

Naomi Paik:

Abolitionists seek not only to uproot the structures that damage so many lives and relationships, they also seek to build what W.E.B Du Bois and Angela Davis called abolition democracy, which is defined not solely by the negative process of tearing down oppressive structures, but by the affirmative process of building up the society we want to live in. One that does not require disposing of entire sectors of our society, but creates the conditions where all can thrive. So our annual initiative examines the radical, yet realizable possibilities of abolition in its many forms. While each program may have a particular emphasis, it will also necessarily take an intersectional approach that examines multiple convergent forms of power. We also want to acknowledge that today's event coincides with a day of action to get cops off campus at UIUC in solidarity with movements throughout the University of California system, as well as universities like UIC, Yale, UPenn, University of Chicago and beyond.

Toby Beauchamp:

We hope that you will join us for future abolition events, including tomorrow at the same time. Tomorrow night we'll be hosting an interactive hands on workshop with the panelists from tonight on concrete organizing strategies to start removing police from schools. Space is limited there to ensure that it can be interactive over Zoom, but we do still have spaces available and you can register at a link that we will drop into the chat momentarily. We are as always, very grateful to the Center for Advanced Study, and especially to its Deputy Director Masumi Iriye and the staff members, Destiny Woods and Rita Conerly for making this and all of the abolition events possible. We would also like to thank the many co-sponsors of this event, the Education Justice Project, FirstFollowers, United Muslim and Minority Advocates, iCause, Students for Justice in Palestine, the Department of Gender and Women's Studies, and the Department of Asian American Studies.

Naomi Paik:

Before I start introducing our moderators, just quickly to go over some etiquette over Zoom. We are in a Zoom meeting, and we are bringing people here for respectful dialogue and to learn from these organizers that we have invited to learn from and be with. If you have questions, please drop them in the chat. Depending on how many questions there are, your question may or may not get to the moderators and to the panelists by the end, but we do encourage you to ping questions into the chat at any time. We will be organizing them and then giving them to the moderators towards the end, and we are leaving time at the end for audience questions. We also expect that people will conduct themselves respectfully in the chat and overall on this meeting. And I don't think it will come to this, but if someone is being inappropriate then we will respectfully ask you to leave.

Naomi Paik:

With that said, it's my pleasure to introduce our moderators for this evening. They are all organizers within the Champaign-Urbana community and we're so honored that they were able to join us tonight. First we have Justin Michael Hendrix, who is a Parkland College student majoring in early childhood education. He is a bi-state advocate and creator of Hidden Homeboy, which focuses on black and brown communities as well as LGBTQ liberation. Hidden Homeboy focuses on education, advocacy and hip hop culture. Next we have Mayahuel Malik, is a high school student and co-leader of Paign to Peace, a local youth-led organization focusing on social justice in Champaign-Urbana, and on dismantling inequities within the community.

Naomi Paik:

And finally, we have Rita Conerly, who we are so lucky to work with. Thank you so much Rita. Rita is part of the Center for Advanced Study staff and as a single mother, she's always been an advocate of quality early education. Since 2015, she has helped with advocacy for Illinois Head Start Association, and as a state representative for them, she lobbied and rallied in Washington DC to fight for funding supporting childcare. The death of George Floyd catapulted her into activism locally. Since May, she has collaborated with many organizations such as Paign to Peace, Hidden Homeboy, Black Students for Revolution, H.E.R Urbana, and the Champaign County Antiracist Coalition. With that, we're going to turn everything over to our moderators and to our panelists.

Rita Conerly:

Good evening, everyone. Thank you all for joining us tonight. Thank you, Toby, and thank you, Naomi. Thank you to all of our panelists and our sponsors, and to the Center for Advanced Study for such an informative initiative, abolition. I'd like to start by introducing our panelist Bianca Gomez. She is the youth justice director at Freedom Incorporation. She is a former special education teacher and a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Madison's African-American Studies master's program. Her research focused on alternatives to punitive disciplinary policies and practices that impact black youth and youth of color. She wears many hats at Freedom Inc, including providing domestic violence and, excuse me, sexual assault services to black women, youth and LGBTQ+ folks.

Rita Conerly:

She provides educational advocacy for black students and families who are dealing with anti-blackness in schools. Bianca also leads political education groups for young people, including the Freedom Youth Squad, who are organizing against police in schools, Black Girls Matter where they talk about fighting against white supremacy and loving their bodies, and books and breakfast for younger kids, where they discuss body safety, activism and cultural pride. Bianca is unapologetically dedicated to black liberation and believes in shifting power to the most impacted communities. Her dream is for all black people to live free of violence. She looks to her ancestors for support and guidance, and she engages in the struggle for freedom. Thank you, Bianca.

Justin Hendrix:

Hello, everyone. I'm going to introduce our next individual that will be on with us. Their name is Zon Moua. Zon Moua is a queer, femme, Hmoob woman born and raised in Wisconsin. She is currently the Director of Youth Organizing at Freedom Inc. In 2016, Zon co-organized the US Hmong LGBTQ Delegation to attend the first Global Hmong Women's Summit in Chiang Mai, Thailand; where over 100 Hmong women and allies convened to discuss what it looks like to build a future free of gender based violence. Zon has worked on gender based violence, queer and youth justice issues since the age of 16.

Justin Hendrix:

Zon introduces Black and Southeast Asian youth to social justice movements through direct services, leadership development, community organizing with innovative art, music and dance programming. Her passion for youth justice has led her to organize on the issues of policing in schools and the criminalization of young people of color. Through her work, she hopes to not only transform herself, but her community in raising the visibility of queer, trans, black, and Southeast Asian leaders and liberation. Thank you very much.

Mayahuel Malik:

Hello, all. I will be introducing our next panelist, Andrea Ortiz. Andrea is born from Mexican immigrants, born and raised in Brighton Park neighborhood on the southwest side of Chicago. She learned and has seen firsthand her family's struggle and fear of deportation growing up and how families continue to live in that fear. She learned firsthand how unions fight for families as her dad joined a union that helped provide healthcare for her family. She learned firsthand how devastating disinvestment on the southwest side of Chicago is, and losing friends to gun violence. She received her bachelor's degree from DePaul University in Political Science and Latin-American Latino Studies. She began her journey in community organizing in 2016, working as a youth organizer and now lead organizer for a nonprofit on the southwest side. Her work is guided by her community. She has been politicized by hearing from her neighbors and family. Her drive comes from fighting not only for her community, but for the liberation of all. Thank you.

