



# force

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## 2017 Annual Report





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# Dear FORCE Community:

What a hard year it's been to dream a different world. FORCE came together because we saw art as a vehicle for dreaming - a way to build a different world even when it feels so impossible. That's why each of us within the collective fell in love with FORCE's work: what would a world without rape look like? feel like? how would we breathe differently?

How audacious it is to say that we can have a world without rape.

Yet, to be honest, it has felt foolish sometimes to say it - when we live in a country where Flint has gone over a thousand days without water, young Black girls are imprisoned for fighting for their survival, Nazis are marching with torches in Charlottesville, and trans immigrants are being arrested for deportation while seeking aid from abusive relationships. So much dreaming has felt foolish recently.

We've begun to ask ourselves if it is possible to dream too big - if perhaps our work should be different. Then, in October, the Monument Quilt got wet, risking damage to these stories that we are entrusted to care for. But instead of ruining the stories, our community rallied to help. Close to fifty volunteers came together and helped us dry thousands of stories. People donated space, time, and helped move hundreds of pounds in boxes. As we folded the quilts, we shared stories of each square's making. The square that was made at the Border Display in Texas by a family sharing their healing journey; the Lakota Women Are Sacred square made at the White Buffalo Calf Woman Society (the first domestic violence shelter to open on a reservation); and the Free Marissa Now square displayed at her final sentencing hearing in Florida in partnership with the Free Marissa Now Campaign. Standing in that space with hundreds of drying quilt blocks, we recognized that we were stewards of a profound and powerful history that we are honored to share with you.

This is a watershed moment not just for us, but for our country. #metoo has taken social media by storm. Millions of dollars have been raised to combat sexual harassment in the workplace. What makes this moment so different from other ones where survivors have come forward, is that we are being visibly affirmed and uplifted like never before. For survivors to come together and fight to create a world where sexual and domestic violence no longer exists, it is necessary for us to engage in an honest accounting of how rape culture has supported white supremacy in America.

What we know is that there is a vast schism between the experiences of White survivors, and survivors from marginalized communities. In 2017, the CDC found that Black women are more than twice as likely to be killed by their partner than white women. Rising xenophobia continues to marginalize immigrant and undocumented communities - more than 70% of undocumented immigrant women experience sexual assault while migrating to the United States. 1 in 3 Native women are raped, stalked or abused every year. Trans folks, particularly Black trans women continue to have some the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault in the country. In fact, Black women and transgender individuals are at higher risk of experiencing criminalization and violence by police upon reporting domestic violence and sexual assault. It is not by happenstance that for every Black woman who reports a sexual assault, there are 15 Black women whose assault goes unreported.

The lethality of domestic and sexual violence in our communities is breathtaking. So it is not shocking in 2017, that we are not only fighting to stay alive, but also to be believed. Frederica Wilson, a Black woman representative from Florida was called a liar by White House Deputy of Staff John Kelly for stating facts that were videotaped, recorded and transcribed. The Dakota Access Pipeline has finished construction - and already has sprung several leaks sickening the land of reservations.

This is rape culture. The reality that no matter what we experience, say or do, our histories are questioned, our voices ignored, and we are robbed of the right to our land and bodies. In truth, as hard as 45's administration has been, it has only brought to light what so many of us have already known: rape culture cannot end until white supremacy does.

So yes, our work is vast. However, we work to keep centered in the great truth that no matter how hard this work is, that we have a right to our own bodies. This is a truth that needs to be celebrated, shouted out on rooftops and fought for until the end of time. This truth means we need to change the way we do our work, shift how we see collaboration. We have moved to a collective model, and looked inwards at how we operate to ask ourselves one question about each step we take: does this move us towards liberation? Along the way, some of those answers have been hard to hear, and we have struggled as a collective to be a liberatory space. We'll be sharing more about that journey in the year to come.

We remain abundantly grateful for your belief in FORCE's vision, for helping us to continue to dream big and loudly, even when it's hard. We acknowledge those who have moved on to different projects, including FORCE's co-founder, Rebecca Nagle, and so many other beautiful collaborators who have nourished this project into being.

