8 PRINCIPLES

BLACK WOMEN'S LENS

FOR COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A

THE HOLY TRINITY: TRUST, HONESTY, RESPECT

COMMUNITY VISION

HEALING

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EQUITABLE LEADERSHIP

A SHARED LEGACY

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Richmond LAND

INTRODUCTION

These principles are created by Black mothers from Richmond who, through our experiences, saw a need to develop principles, actions and measurements that can empower all people that have been excluded from the development and planning work that shapes where we live. These principles are meant to bring a Black Feminist lens to the process of Community Development and are informed by our work to create safe Black spaces.

This is a love letter for Black women who deserve recognition for their role in the community. These principles should help allies to take concrete action to support Black women in Community Development.

Black Feminist thought calls upon EVERYONE to intentionally practice principles that dismantle the interlocking oppressions of marginalized communities in our world. Anti-Blackness remains the foundation for many interlocking oppressions. We all must intentionally resist anti-Blackness if we want to ever know the true meaning of equity and fairness. Targeted universalism embodies the inclusive theory and practice of Black Feminist thought that if all poor Black women are free, then we would ALL be free.

These are principles that Richmond LAND works to put into practice in our community development efforts, and our goal is that they are applied across communities and projects.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The principles were developed by Building Power Fellows Kapris James and Jennifer Rougeau with support from Fellowship coordinators Sasha Graham and Evan Bissell. The Building Power Fellowship is a program of Richmond LAND that supports Richmond area residents to design community development and housing projects that serve low-income residents of color. The fellows also develop arts and cultural projects that reflect low-income communities of color's right to live stably and affordably in West Contra Costa. To learn more about Richmond LAND, please visit www.richmondland.org

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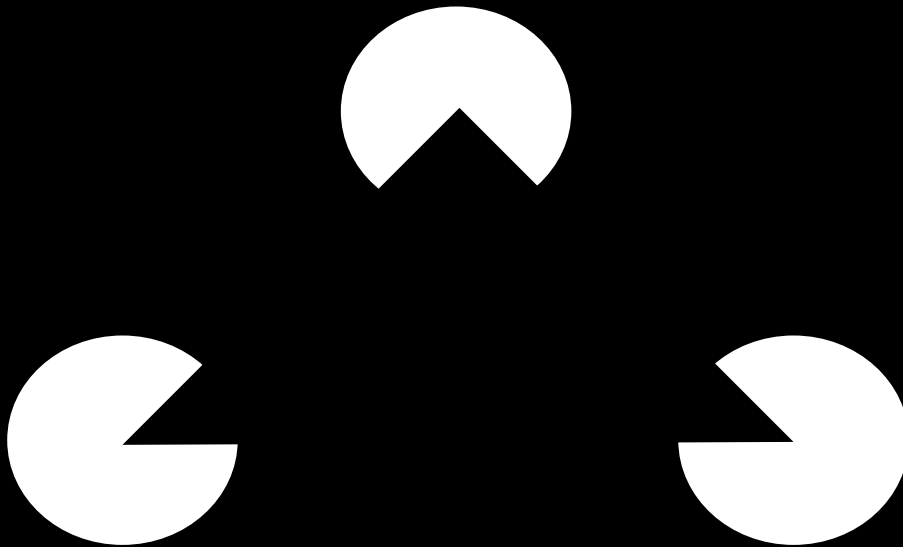
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THE HOLY TRINITY -
Trust, Honesty, Respect

Trust: WE have to TRUST one another to make an HONEST change happen.

Honesty: Be HONEST with one another even if it hurts because it's the only way to heal and TRUST.

Respect: RESPECT one another and the process in healing through being HONEST and TRUSTING with one another. Honesty and Trust are forms of Respect.

