

Commons Archive

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE // SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

HEAR/HERE COMMUNITY BILLBOARD TRUCK CONNECTS NEIGHBORS IN NORTH OAKLAND, CA

Listen up, and look out for HEAR/HERE! - the brightest, cutest, custom EV truck on the streets of North Oakland!

No matter where we find ourselves, we are each a neighbor to other people. However, living in the same place doesn't mean we know how to live together, and our recent collective experience through a global pandemic was acutely challenging. Existing underlying community tensions are exacerbated through necessary social distancing, fear, and distrust. As we emerge to rebuild a sense of what we once knew, how do we create better support systems for our neighborhoods?



It was during this time of COVID-induced isolation when Commons Archive, a creative, grassroots, inter-connective, neighborhood memory project based in North Oakland, recognized the emergent need for a reparative process. To nurture neighborhood empowerment, the Commons Archive team has developed their latest initiative - the 'HEAR/HERE Community Billboard Truck'.

The HEAR/HERE truck is a vintage, custom-built EV vehicle equipped with a large format digital screen, a sound system and an eye-catching static display board. Designed for neighbors to listen and gather stories, share memories, and promote local community gatherings, the truck encourages neighbor interaction and understanding. Black youth activists drive the truck, engaging neighbors with questions around belonging.

In early June 2022, the HEAR/HERE Community Billboard was launched and introduced to neighborhood groups at the Oakland Public Library, in an event hosted by Dr. Saturu Ned of the Black Panther Party Alumni Legacy Network (BPPALN). The launch celebration screened long-time neighbor stories filmed by youth media group Hidden Gem Project, and featured a neighborhood panel with opportunities for community members to share their reflections, gains and losses through the years of COVID seclusion.

Since the launch, HEAR/HERE tours North Oakland blocks on a weekly basis, bringing neighbors out of their homes in curious joy to learn about upcoming local events, resources, and most importantly, interact and connect with one another. The Community Billboard truck has been part of many community events - from the Juneteenth celebration hosted by the West Oakland Cultural Action Network (WOCAN), to neighborhood potlucks, free food drives by the Self-Help Hunger Program, gatherings at local schools and cafés, and block parties such as the National Night Out for Safety and Liberation in collaboration with Neighbors for Racial Justice (N4RJ).

Commons Archive's recently revamped website is updated regularly with handwritten thoughts shared by neighbors, in hopes that their messages are heard, amplified, and ideas are manifested into positive action. The upcoming events calendar is accessible via the website, along with a participation form for North Oakland neighbors to host the truck at their event or block.

For more information about the HEAR/HERE Community Billboard project, contact Sue Mark, Director, Commons Archive - info@commonsarchive.net or visit <http://commonsarchive.net>

The HEAR/HERE Community Billboard was made possible by the generosity by Kenneth Rainin Foundation, with support by local partners Kala Art Institute, Black Panther Party Alumni Legacy Network (BPPALN), AP2TP Collective, Neighbors for Racial Justice (N4RJ), HipHopTV, and Design for Belonging.