In closing, FORCE's work continues to be about finding a different way of being and being seen. Hannah V. Sawyer, Baltimore Poet Laureate, put it best in her haiku for the #decriminalizesurvival action lifting up survivors incarcerated for defending themselves.

our fight is not for  
a longing for revenge but  
for our survival

in love,  
Saida, Shanti and Hannah





# FORCE Mission

## Leadership Team

FORCE creates art actions to upset rape culture and foster a counterculture of consent. Our campaigns generate media attention and get millions of people talking. Nationally known for producing large-scale public art projects, we believe that a more difficult and honest conversation needs to happen in America to face the realities of sexual violence, and envision a world where sex is empowering and pleasurable rather than coercive and violent.

Founded in 2010, FORCE’s highly visible, large-scale projects involve the efforts of many people, including survivors and their allies, from across the country. FORCE first emerged into the national sphere with a Victoria Secret “panty prank”, announcing the launch of consent themed underwear supposedly sponsored by Victoria’s Secret. Since then, FORCE has launched several large scale national programs designed to engage community members in healing and critical conversations about rape culture in the United States. Our work would not be possible without the belief and investment of thousands of survivors and allies across the country. We ground our work in the practice of relationship building - our projects are designed to build deeper connections and relationships between survivors, friends and loved ones.

FORCE is most well known for The Monument Quilt - a growing collection of twenty five hundred survivor stories stitched onto red fabric. At the heart of our work is a commitment to fostering survivor led movement building that centers art as a vehicle for healing, understanding, resistance and social change.

- Alexis Flanagan
- Amber Melvin
- Ella Rogers-Fett
- Greg Grey Cloud
- Jacob Simpson
- Jadelynn Stahl
- Jane Brown
- Kalima Young
- Kate Bishop
- Kiara James
- Liz Ensz
- Lorena Kourousias
- Mora Fernández
- Norwood Johnson
- Rachel Gilmer
- Winter Miller