COMMUNITY VISION

Process will reflect the outcome, and outcome will reflect the process. Accessibility in all forms is essential to organic community vision.
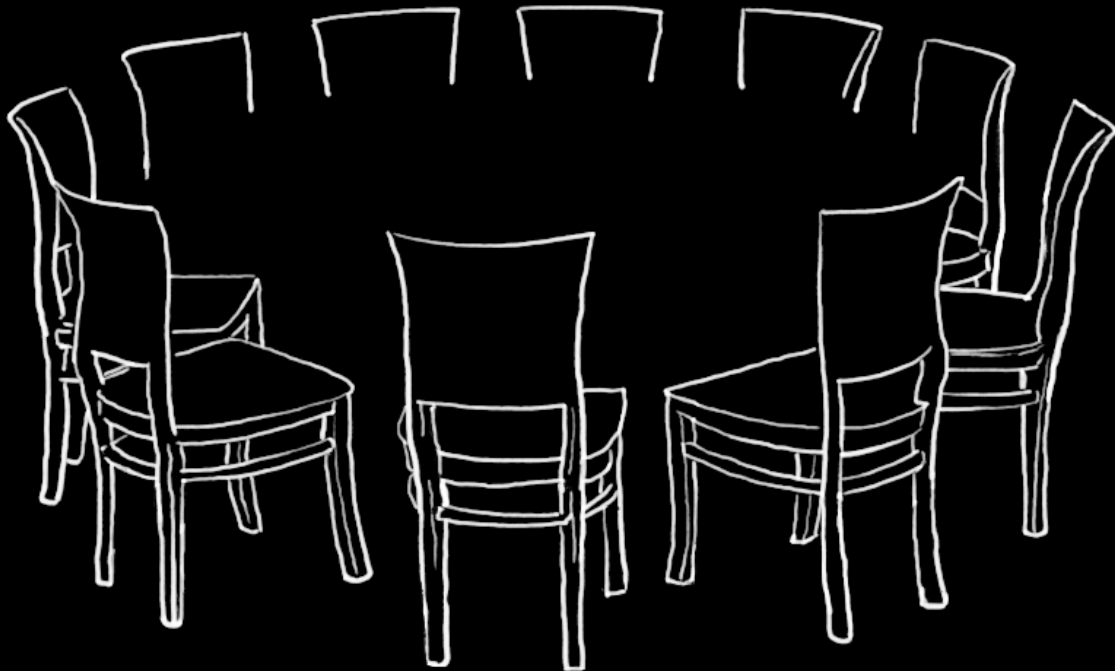
ACTIONS

- Accessibility requires meeting people where they are based on the conditions of their lives and acknowledging that these conditions are shaped by interlocking oppressions. This means creating a way for everyone to have access to the community vision and have input from various backgrounds and abilities. This can ensure that everyone will be able to collectively attend meetings or social gatherings based on common availability, providing resources such as childcare, food, conference calling capabilities and accessibility for multiple types of disabilities. These ways of input allow a community feel and can all be based on what conditions that some people may find themselves in.

- Creating relatable resources by listening to the needs of the community in order to search and provide the necessary resources to help them with being productive within a development process.

- Flexibility in timelines, ways of participating and contributing

- Multiple points and ways of outreach so that outreach is relationship building, not as a way to 'get something from someone'

- Allow for organic interactions that can help grow the vision and support these interactions through the goal of longer relationships

- Creating ways for people to show up as their whole selves

- Communicating potential benefits and risks of participation

- Being open to what will come from the culture of people who are shaping the project and who the project is meant to benefit

MEASUREMENTS

- The impact of participation and leadership on the process and outcome of our effectiveness as engaging people beyond the "regulars". Engaging with community members that are not normally included in community organizing efforts and development projects. They are often overlooked by appearance, vernacular, or class. We want them to be part of the processes to ensure that we capture all community members with various backgrounds.

- The number of times we conduct outreach and relationship-building activities..

- The effectiveness of our outreach and relationship-building activities.

HEALING

Each participant should meet themselves and others where they are, in order to act from a place of empathy.

