

The Zachary Project:

2024-2025 Newsletter



In 2024, The Zachary Project supported community members and comrades of Critical Resistance Oakland (CROak) with rent and living expenses, was there to help people meet mental health needs, and helped people weather unexpected moments of crisis. From living expenses, to medical bills, and more, we resourced organizers and friends of Critical Resistance (CR) suddenly unemployed or coming home from prison.



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DEAR COMMUNITY KEEPERS OF THE ZACHARY PROJECT,

2024 marked nine years of mutual aid through CROak's Zachary Project, a community fund named in honor of beloved former Oakland chapter member, Zachary Ontiveros, to support CR members and community organizer comrades of the Oakland chapter. This year, we were able to distribute resources to help our people get through unexpected life changes, weather conditions of repression and climate disaster, have an extra boost in resources after getting out of prison, or when they just needed some 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 the end of January or early February we like to look back on the ways his legacy and spirit of mutual aid and radical care have been carried on to benefit countless others. We invite long-time supporters and new friends alike to sustain this work for years to come.

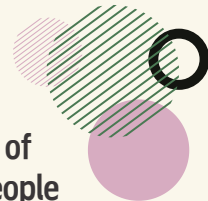


In 2024

- **Twenty people received support** from The Zachary Project, ranging from \$500-\$1,000
- **We distributed \$10,000 to organizers and community members** in our movement ecosystem
- **We fundraised / YOU gifted over \$7,000**
 - 29 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 21 monthly sustainers and 16 one-time gifts

In 2025

- We have **12 monthly sustainers**, contributing a total of \$170 a month.
- We are committed to **continuing to move money to our people in 2025**.
- We hope to **raise \$10,000+** this year to have funds readily available for crisis prevention.



TOWARD THE YEAR AHEAD, your incredible gifts in 2024 sustained a year of many requests! We hope to sustain broader outreach for fundraising for the fund so that people continue to utilize it and we can meet more community members' needs. Therefore, **we must replenish the fund after a big year of mutual aid** (\$10,000 in 2024) 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 and help 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 9-10).

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 Bay Area community. You can **access the request form on CR's website or scan the QR code below**. Every gift helps grow this resource and our mutual aid practices.

As this time of year can be emotional for those of us who knew and loved Zachary, we send everyone who knew him love, and we hope you cherish the memories; they are some of his greatest gifts. CR is eternally grateful for them. Please don't hesitate to connect with us—we would love to keep in touch with you throughout this new year.

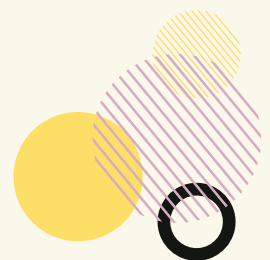
In solidarity,

- The Zachary Project Committee

Critical Resistance



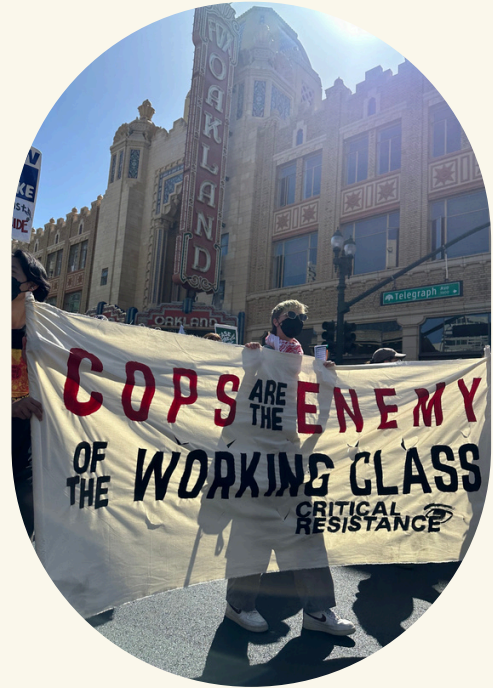
Scan me



<http://criticalresistance.org/the-zachary-project>

What else has CR Oakland been up to?

2024 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.



FIGHTING TO CLOSE PRISONS STATEWIDE!

Along with valued coalition partners, CR Oakland & CR Los Angeles have continued to team up in the legislative, outreach, media, and inside-outside organizing efforts to close at least 10 prisons in California. The Close California Prisons campaign with Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) has shut four prisons down already and compelled a \$750 million cut to California's corrections budget (the first reduction in years).

BUILDING POWER & SOLIDARITY ACROSS WALLS

CR Oakland's Inside-Outside workgroup support the organization's national mail correspondence program to respond to people inside cages. Helping CA Prison Closure campaign organizers communicate with folks in prisons across California ensures a continuous conversation about campaign demands and strategies across walls & cages. CROak members and Bay Area volunteers also correspond with thousands of imprisoned people across the US, sharing resources, information, and engaging in political dialogue.

2024

[Read More](#)

CR Oakland has also been strengthening organizing relationships with key movement partners. In 2024, CR members in the Bay Area supported different Palestinian liberation formations, mobilizations and events, contributed to campaign development for healthcare workers, and more.



CARRYING ON ZACHARY'S LEGACY

Zachary was a vital part of Critical Resistance's work, helping bring new members into the organization and steadying editorial leadership of The Abolitionist Newspaper all as a volunteer member. A fierce anti-capitalist, we know if Zachary were still a CROak member, he would be marching in the streets right alongside us, and hustling to redistribute what resources we can to our community members in need during these trying times of converging crises and urgency.