Justin Hendrix:

And our final panelist will be Veronica Rodriguez. Veronica was introduced to organizing when they attended high school after co-founding the Student Voice Committee, a club that became a space for students to challenge our school's administration, teachers and school culture. They organize on issues like food being allowed in the building, to a student-led PD on adultism for teachers, to challenging their school's contributions to the schools-to-prison to deportation pipeline. Surely their work within school began shifting and connecting themselves towards community and city level organizing. They are now a youth organizer with Brighton Park Neighborhood Council. Veronica is 20-years-old. Veronica loves to work with students, parents and community members. They believe in a world without police, prisons and capitalism. Thank you very much for being here with us.

Mayahuel Malik:

We would like to start off by asking our panelists, what brought you to this organizing and what work have you been focusing on recently?

Bianca Gomez:

I can start. Can you all hear me okay? Okay, great. So again, my name is Bianca. My pronouns are she, her hers and I work at Freedom Inc. in Madison, Wisconsin. I think I've always been rebellious from thinking about education and thinking about how I was educated, thinking about how young people were educated. I saw a lot of harm done to black and brown youth, especially as a special education teacher. I've worked in pretty much had my hand in some type of classroom environment for a long time and felt a lot of discontent and disgust, quite frankly, with our young people retreated.

Bianca Gomez:

When I moved to Madison in, it was 2015 when Tony Robinson, a 19-year-old black boy, black child, black teenager was murdered by Matt Kenny. At that point I hadn't been involved with any type of organizing or any type of organizing around police violence, but that really, like many of us during that time of the Ferguson and Baltimore uprisings, were really outraged and wanted to do something but we didn't know what that something was. I met folks at Freedom Inc. who were organizing around community control over the police and the stopping the building of a new jail. Those things really motivated me to really focus on criminalization of our young people, and not just how they're treated by teachers, specifically how they're criminalized in our schools, how they're pushed out of our schools, uneducated in our schools.

Veronica Rodriguez:

Okay, thank you. Thank you, Bianca. I think very similar, I love school and growing up, I would always participate in after school programs. When I went to high school, I think noticing the differences transitioning from middle school to high school and the different structure and these policies, and so thinking of how policing is enforced within our schools through different uniform policies or food policies. So without even knowing what my club was doing, or what our club was doing in terms of like organizing and trying to hold our administration accountable and even just calling out these injustices or these unfair policies, it started off as not knowing that what we were doing was organizing. Then when we learned about organizing like learning about the history of organizing and how it's our communities like thinking of how my school was founded, the only reason why my school was founded was because community members had fought for it.

Veronica Rodriguez:

So, a lot of what happened was trying to reconnect our school to the community because that was no longer a relationship. So trying to accomplish that. What does it look like to have our community involved in the school? What does it look like to have parents involved in the school? What does it look like to have resources available in the community, and in the school? Asking those questions and challenging that. Then quickly the conversation around policing and the existence of policing began a topic that I began to explore and that ... I became involved with No Cop Academy, which really set the foundation for me in terms of how policing impacts my community, how it impacts my identity, my existence. So ever since, never stopped and all the intersections and all the connections that you can make towards policing and community, and capitalism and prisons is something that I always try to tie to our work.

Zon Moua:

Thank you all for sharing. I'm like, "Oh, gosh." Hey, everyone. Again, my name is Zon. My pronouns are she, her hers and I'm joining everyone from Madison, Wisconsin with Freedom Inc. So, what brought me into this organizing work I think a lot of things, specifically around youth justice work and educational justice. I think it was definitely growing up in a refugee family, being in very extremely poor black and brown communities. Then on top of that, when I entered second grade I couldn't read. I couldn't read and I couldn't write, and just seeing how there was not actual good resources that was poured into me being able to be successful in school. Then on top of that, I was the youngest in my family and also just seeing how the rest of my siblings were struggling.

Zon Moua:

Many of them did not finish high school or if they didn't finish high school, it was like they weren't set to be successful for the rest of their lives, whether that was them deciding to go straight into like a career, or if they were interested in pursuing higher education. And I think it was also me just realizing and seeing basically how all the ESL students were treated and were just being passed through each grade, but not actually being given the resources that they need, again, to be successful. Then it wasn't, I think, until sixth grade where I really saw the injustice and the lack of investment in black and brown students, when my sixth grade homeroom teacher basically during one of, what is it? The parent teacher conference, asked my mentor like, "Does she even want to go to college? Because I don't think she'll ever make it to college."

Zon Moua:

It made me like, "What the heck? What is this? So, you have all these negative things to say, but actually not putting time and actual resources into this?" I think seeing that, and then as I started to get involved with Freedom Inc. at a young age, also seeing again, just how our school district kept cutting their budget from these things that already was under-resourced, underfunded like arts and other resources. One year they were trying to cut our bilingual resource. What is it? Bilingual resource specialist, who provides all the ESL supports, and how devastating that was going to be for ELL folks.

Zon Moua:

Then one year they were also trying to bring in K9 dogs and invest in that. I think that was when I realized actually this is part of my passion around, actually we need to figure out where our schools are putting their money, that it's not being invested in our most vulnerable students, black and brown students so that they can actually be successful in schools. That was part of my interest in really doing this work. And, just again, supporting our young people currently right now with their police-free schools and really helping us push the district to now invest money into black youth and youth of color.

Andrea Ortiz:

Thank you all. That was so amazing. Hey, my name is Andrea, she [inaudible 00:18:24] pronouns. Grew up on the southwest side of Chicago, Brighton Park. No one knows where Brighton Park is. It's right next to the Back of the Yards. I know everyone knows where Back of the Yards is, or has heard of Back of the Yards. So, right next to Back of the Yards. It was always predominately Latinx, undocumented immigrant community so I always grew up with folks that look like me and I just thought it was normal for there to always be shootings, for there to never be any resources. I would see on TV folks, kids on TV going to karate, or ballet or doing all these cool things and I remember telling my mom, "Oh, I want to join karate." My brother really wanted to join karate too and my mom was like, "I can't. It's too far, and if we go we would have to walk there and it's too dangerous to walk at night because there's always shootouts."

