threats issued by their goons to get remaining residents to leave. One resident made a demand that if their broken down RV was replaced, they would move willingly. Pat told them it would cost too much money!

This is an opportunity to force these gentrifiers to not only negotiate but for displaced residents to return to their old locations. Being on a piece of land is much better than having to be crammed together on the sidewalk. These people are trying to make HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS developing this land, and if they can get away with it, they will leave the people with nothing!

Submissions:

The West Oakland Community Newsletter is a collaborative project by the United Front Against Displacement (UFAD) & the Wood St. Community, in an effort to spread news about the neighborhood and the struggle against the pigs & developers. If you would like to submit something, see something added to the next newsletter, or if there is something we got wrong,
LET US KNOW!

Find someone on outreach, shoot us an email [wewontgo@riseup.net], or call/text (510) 815-9978



**General meetings, outreach,
and community dinners
happen weekly.**

General meetings:

Wednesday, May 13th @ 7PM

Wednesday, May 27th @ 7PM

Outreach:

Please contact us via email for exact time and location.

Community dinners:

Wednesday, May 6th @ 7PM

Wednesday, May 20th @ 7PM

A Publication of the United Front Against Displacement
Email: wewontgo@riseup.net