**Shanti Flagg** is the Studio Director at FORCE.

**Saida Agostini** is the Chief Operations Officer for FORCE.

**Hannah Brancato** is the Co-founder and Creative Director of FORCE.





# Who We Are

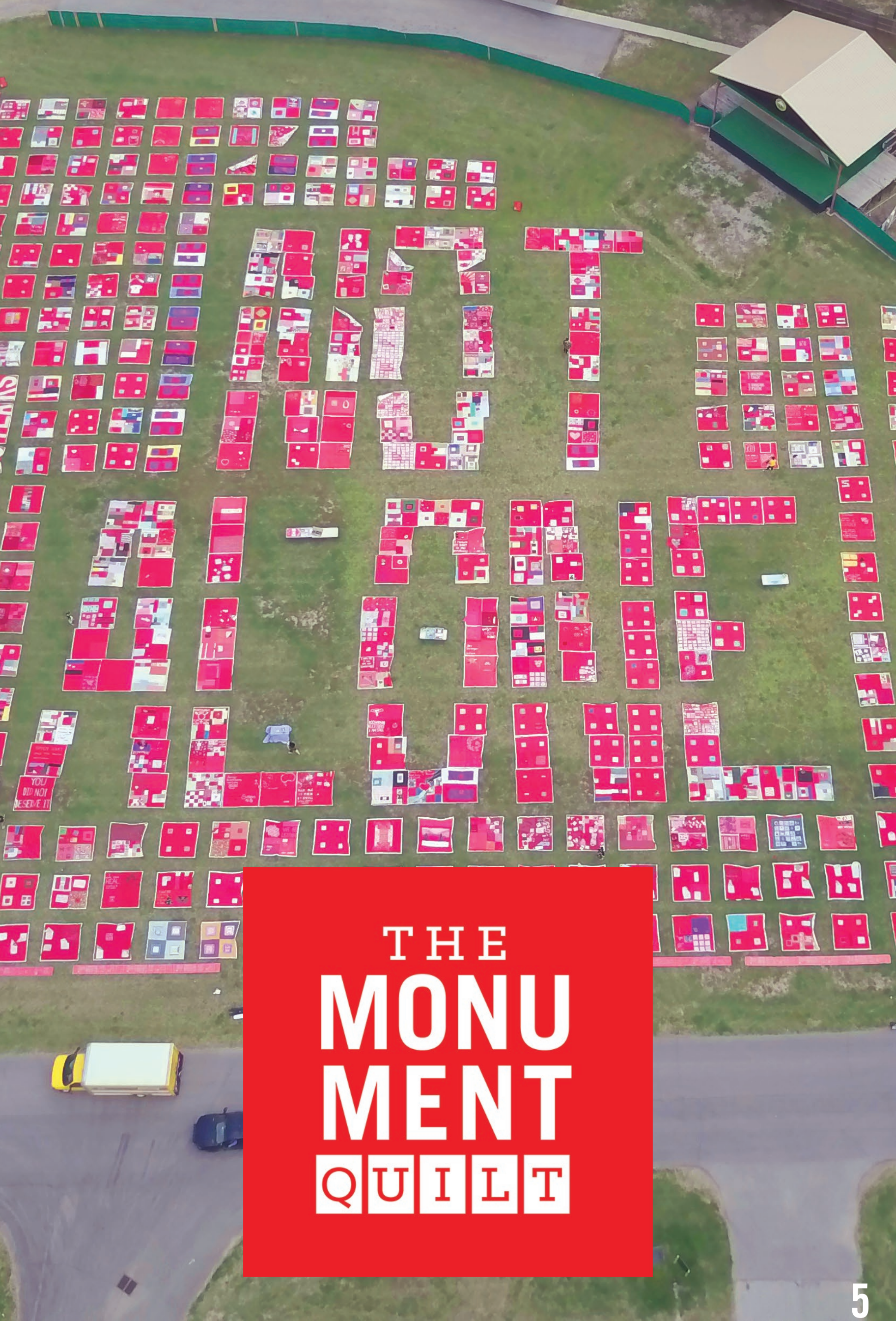
FORCE's work is collective. The actions we take to disrupt rape culture are, and have always been, rooted in brilliant analysis and personal experiences of people directly impacted by rape and abuse about what we need to heal, to change our culture from one that shames and blames survivors to one that supports us. The hard work that goes into monumental visions and actions have always been carried out by many, through tasks large and small. Time and time again, people have stepped up to volunteer when FORCE needs to find better ways to work with one another, or to lay out hundreds of survivor stories on a football field, or to create this very report, or count tent stakes (repeatedly!!). Consistently, the people who show up are women, people of color, indigenous people, and LGBTQ folks -- those who are most impacted by rape and abuse.

But too often, we have not done a good enough job of making sure that the many individuals moving mountains together with FORCE are seen, recognized, and affirmed for the essential role they play in creating change that is larger than any one of us. As 2017 comes to a close and we look towards 2018, we have a renewed commitment to honoring the labor, collective energy, and collaborative spirit of our Leadership Team, countless volunteers, and hundreds of donors, without whom, the Monument Quilt and FORCE's work would quite simply not exist.

We are grateful to the following people for guiding and carrying out this work. We are grateful to them for holding FORCE to a high standard, holding us accountable, and challenging us to mirror a culture that believes, uplifts and supports survivors, where we model a culture of consent, and where we resist white supremacy, within our day-to-day as well as through our art actions. In shining a light on the following individuals, we honor and acknowledge those who invested time and labor in FORCE who are not listed below, and/or who are no longer involved with FORCE.







# THE MONU MENT QUILT





# Studio Update

This year, The Monument Quilt studio saw a lot of changes and expansions. In our home at Motor House in Baltimore, we are now open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 1-7 and Friday/Saturday 12-5, which is more hours than ever before! Running the studio is meaningful because it's a space where survivors and supporters can engage with this issue in a healthy way. Just by being in the studio, we simultaneously acknowledge the bad and traumatic things in the world while honoring our ability to continue living. Continuing to live doesn't mean what happened isn't still present with us. It means we accept it, and also accept it doesn't define us. At the studio and through our work at FORCE, we, together, are actually creating and living a culture that supports, uplifts, and listens to survivors.