Andrea Ortiz:

So remembering that, but always just thinking like, "Oh, this is normal." It wasn't until I got to college that I really had like my political awakening, where I saw ... In Chicago we saw the murder of Rekia Boyd in 2012 and 2014 the murder of Laquan McDonald which happened down the street from my high school and that being we're literally the same age and also being at the DePaul and being like, "No one here looks like me. No one here understand what it's like to be from the southwest side of Chicago." And just having to hear some of these sorority girls say, "Oh, I can't wait for spring break to go to [inaudible 00:20:09]," all of that, "We could use my dad's private jet," and I'm just like, "I'm working three jobs to pay for school. This is not okay." And that, being really like, "Why is my community so disinvested in?" And, really like being motivated to learn more about Chicago politics, which is crazy. No wonder they call us the Windy City. And really thinking about where these disinvestments came from, and who has the power.

Andrea Ortiz:

When I got into organizing was really in 2015, my junior year of college and I got connected to the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council. The office is a couple blocks from my house. I never knew about them because my mom never let me go outside because there was always shoot outs, or I could only walk to the corner and that's it, so I never really knew much about them. But, luckily I was able to get connected with them and started organizing with them. The first campaign I started doing with them, it

was the summer of like 2016, 2015, 2016 and the community had seen a 300% increase in violence. There was gang wars, shoot outs every day, a bunch of young folks being killed, and I remembered how ...

Andrea Ortiz:

I remember this campaign because it was the first campaign that I had been a part of, and I have heard where people were talking about violence prevention. What they were demanding was jobs for the youth, money for our schools, all these resources, but not police and I'm just like, "This is amazing that I am part of this." And being from a community on the southwest side, from my parents, from brown undocumented folks, from young people talking about, "This is what we need to address the 300% spike in violence, and it's not police." I feel like that was part of a moment for me, a real learning moment and I'm just like, "I'm learning so much about my community and this makes me really happy right now."

Andrea Ortiz:

As I got more involved, started working with more and more youth, like supporting them and other students leading their student voice committees in their schools, identifying either a culture shift they wanted to see or a policy they wanted to change and supporting them as they develop their own campaign to make that power shift possible. Then I would connect them to campaigns happening in the community. So, our work with Police Out of Schools came when we started working around the Chicago gang database, because we started seeing that undocumented folks were being targeted and put on [inaudible 00:23:14] database and the more we started looking into it ... Organized Communities Against Deportation led a lot of that work and that campaign.

Andrea Ortiz:

We also saw that 33,000 young people were being placed on this gang database and we were like, "How are young babies being placed in the gang database? Who's placing them?" And just hearing anecdotal stories from students, we were like, "It is the SROs that are in the schools that are placing them on the gang database and putting them in harm's way," and it's a database that you could never get out of and are not even notified about. That's a quick how I got into this work, and also involved with police-free schools.

Justin Hendrix:

Thank you all for your answers in response to our first question, presented by Mayahuel Malik. As I listened to all your answers, I see that there is a sense of urgency that you all were brought into before you even led into your advocacy. With that being said, as you're leaning towards the initiatives of jumping into advocacy and once you've been involved, my next question would be, can you tell us about a lesson you took away from a failed campaign action or from a successful campaign action? As far as, what are some practices and some strategies that you worked with or what worked best and what should you advocate for, and what contributed most effectively and what did not work out? Anyone is free to take that question?

Andrea Ortiz:

I'll just quickly ... I've been talking about this with folks, and I think it just depends. In general when I first started organizing, I remember there ... And one of my other fellow organizers, they were like ... One of our tasks was to literally canvass Brighton Park and invite community members to a meeting. Our goal was to get 100 folks to that meeting. So we would canvass every day and invite folks, and then call them

and do a follow up, and then only like seven folks showed up to the meeting when we were like expecting 100 folks. But in that context, it was like, this is you ... It's like this isn't a failed action or meeting that you have because you still got seven folks to come out. Seven folks that were cold contacts, that didn't know anything about you that had now been tapped into this work. So I think it just depends on what you're using or measuring as successful or failed, because I still think that seven folks activated was seven more than before.

Justin Hendrix:

I like how you gave that. How you were expecting over a certain amount of number but then even with those seven people, that's still seven people that could've been the move a middle, or intersection to where they're now leaning towards a initiative that they did not know about. So I do like how though you were expecting 100, you got seven, but that seven could be even more impactful than the 100 that came. So, that does make a ... That is very important to know. Anyone else want to answer that question?

Veronica Rodriguez:

Yeah, I can jump in really quickly. I think something that I've been reflecting on and learning from the Cops Out of CPS Campaign and just organizing in general because I feel like I'm still trying to understand what organizing is. But, I think recognizing how important relationships are to one another and how much time, and how it should be a priority really to build relationships, because ... I don't know, just thinking these are the people that you're going to be building with. I think something that I've learned is how to sustain ourselves when we create a plan, like thinking of what's going to happen after this. If we don't win this campaign, how are we still sustaining ourselves and sustaining the work to continue it? So, thinking about that.

Veronica Rodriguez:

And also, I feel like this year we've been forced to work like 10 times at a different speed. So slowing down, I think that's where relationships come in like, how are we holding space for each other? How are we holding ourselves accountable? But also, how are we healing with one another and how are we creating spaces so that we can continue to reimagine and put work into visions and what we can do to make sure that we can build it together? That's something that I've been thinking about. And, what is community? How community can mean different things to different people? Like, how are we making ... When we talk about like, "We have to center our community?" What does that look like? What is a community? What does it look like? How can it function? So, thinking about that stuff.

Justin Hendrix:

I really like the way that you spoke on community and just the sense of us being involved in advocacy and civic engagement. It's very important for us to understand, what is community? Every community is not the same. Every community need is not the same. As we even though here in Champaign-Urbana at large, every community is different, from Garden Hills, all the way to Ivanhoe. Those are different communities with different needs. So, I do really like the way that you stated that with having a sense of urgency of understanding what is community and actually knowing the communities that we're involved in. We have two others. If they want to answer the questions, you're free to answer them but I do like how we're talking about the sense of community, and urgency and understanding.

Bianca Gomez:

Yeah, I was just going to say before every action, we do some risk assessment to see what safety measures we need to put in place. And one of the things we learned very quickly is a low risk action, or a low risk protest or low risk event doesn't mean low risk in terms of violence and in terms of harm, especially that can be done to our young people. So again very quickly ... We were just going to school board meeting and we do our things at school board meeting like yelling, and shutting things down, and making sure that we're heard outside of the little three minutes that they give us the speak and ignore us.