It is important to recognize that one's own healing process is tied to healing with others.
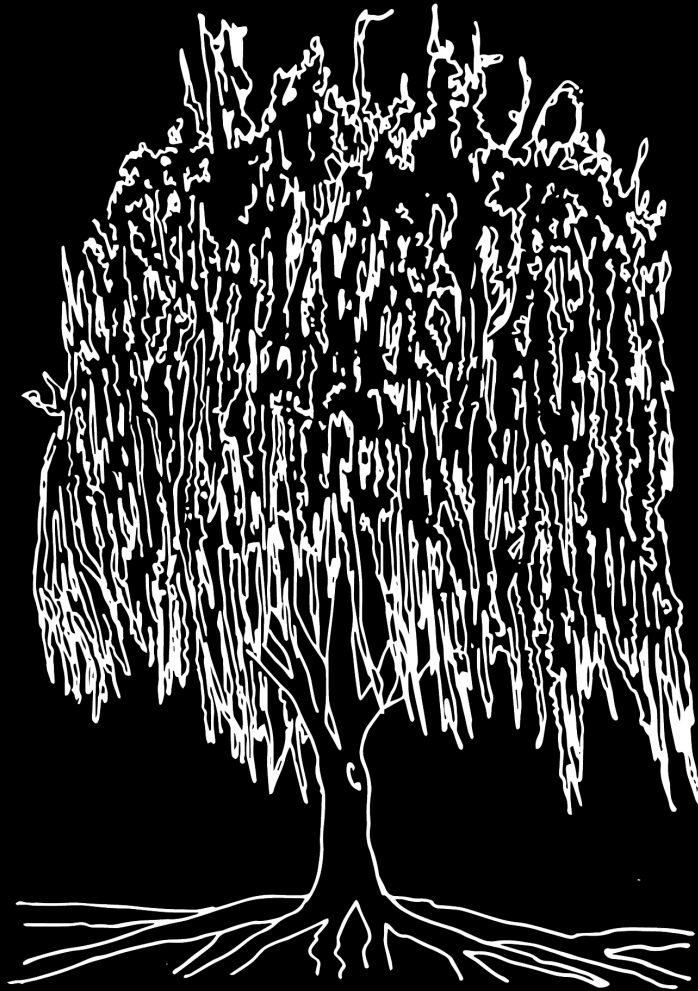
ACTIONS

- Integrating existing resources available for mental health and healing.

- Creating opportunities for self-evaluation in order to be able to name and acknowledge sources of trauma, harm and challenges to be able to access necessary resources.

- Through storytelling opportunities, leaders show vulnerability in order to model for others. Vulnerability has to be modelled before it can be expected.

- Don't judge other people's pain or compare it to other people's, just respect it for what it is.

- Create opportunities for listening.

- Create opportunities for being able to express care - I'm sorry, I hear you, I care for you.

MEASUREMENTS

- People are okay with expressing vulnerability, emotion and feelings from being harmed - crying, talking, etc.

- Opportunities for self-evaluation.

- Evaluations/assessments of how the process has been healing and what aspects specifically contribute to that healing.

- Number and types of opportunities to listen, share stories, and express care that are integrated throughout the process.

- Healing resources are made accessible to staff/participants/members.