This year, volunteers worked with Shanti, the Studio Director, and received and processed about 450 new Quilt squares from survivors and their supporters. About 220 volunteers gave more than 1500 hours of their time to add these new Quilts into the Monument Quilt!

From the bottom of our hearts, **thank you** to every single person who participated in the Monument Quilt this year. We are always in awe of and learning from the passion of every person who contributes to this work.



In 2018, we are preparing the Monument Quilt for the final display on the National Mall within the next year. The growth of this project has been incredible to watch and be a part of. As more people get talking about this issue, FORCE hopes more people will begin to realize the deep importance of public healing space like the Monument Quilt. If that is you, consider joining us in the New Year as a volunteer! Email [shanti.flagg@gmail.com](mailto:shanti.flagg@gmail.com) to volunteer!





*April 23rd, Valley Center, CA. In partnership with La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians Avellaka Program's 8th Inter-Tribal Annual Sexual Assault Awareness walk. Hosted by the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians.*

**April 2017**

## West Coast Tour

Leading up to a historic display at the US/Mexico border, and during sexual assault awareness month, the Monument Quilt travelled the US and Mexico with stops in California, Arizona, Oklahoma and Texas. The quilt partnered with Native American Tribes, Immigration Advocacy Groups, College Campuses and a US military base to build a national call for communities to organize against sexual and domestic violence. Through survivor's own stories, the Monument Quilt makes visible the ways that US policy and culture collude to create high rates of violence. Four in five Native women will be raped, abused or stalked in their lifetime while the overwhelming majority of their perpetrators are Non-Native (96%). In 2014, 10,600 men and 9,600 women were sexual assault while serving in the US military and 85% of these victims did not report their crime. Of reported crimes only 9% of perpetrators were convicted of a sex offense by the US military. According to Amnesty International Mexico, more than 70% of undocumented immigrant women experience sexual assault while migrating to the United States. Anti-Black racism in the United States intensifies the impact of Xenophobia on undocumented Black immigrants. A recent study found that Black undocumented immigrants are detained and deported at [five times](#) the rate of their presence in the undocumented immigrant community.



# Official Tour Dates and Partners

## April 13th:

Okmulgee, OK, At Muscogee (Creek) Nation Festival Grounds. In partnership with Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Family Violence Prevention and Native Alliance Against Violence.



## April 18th:

Ft Hood, Texas, At Sadwoski Parade Field, Ft Hood Military Base. In partnership with III Corps and Fort Hood.





**April 21st:**

Phoenix, AZ, At Hayden Lawn, Arizona State University. In partnership with Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition, American Indian Graduate Student Association, Cocopah Tribe, and Arizona State University.





**April 23rd:**

Valley Center, CA. In partnership with La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians Avellaka Program's 8th Inter-Tribal Annual Sexual Assault Awareness walk. Hosted by the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians.



**April 25th:**

University of California Santa Barbara at Storke Plaza. In Partnership with Take Back the Night UCSB.





May 3rd:

San Francisco, CA, At City College of San Francisco. In partnership with Women's Studies/Project SURVIVE, Physical Education Department, and Student Health Services.



Rhonda Robinson and Stephanie Cassidy were the fearless stewards of the Monument Quilt, driving the project across the country and back for this tour!

**Rhonda Robinson** is a jazz vocalist, flutist, bandleader, and actress performing throughout the Mid-Atlantic region at clubs, festivals, concert series, schools, museums and special events. Since 2003, she has also been a serious student/practitioner of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) [www.RhondaRobinsonMusic.com](http://www.RhondaRobinsonMusic.com)

**Stephanie Cassidy** is an Oglala Lakota sister, daughter and friend. She is a recent graduate of the London School of Economics with a Masters in International Development and is passionate about public health, food sovereignty, gender, and migration. While she grew up in Tacoma, Washington and San Francisco, a good deal of her adult life has been spent on the east coast and she is happiest when she is spending time with and serving her community in Baltimore.