Bianca Gomez:

But, one day it was just a gang of white supremacists who decided to show up, and they wouldn't call themselves white supremacists but they are. This whole altercation ensued with our young people, and this white lady saying that she's being assaulted by some like 12-year-old kids. So we learned very quickly that we had to put a safety team in place and they go wherever our young people go. It's something that we wish we would've thought about before, before that altercation happened, but again, it was a very quick lesson.

Zon Moua:

Yeah, thank you for ... Oh, Sorry.

Justin Hendrix:

I'm sorry to interrupt. And those moments, those are also very important to know. We know we expect the best, and we expect the best at all times. We never expect the worst and in those situations, things can happen, especially with knowing the truth of America now becoming exposed and people are very upset about it, and we understand they think it's more important to bring back football than to bring back black and brown lives. So we have to understand that in those moments, that situations can happen, they can arise and chaos can occur. That's really good to know that in those moments, you sense now how to put security in place so that we know that everyone is protected in those moments of a situation that can be provoking to others. Zon, I'm sorry to interrupt you.

Zon Moua:

No, no, no, you're good. It's funny that Bianca brought that up. I also just wanted to add a little bit more to that, too. But before that, I think I was having a really hard time with this because I was like, "Oh, a failed campaign or action." I think one thing is that we're really hard on ourselves when things don't happen the way we want to, and we got to remember that actually we need to celebrate, right? Especially campaigns like these that are led by black and brown young people, we need to celebrate. I always go back to what our founder and co-executive director says and what Freedom Inc's motto is, is our community is our campaign. It's about changing the hearts and minds of our folks, and also building the capacity. And if we didn't win that one certain thing, but that we were able to bring like 10 young people or 100 young people and they spoke their truth, that is winning.

Zon Moua:

I always try to go back to that because there are so many times where I'm like, "Damn, we didn't get that." I'm so sad and I'm like, "Wait, we got to celebrate the young people." I especially wanted to add to what Bianca said because with Freedom Inc, we are a black and Southeast Asian organization. So, what does that mean when we actually do our organizing work? Especially our organizing work during this moment? Our organizing work that's really talking about police-free schools, defunding the police,

and really making sure that we're centering and uplifting the voices and leadership of those most impacted; black girls, black trans, intersex, the queer folks. How are we doing that, and doing that in a way where we're really thinking about strategies and tactics? And, who are going to execute those strategies and tactics in a way that will cause the least amount of harm and attack on our black young organizers?

Zon Moua:

I always continuously go back and think about that moment that Bianca talks about, because it wasn't just that they were attacking young people. No, they were specifically targeting the black youth. They weren't targeting the Hmong and Khmer youth, they were specifically targeting the black youth. Really going back and thinking about, what could we have done right? And, even thinking about safety, and thinking about safety in a way where we're actually going to protect those most vulnerable, right? So, just adding more of even a race analysis for us to really move forward and figuring that out I think was one of the biggest lessons that I think I learned and try to move forward with.

Justin Hendrix:

I really like what you said for Freedom, how the motto is your community is the campaign. With that being said, we sometimes get overshadowed in the Black Lives Matter statement or movement to realize that when we say Black Lives, it also includes indigenous people or Latinx people, even Southeast Asian individuals and lives because we also know too, that they suffer from those same demographics, and adversities, and disparities that we do as black lives. Also, with that being said, we know that there's a large demographic of LGBTQ individuals, especially among trans, intersex and non-gender conforming, even intersex, which is another spectrum that we hardly discuss. I really do applaud that because we know in the black community, those spectrums aren't as discussed or as accepted. With these organizations, it's also creating an avenue and space within our communities to have that voice, to know how to campaign in our community by standing up in our demographics that may not be seen or targeted.

Rita Conerly:

Yeah, I'm really loving the direction that this conversation is going. I really appreciate the responses. Decline that. I do apologize for that. What I wanted to ask is what kind of coalitions do you have with other groups, and how do you decide when to collaborate with others? How does that collaboration affect the work that you do? Anyone can jump in, because I heard Bianca talk about safety, and similarly we can relate here with organizing with having to use many different organizations to take roles in order to make sure that while we're demonstrating, that we're also making sure everyone is safe. And then other people who oftentimes are doing the research so that when we do have the crowd's attention, we can educate them in those moments. So, how are you guys working and collaborating with other organizations and/or coalitions?

Bianca Gomez:

Well, one we always have to make a collective decision as an organization about whether or not we're going to work with somebody, especially as a black and Southeast Asian organization. Because if another Southeast Asian organization is anti-black, it doesn't matter what they have to offer, we are absolutely not going to work with them. If a organization is queer-phobic, if a organization doesn't respect the leadership of women and queer folks, and if an organization is maintaining the state because abolition is just not a popular idea, then we have to ... It's not that we wouldn't work with them, but we have to be

very upfront about what our goals and objectives are in working with that group and working with that organization. Freedom Inc operates like a very intimate coalition, if that makes sense. We're black and Southeast Asian, but we also do very cultural specific work, like I specifically work with black girls amongst ... Zon specifically works with Hmong girls and queer folks.

Bianca Gomez:

I mean, we have our compass, we have our values of black and Southeast Asian liberation. We have our values of gender justice, and queer justice and anti-colonialism. That's how we decide who we work with and who we align ourselves with. And again, sometimes that's really hard ... In Madison, but we have to be very careful in navigating that because we're not going to work with a homophobic institution. We're not going to work with an institution that doesn't respect me as a black woman and my leadership. But nationally we work with a lot of different organizations, including the Advancement Projects. I'm sorry, including the Advancement Project. Shout out to them because they have been holding down our campaign work for a really long time. I don't know if any of them are on the call but if you are, I love you all so much. So, that's how we navigate and how we decide who we work with.

Rita Conerly:

And if I can just be a little more specific, how do you organize people who want cops in schools, versus working with people who want cops out of schools?

Andrea Ortiz:

I feel like for us ... I also want to give a shout out to Alliance for Educational Justice and Advancement Project because they're also the reason that we're doing this work and have connected us with other folks nationwide who are fighting for police-free schools, but are fighting for this and they're rooted in abolition. I feel like they have been amazing, so big, big, big virtual hugs. And I think if gotten ... A lot of ... Some of our parents are with ... We're intergenerational organizing organizations so we have a lot of parent leaders and also our youth leaders, but not all of our leaders are on the same page. They also have very different experiences and understanding how they grew up and the community, and also very much a lot of gang violence and a lot of unpacking there.

