

## Hi, How Are You? A Virtual Round Table Conversation

Contributor quotes and bios



### ***"What makes a neighbor a neighbor? Is this a noun? A verb?"***

---Miyuki Baker

Miyuki Baker brought their knowledge, experience and creativity to facilitate our conversation with agility and grace. Miyuki Baker is a non-binary Zainichi (zai rhymes with eye) artist & scholar living in Fruitvale committed to Beautiful Scholarship for our collective liberation. They are currently finishing their PhD in performance studies at UC Berkeley writing about histories of mutual aid in East Oakland.

Learn more about their work at [www.miyukibaker.com](http://www.miyukibaker.com).

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### ***"What question will you stay faithful to? What else is possible?"***

---Shikira Porter

Shikira Porter is a being whose values are rooted in integrity, grace, and vulnerability. She is one of the co-founders of Neighbors For Racial Justice, a multi-racial group composed mostly of white women who examine and act to address internalized racism, anti-blackness, and white supremacy. As the N4RJ Black Advisory Council leader, Shikira has provided Commons Archive with powerful feedback. Over the past year, we've taken a deep dive into examining our methods and processes as we work toward equity-based actions.

Learn more about N4RJ at [www.neighborsforracialjustice.org](http://www.neighborsforracialjustice.org)

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***"Telling a story is dope. What action happens after?"***

---Leo Mercer

Leo Mercer is a Community Organizer & Culture Keeper born and raised in Oakland CA. We first worked with Leo at our last large public event in 2020 at the Golden Gate Library. A musician and activist, Leo blended recorded neighborhood history with local jazz to create a unique soundscape in the library. As a displaced North Oaklander, he shares his powerful perspective on who can be called a neighbor. It's not only about where you lay your head. It's what's in your heart.

Leo supports the needs of all neighbors in his capacity as the director of Oakland Communities United for Equity & Justice. As the founder of The MERCER Brotherhood, Leo leverages Hip Hop as a platform for social change. Learn more about [The MERCER Brotherhood](#) and follow Leo on Instagram [@mercerbrotherhood](#).

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***"People tell their stories so we can grow and learn together. We hear each others' concerns and realize we're not so different."***

---Saturu Ned

We're blessed that Brother Saturu, a Commons Archive partner, has been sharing his knowledge and wisdom with the community through workshops at the Golden Gate Library. Believing in the power of history, Brother Saturu shares Panther community building tools to use in neighborhoods today.

Saturu Ned is a member of the original Black Panther Party who continues his activism as an educator & community architect. He is one of the founders of the newly formed Black Panther Party Alumni Legacy Network that supports the Black Panther Party's original survival programs for economic stability and freedom. Learn more about the [Black Panther Party Alumni Legacy Network](#).

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***"Disconnecting ourselves from the outcome and being open to the process requires listening and being responsive."***

---Toby Lewis

Two years ago, Toby partnered with Commons Archive to amplify and save the stories from longtime neighbors on her block. Last year she helped coordinate a deep listening session with

several Black neighbors whose families have been part of the local block club for generations. Toby is now working with Commons Archive to develop a neighbor-driven process to strengthen neighbor relationships.

Toby Lewis is a North Oakland neighbor who is deeply invested in fostering community resilience. She participates in the 900 Block Apgar Group, [#regularonly](#) musical events in connected backyards, local BLM and reproductive rights demonstrations, and the Longfellow Community Association board.

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***"Who do I treat with dignity and respect? What are my biases, how can I be kind to myself in recognizing them?"***

---Heidi Herrera

Heidi Herrera is an Oakland-based writer, designer, and cultural worker who has been a Commons Archive collaborator since 2018. She joined the Commons Archive team while interning at the Kala Art Institute. Through a design practice that centers equity and accessibility, Heidi crafts meaningful, engaging print and social media materials for Commons Archive. Heidi manages [@commons\\_archive](#) social media content, contributes to equity-based strategies, and designs zines and other visual ephemera.

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***"How do we let go of the drive for consensus in group work and prioritize 1-to-1 relationships?"***

---Sue Mark

North Oakland has been Sue's home for nearly three decades. The city's health directly impacts her well-being. With Oakland's rapid change, we wonder, how can neighborhood culture remain both intact and evolve? When do neighborhoods become communities that embrace their diversity and difference? Sue Mark is a cultural researcher, literacy educator, artist, and long-time North Oakland neighbor.

As ['marksearch'](#) she designs interactive opportunities to amplify and preserve diverse neighborhood narratives. Her projects amplify community knowledge and honor extraordinary neighbors leading ordinary lives. In 2016 she launched Commons Archive, a grassroots history project.