SAFE SPACES

In process and outcome, spaces must be safe for Black people.
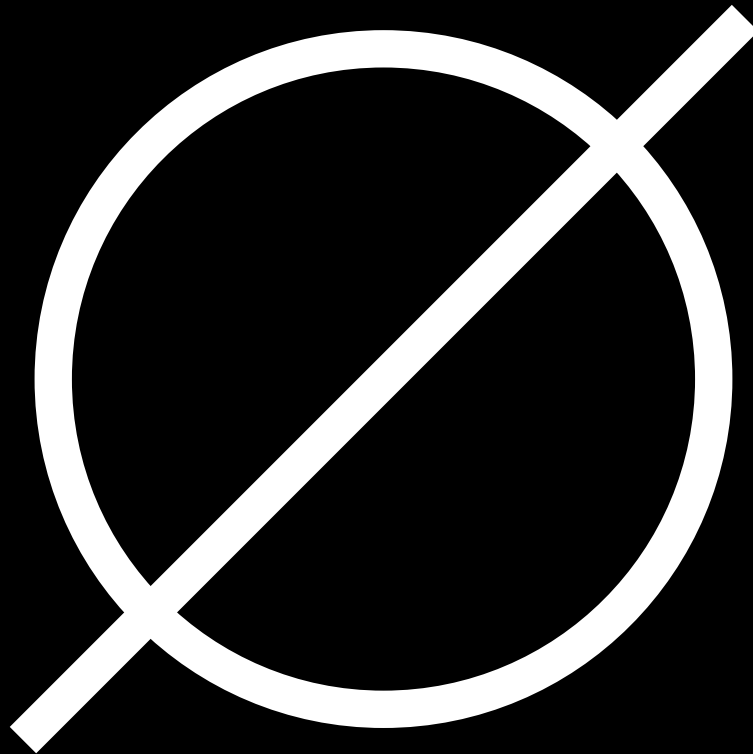
ACTIONS

- Use the principles expressed in this document during the development process to set additional ground rules and agreements as necessary to your context.

- Providing specific resources to support, empower, benefit, allow for self-expression, in a Black community space that is safe for everyone.

- Rituals for checking in and checking out to get temperature check and understanding of people's feelings toward the space/process.

- Clear processes to hold ourselves and each other accountable to the principles and agreements, and to address conflict and harm.

MEASUREMENTS

- Joy

- Honesty of not having to hold anything back.

- Not needing to mask opinion & emotions.

- Happiness of Black participants in and with the process and space.

- Measuring engagement - high turnover, length of time, bringing in new people who people are close to.

- Multiple points of reflection and evaluation with Black participants and leaders.

NO OBJECTIFYING WOMEN

Women are NOT OBJECTS, SEXUAL OR OTHERWISE
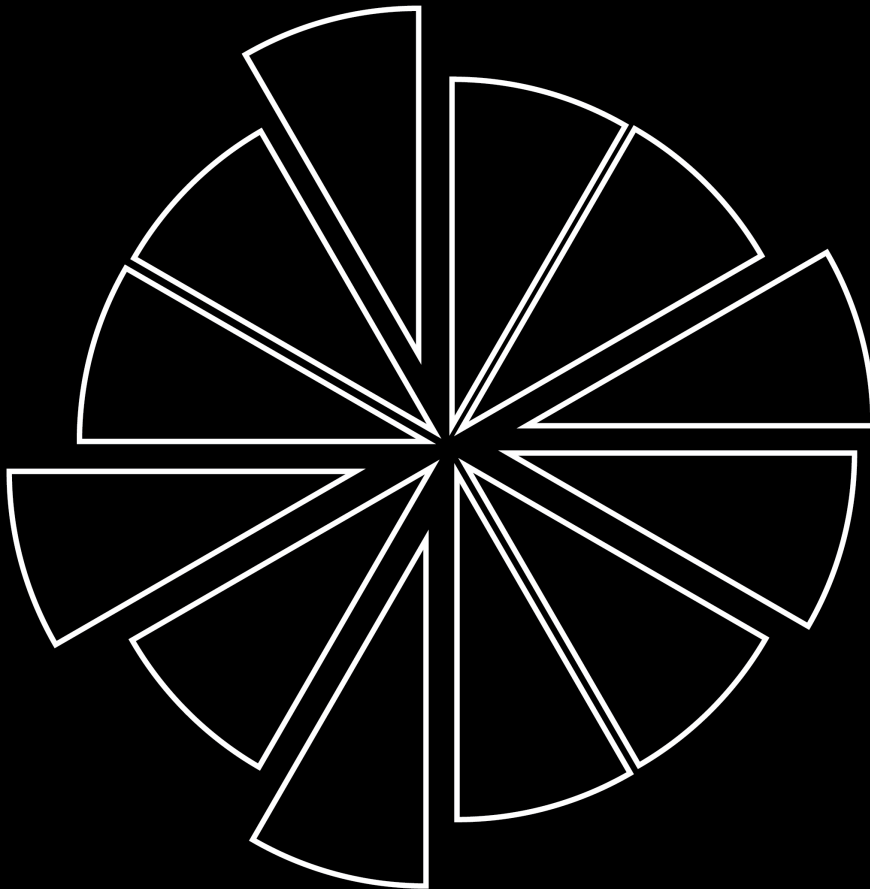
ACTIONS