Andrea Ortiz:

But, I feel like it is a lot of what ... When we're talking about what's going to bring safety to our communities or even our schools, what does that look like? Chicago has like the most police per capita and violence has not ... It doesn't stop violence. They don't do anything. They're also one of the most corrupt. So, talking about that and I feel like something that's been really helpful for us is really looking at the city budget and the way that CPS, Chicago Public School budgets are made and the way that funds are allocated, compared to how much money is actually going to police. A lot of our talking points and a lot of things that ... The way that we approach is, we need to divest from police and invest in these resources that we know actually work and are actually violence prevention and are actually going to bring healing to our community and to our schools, and is what our students need.

Justin Hendrix:

Anybody else want to answer Rita's question before I go ahead? All right, the final question before we ask some additional questions and go further into SORs and other things just to discuss and even questions from our viewers, our final question is, how do you keep going? What do you do that makes the work sustainable?

Veronica Rodriguez:

I can start. I mean, to be completely transparent I think this year has really tested what self care looks like, or even how to do self care, especially again, with how capitalism is ... It's hard to not, I guess participate in, because it's the only means of, I guess living that we have right now. But, I think that what has been helpful is, again, this idea of relationship building. If I had not built community with the people who I have been doing this work with, I think that this year would have been extra harder because everything on the media, it's very draining and very ... I feel like I was struggling with not falling into a pit of like, "Ah, it's the end of the world." Or, I don't really know what to do because I feel like resources and tools were suddenly in the high necessity, this idea of ...

Veronica Rodriguez:

We were seeing how communities were doing mutual aid like supporting each other, and I think that that was my axis of feeling more hopeful, participating in mutual aid and having conversations with people that wasn't about politics or wasn't about everything that's happening. I think those were helpful, and also just being honest with people and transparent about where you are and like, "I need a break." I think that was something that I had to learn how to do, how to ask for breaks or how to even acknowledge like, "Wow, I'm really tired and I actually need to take a break."

Veronica Rodriguez:

Those are things that I feel have been helpful for me, or it's something that I'm trying to explore so I can have a better understanding of, what are my needs? How do I sustain myself? How do I sustain the work that I'm doing? Journaling has been really helpful, and also keeping track of everything. Just a timeline of, this is happening, what can I do? Or, how does this affect me, has been helpful too. But, I think just maintaining relationships and building community has been my way of sustaining my work and sustaining myself.

Justin Hendrix:

I take it that it's more so less interaction with media and more so interaction with the community from what I'm getting in the sense of what you were saying, because I do understand we can become warped into the news to where we're more so concerned with political things instead of the people, and of people's first approach with helping the communities at large, because what's on the news is not actually what's being seen in my community. So I do understand what you're saying with that, how we can become very turned away or confused about what's going on within our own community because we're stuck on what's happening on a national scale.

Veronica Rodriguez:

Yes, absolutely.

Justin Hendrix:

Anyone else want to answer that question? Thank you, Veronica.

Bianca Gomez:

Yeah. One of the beautiful things about Freedom Inc is that we are required to go to therapy, especially many of us are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. We're all women and queer folks, so it's an institutional requirement that we're seeking therapy services. We also have a self care grant. Each

full time staff member is given a set amount of money each year to just focus on self care. Whether that's paying for your copay or going to the spa, whatever you want to do with it but it has to be for self care. It can't just be like, "I'm about to pay my credit card bill because that's self care for me," which is a form of self care but I think that's really ... That was something that was very beautifully taught to me by our leaders in the organization, that it's not just about telling your employees, and your staff, and your comrades to seek self care, but really investing in it as an organization and as an institution.

Justin Hendrix:

I really like Bianca where you said about self care, which is really important. It wasn't mentioned earlier in my bio, but I began my advocacy in St. Louis, Missouri where I lived before, after and during Mike Brown. One thing that I did learn about organizing and protesting in Ferguson with those long hours and overnights and going through those moments of being in the trenches, is self care is very important. You're fighting for the people and it's like if you're not healthy for the people, then the people can't be healthy enough because they're depending on you. So, I think that self care is very important. It's very, very, very, very important for everybody.

Justin Hendrix:

I think we all need a little bit of self care, especially in these moments and in these times of chaos and things being undecided. Just things going different directions and people are not sure where they are in America or in the world as it is right now. So I think it's very important to have self care just for yourself, mental health care and mental health awareness. And I think for your organization just to do that for the body itself for you all as individuals is very important for you all. It's very important and I do applaud that.

Rita Conerly:

Anyone else want to chime in on how you keep going? Because this is hard work that we're doing organizing, especially pressing the issue with cops out of schools. So, what do you do to make the work sustainable? Anybody else want to chime in on that?

Zon Moua:

I'll go quickly. Yeah, everything that Veronica and Bianca said already, and I think one way that ... One thing that also keeps me going is doing a lot of reflection in my work, especially around youth development. Just seeing how many youth leaders we have and that you can step away from the work and trust and know that these young people can lead stuff and they can do stuff. That you don't always have to be everywhere doing everything and that these folks are experts, they got this. I think that's one great thing that I always love looking back. And then I think I love affirmations. I've come to admit that after all these years. I think even around that, hearing affirmations and also knowing that I think our folks, black and brown folks, we also don't hear enough about how amazing we are, how beautiful we are and that we deserve love.

Zon Moua:

And I think something that I also do since I love that is making sure that I'm also giving that to folks and also knowing that ... Yeah, letting them know because I think also feeling people's energy also impacts me in the way that I want to move around in the space and the work. When I know that people feel good and confident in the work, I feel really good and proud, and feel confident. So, just a little something like that.

Andrea Ortiz:

I'll just say one thing. Something that I have loved and seen this year for our fight for Cops Out of CPS is just the youth have been giving us so much art, and dance, and just have been ... They're like, "I just want to be happy and just have a dance party right now." That's what we're going to do and I think that's beautiful, and has been sustaining. That's just one of my highs.

Rita Conerly:

Andrea, thank you for that. I'd like to add to that, that the youth are what keeps me going in all of this organizing. You guys have a lot of energy and I think that your voices are really what's needed at the forefront now as we make way for your future. And as we approach the eight o'clock hour, I want to thank each of you for answering the questions that we have posed. We will open it up now for discussion for our audiences to participate. It looks like we have several questions already pouring in from the audience, so I'd like to start off by asking a question that was asked by Deborah Rawlings. She states and asks, "Is there ever any justification for police in schools?" What are your thoughts?

