

# The Zachary Project: 2022-2023 Newsletter


A Project of Critical Resistance Oakland



In 2022, The Zachary Project supported community members with rent and living expenses, and was there to help people meet their physical and mental health needs. From commute costs, to medical bills, and more, we resourced organizers, friends of Critical Resistance, and folks returning home from imprisonment.

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January 26, 2023

## Dear Community Keepers of The Zachary Project,

2022 marked seven years of mutual aid through **Critical Resistance (CR) Oakland's Zachary Project, a community fund named in honor of beloved former Oakland chapter member, Zachary Ontiveros, to support community members in need.** In one of our largest years to date, we were able to distribute resources to help our people get through difficult periods, or when they just needed that extra help so they could show up as their full selves. All of this was possible through the continued support of this growing community – thank you!

Zachary's birthday is on January 26, so each year around this time we like to look back on the ways his legacy and spirit of mutual aid and community self-sufficiency have been carried on to benefit so many. We invite long-time supporters and new friends alike to sustain this work for years to come.

### In 2022:

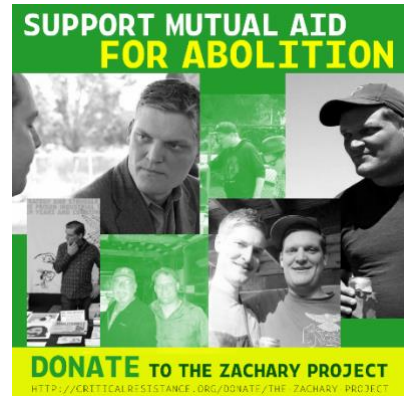
- Twenty people received support from The Zachary Project, ranging from \$500-\$1,000
- We distributed \$11,000
- We fundraised / YOU gifted \$7,300
  - 32 donors total: Contributions came from loved ones, friends, some of CR's organizational partners, and people who have accessed the fund in previous years.
  - There were 14 monthly sustainers and 19 one-time gifts
- We onboarded three new members to our Zachary Project Committee: CR's Operations Coordinator and new Development Director, as well as another CR Oakland member to make the committee half paid members and half volunteer members.
- Redesigned our application process to make it quicker, more accessible and streamlined for applicants and for our committee to process

### In 2023:

- We have over \$6,000 in the fund at the start of 2023
- We have 9 monthly sustainers, contributing a total of \$280 a month
- We are committed to continuing to move money to our people in 2023.
- We hope to raise \$6,000+ this year, which would mean we have \$12,000 available for crisis prevention.

- We will continue to collaborate closely with [The Abolitionist newspaper](#) (a project to which Zachary lent his strong editorial guidance to strengthen our inside/outside organizing), so that people who were imprisoned subscribers of the newspaper can access these funds.

Toward the year ahead: Your incredible gifts in 2022 sustained a year of many requests. We hope to sustain our broader outreach about the fund so people continue to utilize it. Therefore, we must replenish the fund after a big year of mutual aid (\$11,000 in 2022) and do some fundraising together.



**We invite everyone who has touched The Zachary Project to pitch in.** If you received support funds, we invite you to give forward and help out the next person. If you have donated before, please donate again and invite someone to join you. If you can become a monthly or quarterly sustainer at \$15 or more, please do. Humbly, we ask you to keep supporting the fund through whatever means you can: a financial gift, a monthly commitment, or an invitation to your networks to donate (see the outreach tools, pages 4-5).

Thank you so much! We are honored to grow this resource with you. You are welcome to share this newsletter and let friends of CR Oakland know about the existence of this fund for our movement. You can access the [request form HERE](#). [Every gift](#) helps grow this resource and our mutual aid practices. This month can be emotional for those of us who knew and loved Zachary. We send you love, and hope you cherish the memories; they are some of our greatest gifts. We know we are thankful for them.

In solidarity,  
The Zachary Project committee, Critical Resistance



## More 2022 Updates from Zachary's chapter: CR Oakland

2022 was a dynamic year for prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition, and CR Oakland took action to push the movement to free people from cages forward. A 2022 year-in-review for CR Oakland can be found [here](#), and we thought we'd share some updates and reflections for our Bay Area supporters of Zachary's home chapter of CR Oakland.

