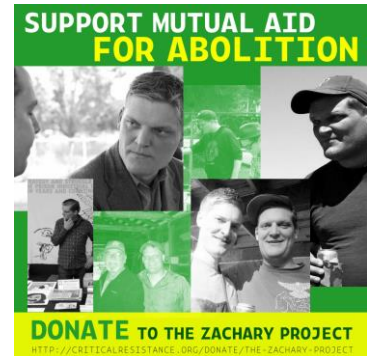


Dear Community Keepers of The Zachary Project,

This year we have seen a profound and inspiring rise of mutual aid efforts as well as general curiosity about this strategy for survival and resilience. We write to you today with our annual update on The Zachary Project, our five-year-old mutual aid fund, established in honor of a beloved former CR Oakland member, Zachary Ontiveros, who we lost in 2015. We write to you with a message of hope, gratitude and commitment. Thank you to the people directly receiving this newsletter: together we have seeded, nourished, sustained and shared this fund!



Today we sent out [a broader public message](#); this newsletter is coming directly to you, our keepers of The Zachary Project.

As the Covid-19 crisis began to escalate in March 2020, we experienced differing and profound feelings of fear and sadness, anger and helplessness, as well as the usual organizer spirit response: “Something must be done.” Many members and staff at Critical Resistance pitched into heightened efforts to get people out of the grips of the prison industrial complex (PIC). A small committee of CR members who have organized against policing together for years— the committee that supports The Zachary Project— had a different task at hand. We had to make sure people knew about our established The Zachary Project and to help people access it!

We sent The Zachary Project materials out to CR membership and staff and asked that people share the information with their networks. New requests began arriving weekly. Since March of this year alone, we have received and supported ten requests to The Zachary Project fund. Funds have gone to get families into housing after prison, after job loss and after a fire; to buy life-saving medications during an ill-timed insurance lapse; and to buy groceries and fulfill basic needs. We have distributed \$5,000 since March 2019, and over \$4,000 in the last three months alone.

Community, WE THANK YOU! Below, you can read quotations from people who accessed the fund. Please join us in wishing them safety, health and joy during this time! Please join us in celebrating and uplifting our collective capacity to make survival not only possible, but beautiful, if not irresistible.

Thank you for helping us bolster this life-affirming resource for our people and the abolitionist movement! Thank you for taking care of our CR Oakland community.

Zachary was always down to help with a mundane task, drive a comrade to the airport, or lend an earnest (and funny) ear. Help us support each other how he supported us.

In solidarity,

Charlene Khoo, Jayden Donahue, Jess Heaney, and Woods Ervin

for The Zachary Project committee.

2019- 2020 Testimony and Updates

In 2019 we raised \$3,255 for the fund through our annual plan and distributed \$1,000 to two people in need for housing and funereal support. At the close of the year, we had a healthy \$5,277 in the fund.

From January to April in 2020, we raised/our community donated an additional \$2,010. Since March, we have distributed \$4,000 to eight community members and their loves ones in need, and are so thankful to have had money “in the bank.”

We anticipate that the requests will continue at an increased rate in 2020; we are approach the “replenish threshold” that we set when the fund drops to its seed amount of \$2,000 and we invite you to help us replenish the fund! We are initiating a grassroots fundraising effort. What you can do:

- Donate. Make a one-time gift, a donation in someone’s name or memory, or commit to giving annually. [Donate here and under Designation, select “Zachary Project.”](#)
- Sustain. [Become a monthly sustainer to the fund](#). We have eight monthly sustainers to the fund Thank you if this is you!). Help us hit 10 this month!
- Spread the word:
 - o [Send this broader 2020 newsletter](#) to your community and ask them to contribute.
 - o Share [these social media tiles](#) (attached)! We invite you to use them anytime, or join us for some #MutualAidMonday posts this month.

“The Zachary Project was there for me and my family in our darkest moments. We found ourselves houseless after our apartment caught fire, with none of our belongings or even clothing. During these already terrifying times of Covid-19, we desperately needed to shelter and begin to rebuild our stability. We are still on our way to doing that. It is a day by day process, and The Zachary Project held us up when we really needed it.”

“The Zachary Project helped my sister-in-law pay the deposit on a three-bedroom apartment for her and her four children. She was released from federal prison into a halfway house September 2019 and released from the halfway house in March 2020. One of her greatest fears was not having a home for her children. The Zachary Project's donation provided her with immediate relief and helped her to raise enough money to get an apartment and move her kids in with them. The home is some much needed stability for them all and it is her first time living on her own. The Zachary Project is an amazing resource; we are thankful to everyone who runs it and contributes to it.”



“While i was struggling to look for funds after i lost my job due to covid, The Zachary Project showed up for me. I didn’t have rent or any resources and had lost my housing. They pulled resources together to help get me sheltered through reaching out to community. As a black queer oakland native, I’m hella appreciative for this org. Thanks so much, The Zachary Project.”

“Because of the rapid response and care I received because of The Zachary Project, I have been able to care for my immediate mental and physical needs. I am able to pay for medication that I need and at this time cannot live without, not even for a day. I remain safe while a pandemic is changing our lives in the deepest of ways and I am indebted to The Zachary Project. The Zachary Project came through for me and my family during this intense and challenging time, in such a way that I have been so impacted that I’m considering creating a fund as The Zachary Project.”

“Nature, through biology, has decided to reflect on the inequities of life via globalization of a new infectious disease. As a result, light has been shed on draconian injustices people on the periphery of American society suffer-under quietly -- in homeless encampments, oppressive homeless shelters, and largely callous law enforcement apparatus and self-serving Prison Industrial Complex.

“If it were not for Zachary Project's continuous support I too would have fell, anew, under swot [sic] of capitalism and its culture of merciless meritocratic-materialism. The Zachary Project continues to assuage physical and mental needs of Americans let down by organs of government who are shamelessly at home in disavowing themselves from blatant immorality of neglecting Americans in dire need.”

About The Zachary Project

The Zachary Project is a mutual aid crisis support and prevention fund, maintained by Critical Resistance Oakland.

The fund has helped Critical Resistance (CR) members and friends to access vital and stabilizing resources in times of mental health crisis, chronic illness, interpersonal violence, and economic instability. Since 2015 we have supported people to secure housing upon return from prison, after a fire, and during domestic violence; to cover income after loss of employment; to buy medications and substance treatment during health insurance and income lapses; to name a few. The Zachary Project enables us to sustain our community through hardship and crises.

In January 2015 Critical Resistance lost a beloved member of our Oakland chapter, Zachary Ontiveros. Zachary was a core member of CR, bringing in new members to the organization and anchoring the editorial board of our newspaper, *The Abolitionist*. Zachary’s aunt, Patricia Porter Salazar, and his cousins, Lindsey Adams, Brooke Salazar, and Aaron Salazar joined forces to establish *The Zachary Project* in 2015. His commitment to fighting for working class power and international liberation is an inspiration to us and will be missed, even as we remember him every day. We hope you will join us in honoring Zachary’s life, legacy and commitment to the movement.

Learn more and support: <http://criticalresistance.org/donate/the-zachary-project/>