Bianca Gomez:

No. That's a serious question, especially thinking about parents and thinking about teachers or the young people themselves. The United States is very great at fear mongering. They can list all of these situations that are probably not likely to happen and convince us that we need this force to keep us safe on the back end, but on the front end and in the reality in our everyday lives, they harm us. One of the biggest fears that we heard from parents and our elders and the teachers that we work with, there were like, "What about weapons in schools, and what about a school shooting?"

Bianca Gomez:

One, that's actually very unlikely to happen. Two, the demographics of a school shooter are a young white male, who has a history of domestic violence and a history of racism, and a history of abusing animals. The demographic of someone who would shoot up a school, they're not targeted by the police. I don't want any young people being targeted by the police to be clear, but those are not the kids that are being targeted by the police, it's our kids. I cannot remember this teacher's name, and maybe it's a good thing because I'm pretty sure what he did is illegal, but he would ... When he would find weapons on students, he would just confiscate them and be like, "Why do you have this?" And most of the time, it was for protection because they were scared to walk home or they were scared to ... They were in fear for their life. They had no plans or intention of harming people in the school space.

Bianca Gomez:

I think that is a real thing that could happen, but we're so narrowed in on criminalizing these kids and not talking to them, even when it's something ... I'm not supporting kids having weapons in school, of course. But even when that does happen, why is that the response when know statistically, when we know factually that they're actually not going to go around stabbing random people in the school, or stabbing random people on the bus? That's actually not likely to happen. What is likely to happen is regardless if they have a weapon or not, they will be criminalized by the police in their schools, and that is what we need to pay attention to. Instead of giving into our fears, we need to lean into facts and data, and research.

Zon Moua:

Yeah, and quick thing I also just wanted to add around that. I think there's ... Sorry. Yeah, quick thing I wanted to add about that is also folks, make sure you know the history of policing. The police the history of like police in schools, and also know that the second highest complaint after police brutality and around police misconduct is actually sexual assault. So, why is it that we want these folks in schools with our young people if we see this and know this? And actually also, a lot of police officers are perpetrators of domestic violence. So we have these people who are trained with deadly force, who we know are domestic violence perpetrators and sexual assault perpetrators. Why do we have them in our schools? Then we're actually not protecting our young people. And if we're really talking about safety, then these folks definitely should not be in our schools.

Andrea Ortiz:

I agree. If we look at the police officers in CPS, a lot of these police officers were the most dangerous officers and were placed in our schools because they were considered too dangerous to be out in the streets, so being placed as an SRO was considered desk duty for them. So if you're doing that, you don't care. Also, recognizing that policing as reactive and not preventative. They are coming and arriving after harm has been caused and just because they're there and arriving after the harm has been caused does not mean ... It's not addressing the harm that was caused or whoever was hurt also, and just furthers any harm that was caused and trauma, and makes things a lot worse and puts our folks in danger.

Rita Conerly:

I have a leading question that goes with that regarding SROs. Who do we listen to? Do we listen to the students, to the parents, to the teachers, to the administrators, or do we look at the data?

Andrea Ortiz:

The way that we've been saying you listen to who ... The data also, because also there's no data that proves that police in schools works. And also, our students who are the ones and ... When you think about it's the issue, and whoever is closest to the issue and impacted by the issue is whose voice should be censored and elevated, and that is our young folks. Then it's the teachers, and then the parents. The farther you are from the issue, I'm sorry to say, but your voice matters less, and the person and the people who are most directly impacted by this issue are our young folks. So, our young folks and the data is what we should be listening to, and the data shows police in schools do not help our young people and harm them.

Zon Moua:

Yeah, and I just want to add on to that for folks who may have a hard time understanding that, is that we know ... At Freedom Inc we know from our work as domestic violence and sexual assault advocates, is that many people who are surviving violence will probably never speak up because they're so afraid. There is retaliation and there's all of that. So not only do you listen to those most impacted, but how do you create safe spaces so that young people can actually feel like they can share this without getting in trouble and feeling like there can be solutions? That they can actually come up with solutions that will protect them, and center them, and love them. I think things like that is very important to think about.

Zon Moua:

And then also around data, is that not ... If you're going to look at data, you got to know how to read the data. Because I know for Madison, Wisconsin, what they love doing is saying, "Well, the arrest rates have decreased." Actually it's not just around looking at that, but actually knowing how to read that and

saying like, "Who did it decrease for? Did it decrease for everyone?" Because if it did decrease for everyone, it doesn't matter because there is still a disproportionate arrest rate of black folks. So, also being able to know how to read data is so important.

Bianca Gomez:

One of the things that I recognized early on too, is this internalized criminalization that some of our youth feel and are dealing with. When I first started with the group of black girls that I work with now, it's probably been five or six years. Some of them were like, "No, we're bad kids. We're bad people. We need to be in cages. We need to have the police in our schools because we are bad." That's something that schools and these other institutions have told them for at this point, 15 years and I think ... So, it's not always going to be ... The most impacted youth are not always going to come in with these stories like, "Yeah, FTP, F12. Get these cops out of schools," which I expecting and a little bit illusioned around.

Bianca Gomez:

Some of them, I had to do a lot of decolonizing work like, "You are not the problem, these institutions are the problems." So, both of those things are happening at the same time. And what happens with MMSD, our school district, they would profusely pick those kids out. They would be like, "Let me show you this one black boy who had this experience with a police officer. We're going to put him on stage and he's going to tell us why we need police in school." So, we have to be mindful and have an organizing strategy around that group of young people as well as we have to have an organizing strategy around the youth that are already willing and ready to get down.

Andrea Ortiz:

I just want to add one thing, and CPS does that so early on. My eighth grade field trip was to Cook County Jail. Were other students are going to Springfield or they're going to Washington DC, they took us to Cook County Jail. I'm thinking about this and thinking about how half of my classmates who were on that trip with me are now dead, and how that didn't help at all. I'm just thinking, how did this trip also contribute to their death and lead to their death? It's very traumatizing.

Justin Hendrix:

I'm going to give you guys some stats real quick that came around 2013, 2014 from the ACLU and I'm going to play a little devil's advocate with a question. It says black students make up about 15.5% of school enrollment nationwide, but a staggering 33.4% of student arrest. And we know that they are applauding for police in schools, but then we also don't want police in schools as well. With that being said, we know that SROs operate outside of any centrally imposed trainings, and they also have little to no understanding with children with disabilities, language or culture. So my question will then be, how do you navigate the contradictions and perceptions about the role of public safety and police in schools?