- Change the common sense around women's worth.

- Men take it on themselves to disrupt and challenge "man-chatter" and "locker-room talk". Men need to allow women the space to take charge without feeling like women's opinions and solutions are inferior to their own.

- Check your motives before asking for extra labor or relationships beyond work from women.

- Don't feel entitled to my body - don't comment on my body or how I look in a work setting.

- Don't feel entitled to my mind - Emotional support, logistical guidance and nurturing should be a two-way relationship.

- Don't feel entitled to my labor - Compensate Black women for labor that is often unseen or undervalued.

MEASUREMENTS

- Actions, policies and training that dismantle objectification of women before the acts of objectification.

- Clear principles around sexism and objectification of women in documents.

- Setting ground rules and agreements that are explicit about objectification of women.

- Commitment to Restorative Justice and/or conflict resolution (rather than punitive approaches) to address harms brought forward by women.

- For women who bring forward these concerns, systems in place that protect them from losing their job or bullying.

ANTI-EXPLOITATION

Don't use people, everyone should be able to eat even if the portions are small.
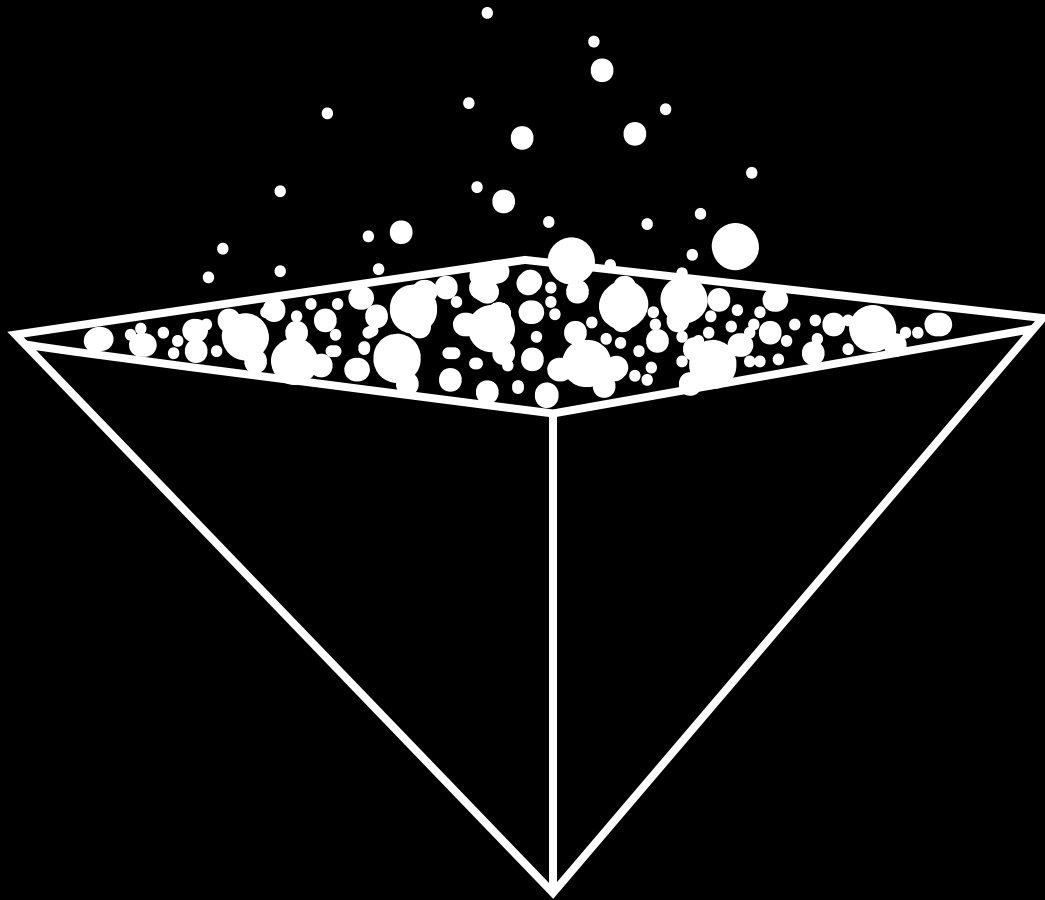
ACTIONS

