

CTCAV NEWSLETTER CONTENT and FORMAT

Welcome to the last Cancel the Contract Newsletter of the year. We want to open today with our condolences and prayers and blessings for the family of 27-year-old Niani Finlayson who was killed by Sheriff deputies in her home in front of her child, after calling 911 for help.



On Thursday, December 4th, CTC held a candlelight vigil and [press conference](#) outside the building where Niani was murdered. We were joined by BLMLA, many AV activists, as well as Niani's 9 year old daughter, her mother Tracie, and other family members. They shared stories about Niani and we all called for justice on her behalf, saying her name.



We invite you to donate any amount to the [GoFundMe to support Niani's](#) family in funeral costs and care for her children, who will now spend Christmas without their mother.





We are calling for an independent investigation by the OIG, the FBI and the DOJ, and for the firing and prosecution of Deputy Ty Shelton. Our job as community doesn't end here. We must see to it that justice is served. We have pre-drafted an email, link in our bio and stories, to the Department of Justice (DOJ) demanding that they and the FBI conduct an independent investigation on this incident.

Read about the 4 CTC Committees below and decide which one to join as one of your New Year's Resolutions :), catch up on CTC's Thanksgiving Teach In and Boycott of WinCo Foods for racist policies and staff, see our CTC Top Ten Year in Review Slides, and read the reports on student experiences with SRDs by the County of Los Angeles' Human Relations Commission.

The next CTC Coalition Meeting will be **Monday January 29, 2024 at 6pm** in person at the CTC Offices. Please mark your calendar and see our January newsletter for registration links.

Cancel the Contract Committees

CTCAV advances its work through 4 Committees chaired by the Steering Committee and Staff and open to all Coalition Members. Please read about the Committee work below and contact info@ctcav.org to join one.



Education Justice Committee

Chaired by: Raquel Derfler

Meets: The last Wednesday of each month at 6pm at CTC's office located at 44738 Sierra Highway Lancaster, CA

Addresses: School Security Contracts with LASD and deputy conduct on campus; leads the work on the AVUHSD Discipline Discrimination Lawsuit; works with the County Board of Supervisors on school safety and school climate issues; identifies and shares student data and related reports; takes positions and provides testimony on education related state legislation.



2023 Summary: (READ MORE)

This year we continued in our work as advocates for students as we focused on disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline that affects so many of our youth here in the Antelope Valley. Those efforts occurred on the local level and County level. We were there each month at the AVUHSD Board of Trustee Meeting to give public comments, as well as meetings of the Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission and Probation Oversight Commission to share the issues impacting our students with a wider audience. County officials took note, and in April of this year the Office of Inspector General authored a [report](#) on the racial bias shown by School Resource Deputies towards our Black Students and The Los Angeles Human Relations

Commission spent a week at CTC's office interviewing students about their interactions and feelings around School Resource Deputies and produced a [two-part](#) report of those [narratives](#). Finally, the most significant event to occur this year as a result of our work, was the [lawsuit](#) we filed against AVUHSD on May 24 for its discrimination in discipline against its Black students and Students With Disabilities. This legal action was the only option left to us after our repeated attempts to engage with the District. In addition, we released a 420 page [report](#) authored by educational expert Dr. Jaime Hernandez that found pervasive disability discrimination and race discrimination occurring throughout Antelope Valley Union High School District (AVUHSD) towards students with disabilities. The trial begins February 2, 2024, and we will post updates in our newsletters and on our socials.



Criminal Justice Accountability Committee

Chaired by: Raycine Ector in 2023 (currently open co-chair role available)

Meets: 3rd Monday of the month at 1pm online

Addresses: Tracks DOJ Monitoring Team reports and 2015 AV Settlement Agreement Compliance, tracks meetings and provides testimony to the LA County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission; takes positions and provides testimony on criminal justice related state legislation; provides rapid response support to sheriff excessive force incidents in the AV and tracks deputy gang activity.

2023 Summary: (READ MORE)

In 2023 we were excited to relaunch the Criminal Justice Accountability Committee under the leadership of Raycine Ector. Much of the CJ Cmte's time was spent in rapid response to numerous incidents of LASD harassment and excessive force, where CTC secured legal representation, provided other services to the victims, and organized protests and press conferences, as in the case of [the WinCo Foods incident](#). In our monthly meetings we reviewed and took positions on important CJ legislation moving through Sacramento, [like AB 93](#), which would have prohibited the police practice of escalating stops by pursuing intrusive searches when there is no evidence of a public safety threat, as well as advocated for local CJ reforms, [like supporting LA County's move to a zero bail policy](#). We [analyzed the 16th Monitoring Team Report for the 2015 AV Settlement Agreement](#), finding that, after 8 years of DOJ monitoring, LASD is still out of compliance on the vast majority of metrics. We sent [letters to all Parties](#) with our concerns about whether the new Lancaster Police Department is accountable to the Settlement Agreement and called for an immediate 'Return to Court' to put some teeth into DOJ oversight, you can [read all of the letters here](#). We also launched [ReportPoliceBrutalityAV.com](#), a one stop shop for any redients who feel their rights have been violated by law enforcement to file complaints and get legal help.