Bianca Gomez:

I'm sorry, can you repeat the question? The last part of the question?

Justin Hendrix:

How do you navigate the contradictions or the perceptions about the role of police and public safety in schools?

Bianca Gomez:

Yeah, I think generally, safety for who? Police do not keep us safe. We've said that experientially, we've said that statistically, we've said that anecdotally, we said that in the footnotes, we've said it in the abstract. We've been saying it for hundreds and hundreds of years that police don't equal safety for us. In the beginning we talked about the history of policing in schools and the history of policing in America. From its foundation police have been created to control the behaviors of black folks and keep us in line, so how does that equal safety? If you're talking about safety for white students, which I don't even think they do that, maybe. But if we're talking about safety for black and brown communities, police does not equal safety.

Bianca Gomez:

Safety for who, would be my response to that question. And, who gets to define safety? Who gets to define crime and criminal activity? Who gets to define being defiant or being disruptive in class? Who gets to define a threat? Those are all things that black and brown communities have not had any ability to define in this country. So, safety for us does not equal police. Safety for us looks like transformative justice, looks like community accountability. It looks like healthy food, it looks like housing, it looks like transportation, it looks like employment. Safety for the state looks like black people in cages and black babies in cages.

Justin Hendrix:

So in other words, I said what I said. I applaud that because in all actuality, Tamir Rice would be more so attacked before a Kyle Rittenhouse. Let's be real about it. So it's very true and I like what you said, safety for who is the question. Because when you put police in our schools, who are you protecting? Who are you protecting them from and who are being protected? So yes, I do applaud that. Anybody else want to take on that question? I know she annihilated it, but you all can take up on it.

Andrea Ortiz:

I think Bianca did great and hit the nail on the head with it.

Rita Conerly:

Yeah, Bianca, I thought that was an amazing answer because we know that police are often reactive, not proactive, and I agree, safety for who? Because oftentimes it's teachers that are probably calling the police. And again, the police once they arrive, the action has already occurred. So then the next step if you ask me, would be to take the students and arrest them, and take them to jail. I had another good question that came in. It was from Aggie. Do you often find that research is useful for changing people's minds regarding RSOs? Are there certain research questions that would be especially helpful to have addressed?

Andrea Ortiz:

I would [inaudible 01:06:10] really good. I feel like a lot of our youth learned how to FOIA. One of our tools for fighting for Cops Out of CPS is FOIA, so it's Freedom of Information Act. They learn how to submit FOIAs and then taught other youths how to submit FOIAs. So, then we had a bunch of students in CPS FOIAing the records of the SROs in their building, and that became really helpful. If you go on our website, copsoutofcps.com, you could see the report that we put together with a lot of the FOIAs that

the youth did on their SROs also and their records. It became helpful when the local school councils were then forced to take a vote on whether or not they wanted the SROs in the building.

Andrea Ortiz:

Students then came prepared and were like, "These are the records of the SROs in our building, and this is who you're asking to stay here? This is who you're saying is going to bring me safety and is going to protect me? This is who is not going to do just that." A lot of our parents reacted really positively to that and we saw a lot of ... We saw 17 schools vote to get their SROs out. That was with hearing from the students' experiences, which is also data that we should be listening to and the data that they got from the report as well. That's thousands of students that are going to go to school without an SRO, and we were able to cut the budget by 20 million.

Veronica Rodriguez:

I think the only thing I'll add on to that was, not only did we have the tools of the FOIA, but we also had this awesome database that was accessible online. Whenever we would have actions for example, we showed up at the Board of Ed president's house the day that they were having a meeting. We were disrupting them outside of their home, and they called the cops on us. So as we're trying to hold space and these cops are just standing there watching us, students were like, "All right, I'm going to look at your badge number, and I'm going to look you up on this database, and I'm going to call you out and let the people around here know. The community and the people who are going to see this online know that this is the police officer that the Board of Ed President called so that they could arrest me, or that they could just stand there and harass me." So again, making those connections of there's these tools, these resources, but also there's this data that is showing once again how these cops are not. They're racist, they're abusive, and they're just not helpful and not needed.

Justin Hendrix:

I like all of your answers. What I do understand is that we see that most of the cops in our schools are not from our neighborhoods, as we see most of the cops that are on the police force are not from our neighborhoods. Even our sitting officials here in Champaign-Urbana themselves are not from our neighborhoods. So, I do understand there's a big urgency for having officials and individuals that are here to protect and serve be from our communities, or at least know and engage with that communities. Also, I need to know how you were able to defund that 20 million because we need to get a piece of that out of Champaign. Our next question is going to be ... We're talking about police in schools and the whole concept of abolition. How does that relate to your work to create a police-free school?

Zon Moua:

Okay, I'll go. So, how does abolition relate to our work to get police-free schools? I just want to clarify. Yeah, I want to start off by saying when Freedom Inc, when our young people was thinking about our police-free schools campaign, the one thing that we were trying to model or push for was actually community control over police, or just community control over an institution in general. We said we don't know if we'll ever ... How close we'll get to that in the bigger sense of our community, but what would it mean and look like if we were able to do that in our schools to actually push for community control in our schools?

Zon Moua:

So getting rid of the police, and then actually having most impacted folks have control and decision making power around, what's happening in our schools? How should the funding be? What should be taught? We wanted to test that out in our schools and we said, "Why not try it in our schools with our campaign work?" We want to use it not enough for us to end that contract, but we actually want control. We want decision making power, and we want to ... And there's a chance that we might get this in our schools. How amazing would that be to use as a model then to actually say like, "If we can do this in our schools, we can actually do this in our communities." that was one thing that we really thought about when we were doing our police-free schools campaign, was around that and one of our demands is definitely community control. It's not enough that we end the contract and divest, invest and we want control.

Bianca Gomez:

Yeah, also I'll say to that our police-free schools campaign was, of course about ending the contract that the school district had with the city through the police, but it was also about ending the culture of policing of black children, of black and brown bodies in our schools because that's also ... The school-to-prison pipeline would exist, even if there were not SROs, right? The criminalization of young people, the harm done to young people would, and does exist even if there wasn't a school resource officers so we've also been really pushing for that.

Bianca Gomez:

Where are the policies that impact young people that forces them to divest from learning like racist and sexist dress code policies? How are they being taught by teachers? What is the curriculum? We need a decolonized curriculum. The curriculum is a form of policing young people, so that's really where ending policing in culture in addition, and especially to ending the physical presence of police officers. And what Zon said, community control is the only way we see that truly happening, because these schools have had hundreds of years to get it right for our young people and they haven't. So, now it's our young people's turn to decide how their schools are going to be.