- Along with valued coalition partners, CR Oakland and CR Los Angeles have been engaged in the legislative, outreach, [media](#), and inside/outside organizing efforts to [close 10 California prisons by 2025](#).
- CR Oakland has a Membership workgroup dedicated to the critical internal work of organizing our volunteers and membership, and this workgroup has developed more structure and resources for member onboarding and support. The Zachary Project is one of the resources available to our dedicated members.
- Lastly, CR Oakland's Inside-Outside workgroup maintains the organization's sprawling mail correspondence program to respond to people inside cages. In 2022, they hosted virtual and in-person mail days each month that engaged our Oakland community and helped us stay on top of our inside/outside relationships, including those that bolster our organizing in the California prison closure campaign.
- Zachary was a vital part of Critical Resistance's work, helping bring new members into the organization and anchoring editorial oversight of [The Abolitionist newspaper](#). In the spirit of mutual aid and prisoner solidarity, we invite you check out the "[sneak peek](#)" of Issue 38: "Labor Struggles & PIC Abolition." Every paid subscription to the newspaper sponsors imprisoned readers' free access to the paper. As Zachary would say, "the paper is never free" because he knew that people outside cages had to give what they could for people inside. You can sign up for a subscription or **check out past issues** [here](#).



## Testimonies from 2022 Recipients of The Zachary Project

“

*Your fund helped me pay rent and other bills. I am a single parent with a 9-year-old and 5-year-old. Given the inflation and other factors, it's hard for me to make ends meet. Zachary's fund helped me not worry about rent.”*

“

*I'm grateful to The Zachary Project for helping me out with the funds I needed to start culinary arts school last semester at Laney college. The funds helped me get the uniform and supplies I needed for the class because I didn't qualify for financial aid because of not having a GED. Without those funds from the Zachary Project, I wouldn't have been able to finish my first semester in a college ever, and I passed the class. Starting a new semester with a job too so thanks Zachary Project for stepping up when no other would. I'm truly grateful.”*

“

*The Zachary Project fund and CR members saved my life from going in the continuous spiral it had been in from being without stability and uncertainty with housing and resources. CR told me about the Zachary Project and encouraged me to apply for housing assistance and resources that made a difference in my daily life. No one should have to stress like that, and I believe when there are more folks out in the world who can provide resources and assistance through honorable means, they should fund and facilitate with all organizations to build greater community.*

*I was able to change my life because of CR and the Zachary Project by being granted stability by my comrades and cohorts with the organization. Thank you for the blessings brought and continually given.”*

## A Note from Margaret Ontiveros, Zachary's Mother

“The price of great love is grief.”

~Jill Koehler

*Today, on my son's birthday, my memory takes me back to the day of his death as well as to his life. Shortly after he died, my sister-in-law, Louise Ontiveros, shared what she treasured most about Zachary, “**He was always here.**” And he was; here to celebrate, here to help, here to make us laugh, here to make us think, here to stand for justice, here to question, here to listen, here to support, and here to make a difference. My friend, Cris Maxwell, recently recalled, “Everyone loved Zachary.”*

*As the years have passed, I have learned lessons from my devastating grief. The peace that surpasses understanding increases with time, yet is not yet constant. Although my shattered heart has mended with the supportive, nonjudgmental love of family and dear friends, the ragged seams remain. What I do, how I spend my time is important, who I reach out to matters. I can't coast with privilege. And, most importantly, I've learned to find Zachary in rituals and markers.*

*Visiting his headstone, stopping at “Zachary's tree,” where some of his ashes are spread, randomly hearing Somebody to Lean On, sitting on his bench, holding my precious grandchild, Yarrow Zachary, and beginning each day looking at the predawn sky to feel my son clustered in the constellations remind me that Zachary is **still** always here, and that everyone **still** loves him.*

## How To Support The Zachary Project

The Zachary Project is maintained through individual grassroots donations and family gifts. To support this crisis prevention fund, you can make a gift online:

[donatenow.networkforgood.org/criticalresistance](https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/criticalresistance)

- Under Program Designation, make sure to **select “The Zachary Project.”**

### **We also accept checks and cash.**

Please send checks, payable to "Critical Resistance" to:

Critical Resistance, attn: Zachary Project, P.O. Box. 22780, Oakland, CA 94609-2301

If you have questions about The Zachary Project or would like to request support, contact [croakland@criticalresistance.org](mailto:croakland@criticalresistance.org), fill out the [request form here](#), or call 510-444-0484

## Outreach Materials: Social Media Tiles

Below is our first set of social media tiles, made for the “Mutual Aid Monday” fundraiser in spring 2020. As we receive more photos from recipients, we look forward to incorporating varied images representing a range of people touched by The Zachary Project.



The outreach materials are available for viewing and download [here](#).

Please let us know if you would like to help spread the word about The Zachary Project. Email [shirley@criticalresistance.org](mailto:shirley@criticalresistance.org) and [liz@criticalresistance.org](mailto:liz@criticalresistance.org) with questions, ideas, or opportunities. Thank you for supporting us support our people.