In the spirit of mutual aid and prisoner solidarity, we invite you check out the sneak peeks of Issue 42 on Anti-War Organizing on CR's website. Every paid subscription to the newspaper sponsors imprisoned readers' free access to the paper. As Zachary would say, "the paper is never free for people outside," because he knew that people not in cages have to give what they can to move in joint struggle and support people locked up to access outside movements, political education materials, and organizing resources. You can sign up for a subscription or check out past issues on CR's website: criticalresistance.org/abolitionist.

In a time of political upheaval and increased repression of our movements, CR Oakland has grown in size and might, and we hope to continue to get even stronger so that we can be in our best fighting form for the years ahead.



Testimonies

From Zachary's Parents: *Paul & Margaret Ontiveros*

Reflections on January 26, 2025

"Only in the darkness can you see the stars."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ten years ago, we were deeply immersed in the darkness of grief. Our son had died by suicide. We quickly became engulfed by the loving support of family, friends, and community. A deep belonging blanketed us, and the fleeting peace that surpasses understanding ever so gradually lit the dark sky.

We continue to search the dawn for the morning star. We dare to hope and resolve to work for a more just and peaceful world for our children and grandchildren. With tear filled eyes, we listen to Zachary's song Lean on Me, and remember how committed he was to inviting others to lean on him when they were not strong or needed a friend.

We are very grateful for loved ones, as well as strangers, who ascribe to our son's belief in the boundless worth and intrinsic decency of all people and continue to keep our son alive through the Zachary Project.

*"A man is not dead
while his name is still spoken."*

-Terry Pratchett



FEBRUARY 2025

From Zachary Project 2024 Recipients:

"Being fiercely independent, it has been difficult to accept help - even when I needed it. The Zachary Project has shown me that allowing your community to be witness to each other's shared struggles with open hearts, understanding and compassion is love in action - and it goes both ways. Thank you for loving me up. Here is a mandala made from recycled materials I use in my daily life. I hope to make more mandalas under the name "Not a throwaway" to raise money for California Political Prisoners, with a focus on Elder New Afrikan PPs."



" I am Truly Grateful to the Zachary Project for helping me out in my time of need. By me being a Hood Food Pop Up/Caterer, I buy, cook, and prepare food for the Hood and other organizations. Well, last year, my car broke down, and I was unable to do anything. I decided to reach out to CR, and see if I can get some help to get my vehicle fixed and they helped me. I got the rest of the funds needed to get it done, and back to feeding the people, so without the ZP, I would not be thriving again and feeling lost. Thanks Forever!!!"

"I am extremely grateful for the financial support I received from CR's Zachary Project. It supported me during an uncertain time due to employment loss and allowed me to continue to organize instead of having to drop it or pause it to pick up extra work."

*Pictured right: a graphic this recipient made in their organizing work



"The support I received from The Zachary Project came at a time when I felt like I was drowning. No matter how hard I hustled, I kept hitting wall after wall, struggling to make ends meet. Their funding helped me cover essentials I couldn't manage on my own, giving me not only relief but also a renewed sense of hope during one of the harder times in my life. I'm forever grateful -thank you for helping me get my head above water!"

I've spent the past 10 years fighting for people impacted by incarceration, but when I lost my job, I found myself in the hardest financial position I've ever been in. As an advocate, I'm used to being the one finding resources for other—so when I needed help myself, I wasn't sure where to turn.

A friend told me about the Zachary Project, and when I reached out, CR met me with nothing but kindness and urgency. I truly don't know how I would have paid my rent without their support. They stepped in during a moment of deep uncertainty and helped stabilize me when I needed it most.

The Zachary Project is an example of real solidarity in action, making sure that those of us doing this work aren't left struggling alone. I'm beyond grateful, and I hope others will support this fund so it can continue helping more people in times of crisis."



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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: criticalresistance.org/donate



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,
PO Box 22780,
Oakland CA 94609-2301

If you have questions about The Zachary Project or would like to request support, [fill out the request form on our website](#), or scan the QR code.



Scan me

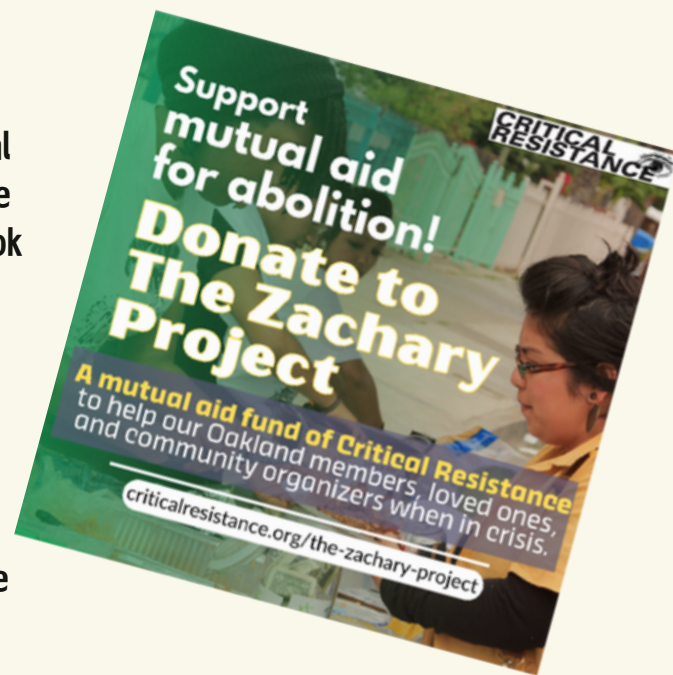
Outreach Materials

We also have some longstanding and more recent social media tiles to encourage folks to donate to replenish the fund. 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 and liz@criticalresistance.org with questions, ideas, or opportunities.



Thank you for helping us support our people!