Rita Conerly:

That's very good. I agree, Bianca. I think that leads into our next question, which is ... It's a little bit off topic, and not to divert but, what are we going to do about why police were put in schools in the first place? This question is asked by Clarissa Nickerson Foreman. For example, white teachers calling the police because of stereotypes, and no mandatory diversity training. So for example, students posting rap lyrics turned into the police by teachers.

Zon Moua:

I'll go first, then you all can add because I'm all like, "Easy, community control." Because again, I really do think it goes back to community control, exactly what Bianca was expanding more on. There are those policies still put in place where teachers can still call where even our behavior education plan to address behavior issues is basically like coded language to police black students and black bodies. So again, if we actually had community, if we actually had most impacted young people, black and brown folks who understands and actually wrote these policies and pushed things around, then we would actually be able to really put a stop to that.

Zon Moua:

And then I think also even this thing around ... I want people to be clear even around the history of police and why police were put in schools. I think a lot of times people go back to thinking, "Oh, it's because of the school shootings," but actually police were put into the schools when folks were trying to segregate the schools. But we also know that they weren't there to protect the black students, they were there to protect the white students. So, even for us to still understand that and know that is important.

Andrea Ortiz:

I'll jump in. Like what Zon's just said, the Chicago Teachers Union in the 60s, predominantly white. These teachers were the ones who are calling to get police in schools. The reason why police are in schools now is because they were scared of black and brown students when they were desegregating the schools and they were like, "I'm scared for my life. I need police in schools now." That's why they were placed in Chicago Public Schools. But fast forward to this year where the Chicago Teachers Union is standing by us and acknowledging this harm, and teachers from CTU coming out strong. Literally the students would be like, "We want you to show up to our actions, but the only thing we want you to do is stand as a barrier between us and the police, and that's the only thing I want you to do. Bring you, bring your body, bring your bikes."

Andrea Ortiz:

So we would just have teachers, and the teachers would serve as the buffers between the young folks and the other organizers, and the police and when it came down to it, were the ones putting their bodies on the line and getting arrested the date that we got the vote. And I really like what Maria had said, it's diversity training is not going to stop a racist white teacher. That's not going to do it. I saw something on Facebook that I really liked that's like, students deserve to see their teacher strive to dismantle white supremacy. You got to do that work and you got to put the work in, we're not going to outline it for you step by step.

Justin Hendrix:

I really appreciate all your answers, especially with discussing the position of SROs in education and police in schools, and even with teachers and how educators themselves have to start denouncing white supremacy. We know that implicit bias training, diversity training does not work for everyone. Any moment someone could still take the training and still be a racist. Hey, we have someone sitting in a seat currently for our nation that is a racist and will not announce it correctly, but then will play dumb for the people that he wants to serve. So our final question will be, what's the one point you want people to leave here with?

Bianca Gomez:

I think a lot of times what I hear from people who care but like aren't 100% convinced is that, "Well, these kids are bad." What I always say, "A black child doing whatever doesn't make them less deserving of freedom and dignity." I think if you understand that, then you know you can't call the police because that would be probably the most undignified experience that that young person has in their lifetime, hopefully only one. So a young person ... You can't just pick the good kids. You can't just pick the kids that are on their best behavior or follow European guidelines and standards of education and behavior. All of these children are deserving of freedom and dignity and them doing whatever, them getting in a fight, them talking back, them rolling their eyes, them being teenagers doesn't mean that they're less deserving of freedom.

Veronica Rodriguez:

I think two points that I can think of is to center youth, to listen to youth. My other point would be, it doesn't just stop with removing cups from schools. There is going to be work that is going to be needed after that. So ask yourself, "What is my role going to be? How am I sure of my responsibility in contributing to making sure that we can live in a world without police, without prisons, without incarcerating young people?"

Zon Moua:

And then also, just one thing for folks where I think, especially the non-black folks is even as we're supporting this work and knowing that this work is crucial to also our liberation is, how do we continue to do this work in a way that's actually again, going to really center and uplift black young people and their voices and their leadership? And also again, assessing again the risk of violence, and in what ways do we intervene in those moments so that we can continue to really support this work in all the ways that needs to be done for us to get justice?

Andrea Ortiz:

I would just say that folks on the ground, the community, our young folks, our parents, our uncles, our neighbors, they're the experts on these issues. They know what they need, and what the community needs and what they've seen. I think sometimes we tend to forget that and enter these spaces, and use vocabulary that's inaccessible and sometimes inaccessible to me. I'm like, "What? I don't understand that. I don't know, I just think sometimes we have to just be more mindful and less academically, because these are the folks, they know already. We just have to listen to them, and center them and uplift their voices.

Rita Conerly:

Thank you, each of you. The time is now about 8:30. I just want to remind everyone who's listening in that tomorrow at seven o'clock, we will be hosting a workshop. The Zoom link should be in the chat. I believe Naomi, if you could put that in the link again so that people won't have to scroll, it'll be right there. But again, from seven to nine tomorrow, we'll be talking about organizing for police-free schools with the panelists that are here tonight. There is a Facebook link, if you guys want to go to that to learn more about what that workshop will be about. We look forward to having everyone there tomorrow. Thank you to each of the panelists. I'll let Naomi and Toby close this out, but thank you again everyone who has joined us tonight.

Naomi Paik:

Thank you all for being here. For everyone who's still with us in the audience, thank you so much for joining us. I want to personally thank Bianca, Zon, Veronica, Andrea, for sharing your brilliance, your fierceness, your savviness and just every ... You seriously have breathed in life to me today. It's been a really hard, I don't even know how long anymore. It's just been really hard, and I feel like learning and absorbing from you is just everything. I also want to personally thank Justin and Rita. Mayahuel had another obligation, but we really appreciate you so much for energizing this discussion and bringing it home to Champaign-Urbana. We do still have a couple of spaces available for tomorrow's workshop so please join us. I know I can't get enough of this so I have a feeling that there's other people who feel the same to me. Toby, did you want to close this out?

Toby Beauchamp:

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No, just thank you all so much for ... This was really life giving and I'm really excited about the workshop tomorrow too. Thanks everyone for participating, and hope to see many of you tomorrow.

Naomi Paik:

Thank you so much.

Zon Moua:

Thank you, bye.