- From the beginning, be clear about what you can offer in return for someone's work and what you expect to get out of their work.

- Ask people what they are willing to do and what their needs are in order to do that work - people have different needs, so don't assume that everyone will need the same thing in response to work.

- Allow people to set clear boundaries, which means respecting "no" when people say "no".

- See all of people's work as work - including care work, relationship building, and other less visible forms of labor often done by Black women.

MEASUREMENTS

- Fair wages.

- Systems for tracking time spent on projects.

- Pathways for advancement.

- Written rather than verbal contracts that protect Black women.

- Paperwork that outlines expectations and commitments.

EQUITABLE LEADERSHIP

Water the seeds that are already here. Create support to allow people to step up as leaders or step back from leadership roles.

ACTIONS

- Allow Black women taking charge in the work to lead together for a common goal without the need for gatekeepers.

MEASUREMENTS

- Black women in leadership roles.

- Black women involved in all decision making processes.

- Resources to support new leaders.

- Pathways for advancement.

- Transparency in leadership.

SHARED LEGACY

A shared legacy means Black women receive credit for the work they do and the results of that work. A shared legacy is a tool to dismantle patriarchy.

ACTIONS

- Create visibility and acknowledgment for black women's successes, sweat equity, and leadership in the project.

MEASUREMENTS

- Recognition of Black women's accomplishments and role in grant documents, in public events and media about projects, their origin and history.

Jennifer Rougeau is a mother, entrepreneur, and advocate who has worked to better her community of Richmond since she was a teenager. She tirelessly works to ensure that everyday Richmond residents have a place at the table in spaces where they are often excluded. She builds community connections through creating events and opportunities for Black people in Richmond to shine.

Sasha "Sunny" Graham is a Black student parent and community activist from Richmond. She serves as the President of the state board for the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment and is an advocate for housing and healthcare as a human right for all. Sunny has received numerous distinguished awards as a student and advocate. She graduated from UC Berkeley in May 2020 with a Bachelors in Ethnic Studies. She is in the Berkeley Law class of 2023.

Kapris James is a lifelong Richmond resident. She is a single mom that is very active in her community. She started her activist journey about 3 years ago after buying a home in Richmond and realizing that her voice can be louder for people in her community that are renters. She is very passionate about the people in the community and the resources they need access to. Her ties to Healthy Richmond's, North Richmond Resident Leadership Team, led her to become a BCLI (Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute) Alumni with Urban Habitat. She now sits on the City of Richmond Department of Children and Youth Oversight Board as well as a Building Power Fellow.
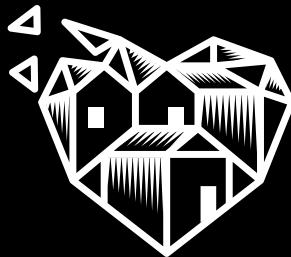
Richmond**LAND**
LOCAL ACTION IN NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT