

Overview

Founded in 2014, the Organization for Human Rights and Democracy (OHRD) (formerly, the Atlanta Public Sector Alliance) engages in multi-issue, grassroots, radical, and intersectional human rights organizing to transform communities and the world using Metro-Atlanta as the model.

Mission

“We are guided by the lived experiences, the activism, and the knowledge of Black feminists and women of color. We prioritize working-class people of color and the conditions they experience to build movements and an institution for change. Using education and action, we address deeply rooted matters of gender, disability, economic, racial, and environmental justice driven by political independence and human rights principles. OHRD articulates a new vision for how Metro-Atlanta and the world will realize, protect, and expand our human rights. We empower our members to become leaders armed with political analysis and a personal/political approach to building power for comprehensive and holistic liberation.”

– OHRD website



Constituency

- Black, Asian & Pacific Islander, Native American, Arab/Middle Eastern, White
- All Ages
- LGBTQ
- Disabled
- Immigrants & Undocumented
- Formerly Incarcerated

Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in Atlanta

Privatization of Public Resources

Which negatively impacts transportation, schools, jobs, housing, etc.

Lack of Affordable & Safe Childcare

Including varying quality pre-K, with issues such as “fly by night” daycares, toddler deaths, rigid/restricted curriculum for state-mandated programs, etc.¹

Lack of Access to Affordable, Healthy Food

Primarily in Atlanta’s historically Black neighborhoods and schools.

Safety Concerns Related to Transportation Infrastructure and Schools

“[Atlanta’s transportation system is] historically rooted in racism, [which is] why it doesn’t have robust transportation and...what exists doesn’t go beyond a certain boundary. So in the last couple years there’s been several accidents with people having to cross major highways to access bus stations, or bus stops not being in particular locations...Another thing that’s happened as well around safety is the moving of schools or shutting some schools down. So kids having to find other means to get to school or being pushed out of certain neighborhoods.”

Lack of Quality Education

Including concerns about policing, security, etc.

“...they are literally cleansing the environment of the ‘undesirables’. It’s happened with the dismantling of the housing community, it’s happening now because once you push the people out of the city, they’re now saying well we don’t have enough people to keep certain schools open so we need to close those schools, so they’re also being pushed to the periphery of the metro area, back into the suburbs... having longer commutes or no access into the city where folks have to work ...[many] working class and middle class families in Atlanta are in the public sector in terms of jobs.”

—Yolande Tomlinson, Director of Education and Applied Intersectionality

Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

Food Cooperative

The cooperative pools money to buy healthy food in bulk from international markets, local black farmers, and local community garden/urban micro-farmers

“We believe that although...you don’t get 5 year olds contributing money, [the food co-op] directly impacts them, what goes into the home, and what goes into their bodies.”

School Cooperative

A cooperative ownership model, based on an “un-schooling” curriculum pedagogical model that is learner-directed and self-directed; and rooted in intersectional politics.

www.learningandliberation.org

“[Other schools were] too pricey, but also really unhealthy mentally for them to be in those spaces. My daughter, for example, would make up excuses not to be in school and she was 5. And so for me it was— something has to be going on in her environment for her not to want to be there... We believe that children of all ages, any age, know what they want to learn and how best they want to learn, and that’s the best way to inspire a passion for learning, and learning at any age.”



Community Defined “Best Practices” to Improve Childhood Health

- **Combined strategy** (political education, base-building, organizing) that catalyzes people into movements

“[Our best practices include] a combination of political education and community base building and organizing. That’s something that lasts even after a particular policy fight or local issue, or things have been stopped, because if you are able to change people’s understanding of the problem, they don’t need you once they gain that understanding.”

- **Disrupt, Dismantle, and Divest** from current system and build alternative institutions through cooperative democratic structures

“[We look] at the broader systemic issues, and when you change systems and institutions, everybody is carried along on that change...particularly when you’re talking about impacting mothers, and black and brown mothers specifically, we come as a part of a network, we’re embedded in systems and networks, so if we are [prioritized], so are the people we’re responsible for [and connected to]. So poor folk, women, children, we’re embedded in networks, because we can’t survive without them.”

OHRD Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety

- As a new organization, OHRD is focused on long-term community building and political education to generate active participation and commitment among members.
- We have established 2 cooperatives that are in operation (West Atlanta Food Cooperative & Anna Julia Learning and Liberation Center – launched September 2017).

Key Indicators of Childhood Health in Atlanta



DeKalb and Fulton Counties had some of the highest **asthma** ER visit rates among children 0-17 in 2012. Statewide, asthma prevalence was higher among Black children (15.6%) than among White children (8.2%).⁵

15.1%

of low-income preschoolers in Fulton County were **obese**.³



In DeKalb County, there were only 1.8 grocery stores but 9.8 fast-food restaurants per 10,000 people.²



Motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for children ages 5-9, and the 3rd leading cause for children ages 1-4 in DeKalb County.⁴

Allies/Partnerships Working on Children's Health

- Community Movement Builders – Atlanta, GA <http://www.communitymovementbuilders.org/>
- Southerners on New Ground – Atlanta, GA <http://southernersonnewground.org/>
- Black Lives Matter Greater Atlanta Inc. – Atlanta, GA <http://www.blacklivesmattergreateratlanta.com/>
- National Domestic Workers – Atlanta Chapter <https://www.2016.domesticworkers.org/atlanta>
- Malcolm X Grassroots Movement – Atlanta Chapter <https://mxgm.org/contact-us/atlanta/>
- Cooperation Jackson – Jackson MS <http://www.cooperationjackson.org/>



Website: <http://www.ohrdemocracy.org/>

Address: 790 Welch St SW, Atlanta, GA 30310

Telephone: 404-855-6584

Email: info@ohrdemocracy.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OHRDemocracy>

Twitter: @OHRDemo

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ohrdemocracy/>

Instagram: @ohrdemo

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCauXANrZM5re3ruFxaeOdYA>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/OHRDemocracy/>

LMU | LA
Psychology Applied
Research Center

Loyola Marymount University



the praxis project

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