Community Wellness Committee

Co-chaired by: Waunette Cullors and Cortez Chandler

Meets: as needed

Addresses: Provides health and wellness activities for the community, hosts Community Convenings (Movie Nights, Latinx Night, Black History Month, etc); and provides Impacted Family Support after sheriff use of force incidents (linkages to services: legal, housing, mental health, reentry).





2023 Summary: (READ MORE)

The CTC Wellness Committee was able to provide safe housing, legal representation, linkages to services and clothing for families this year that were victims of the LA County Sheriff. CTC provided holistic healing to families impacted by law enforcement in schools and communities. Additionally, events, meals, legal, youth activities, and mental health resources were provided to the greater community. For Black History month CTC served soup on Wellness Wednesday for over 200 community members. In March we hosted a wellness clinic with a variety of healers, food, music and community resources free to the community. We continue to provide a space of Hope with creative activities such as art classes, movies nites, games, karaoke and tools to help with selfcare, holistic and wellness treatment. CTC is seeking local healers or anyone wanting to join our team to bring healing to the community please don't hesitate to join our cause. In the New Year look for our dance team, weekly youth activities and May Calmcella a Wellness Festival with healers, drums, music, food and garden demo's.



Alternatives to Policing Committee

Co-chaired by: Lynde Williams and Cristina Ocampos

Meets: First Wednesday of every month 1pm online

Addresses: Developing clear alternatives to over policing and creating long term and structural change through approaches like the PACE program where Black and Brown neighborhoods are free from harm, local neighborhoods are resilient, and small businesses succeed.

2023 Summary: (READ MORE)

Steering Committee Member Lynde Williams worked to get our coalition partners [Neighborhood Defender Service](#) up to speed on everything happening in the AV related to policing, developments in the new [Lancaster Police Department](#), the newly appointed LASD Lancaster station captains, the most recent deputy-involved shooting, and more. We've been looking at city budget allocations to find areas where funds can be redirected to help the community like youth programs, parks, & social service, looking at existing law enforcement practices in the AV, and discussing alternatives to traditional policing and/or workarounds to shape the new force into a more community-based model. The [PACE team](#) has been working on a revised drone policy to better protect residents' Constitutional rights and privacy and have been brainstorming a community event centered around the topic, like a "Know Your Rights" informational session on surveillance and privacy rights for residents of the AV. We've also been exploring restorative justice methods like Truth & Reconciliation to facilitate dialogue, accountability, and healing amongst community members and law enforcement, as well as looking into bringing in specialists to host a fear/trauma remediation event centered around healing breathwork for activists and those affected by racism & police violence. We look forward to continuing this work in the new year.

Reflections on Recent Events



Boycott WinCo Foods - Thanksgiving Protest and Teach In

In November, CTC came back at WinCo in Lancaster, advocating for community and holding WinCo accountable for their egregious treatment of their customers. WinCo has yet to acknowledge their need for new de-escalation policies and the harm they have caused to the community with how they handled Jacey Houseton in July. We hope you are still standing with us in our Boycott against WinCo.

Demands

1. WinCo respects black and brown dollars.
2. WinCo stops criminalizing their customers.
3. WinCo prioritizes deescalating store issues instead of escalating them to law enforcement.

Are you shopping at WinCo where they have a history of criminalizing black people and escalating issues instead of defusing situations? Boycott WinCo and shop where not only your dollars are respected but YOU ARE RESPECTED.



Reports and Information

This past summer, the County of Los Angeles' Human Relations Commission spent a week at CTC's offices to meet with AV students and their parents to discuss their experiences with School Resource Deputies.

“ Ok. My experience with them, the deputy and the school district. It's Deputy [LASD SCHOOL RESOURCE DEPUTY] who beat my son. My son was punched 121 times, according to their supplement report. [LASD SCHOOL RESOURCE DEPUTY] came in with the last 14 punches. And now, a year after my son's beating, I find that [LASD SCHOOL RESOURCE DEPUTY] is the deputy at my daughter's high school.”

[Read Part 1 of report here](#)

[Read Part 2 of report here](#)

Closing Section

We are wishing each of you a restful and peaceful holiday season. Please share this newsletter with your networks and follow us on socials. We hope to see you in the new year, and please reach out with any concerns.

Yours in CommUNITY,

The CTCAV Team

For January newsletter

- New steering cmte members
- January meetings

For a future Newsletter or website:

Discrimination in Discipline Town Hall November 15

CTC and Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County hosted a town hall to discuss the results of a [two-year investigation into the Antelope Valley Union High School District](#) that resulted in CTC suing the Antelope Valley Union High School District for discrimination in discipline against its Black students and Students with Disabilities. That data was the basis of a report authored by Dr. Jaimie Hernandez. The town hall focused on the report's section devoted to Law Enforcement and Probation Referrals, Campus Security Officers (CSO), and the use of Restraints and Searches. Highlights from the presentation : Black students show the highest risk of law enforcement referrals for all nondisabled students, Black SWDs make up over 61% of all law enforcement referrals, AVUHSD relies heavily on CSO for student discipline, restraints, and managing the Student Support Center, and on-campus detention room. Students shared that handcuffing and searches of students by CSO was a daily occurrence. CTC will continue to educate the broader community about AVUHSD's lawsuit through its town halls. The community education is vital as all current and future AVUHSD students will benefit from the systemic change the lawsuit is seeking to bring about.

[Read report](#)