April 2017

## The Monument Quilt at the US/Mexico Border

At the end of our [West Coast Tour](#) this past April, the Monument Quilt and our sister project El Monumento de Historias by [La Casa Mandarin](#) blanketed both sides of the US/Mexico border, as a protest of Trump's xenophobic immigration policies, and to rally against US immigration policies that create high rates of sexual violence against undocumented immigrants.

On April 29th, Trump's 100th day in office, over 2,000 quilt squares created by survivors of rape and abuse were displayed at the US-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

According to Amnesty International Mexico, more than 70% of undocumented immigrant women experience sexual assault while migrating to the United States. Once in the US, immigrant women are three to six times more likely to experience domestic violence than U.S.-born women. Abusers and perpetrators use undocumented immigrant's fear of deportation and going to the police to commit rape and abuse with impunity, and recent anti-immigration rhetoric and policies has worsened these fears.

This event was organized in partnership with La Casa Mandarin, Feminismo Consciente, UTEP- Women's and Gender Studies Program, Center Against Sexual and Family Violence, Violence Intervention Program, Inc., Mujeres en Movimiento, and Make the Road NY.





## Learn more about the incredible partners who worked together to make the action a reality:

**Ixchel Villareal** is based in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, is the founder and CEO of [Feminismo Consciente](#). She was the local organizer of El Monumento de Historias in Ciudad Juárez. Ixchel and Melquíades, her amazing son, organized a series of activities the week before the border display including lectures, quilt making workshops and a display at the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez (UACJ). Her passion, joy and commitment to women's rights were an essential part of the border display success. Ixchel is a psychologist and feminist activist in Ciudad Juárez since 2010. Her activism has been mainly online starting with the Facebook page No quiero tu piropo quiero tu respeto ("I do not want your catcalls, I want your respect") that became a women's collective offering workshops on dating violence and sexual harassment in public places. With a reach of more than 700,000 people on Facebook, the project ended to make room for a new personal initiative on menstruation, feminist maternity and health called [Feminismo Consciente](#) ("Conscious Feminism").

**Juan Ortiz**, from El Paso, Texas, organized the programming and partnerships in El Paso. Juan built on the organizing work of a former member of FORCE's Leadership Team, Teonia Burton, in recruiting partnerships in El Paso. As a person from that city he also engaged his friends and family in the process of bringing the Monument Quilt to the Southwest. Juan Ortiz is an artist, activist and community organizer who was most recently Creative Alliance's Robert W. Deutsch Foundation Fellow for 2016 – 2017. Ortiz is a graduate of Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in the Community Arts Masters in Fine Arts program. He is presently a doctoral student and fellow in Mexican American studies at the University of Arizona.



**Lorena Kourousias** organized Latinx survivors in New York, where she is based, in series of Monument Quilt workshops, generating about 100 quilts from women and trans survivors whose voices became a central part of the event. Lorena also organized press to uplift the events at the border in April. Lorena is a Mexican-American immigrant, works as Director of Economic Justice and Survival Programs at The Violence Intervention Program. She had recently graduated with a Master's degree in Social Work from Hunter College. She also holds a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology from Mexico City. She had been honored with five community service award, the most recently in November 2017. She is a fellow of the Immigrant Civic Leadership Program at CORO New York Leadership Center. As many immigrant professionals, Lorena represents the struggle and perseverance that comes with the immigration process and the various barriers that professional immigrants have to face in the United States in the search of the American Dream, overcoming a long process of revalidating her credentials from Mexico, learning a new language, assimilating a new culture, overcome the physiological trauma that comes with the immigration process of re-starting her professional career. She is now a strong advocate of the immigrant community in NYC.

**Mora Fernandez** The border display was a culminating event for Mora after 3 years of healing workshops with survivors throughout Mexico, Latin-America and other places around the world. Mora is an activist, survivor, consultant, community organizer and advocate for survivors of sexual and domestic violence dedicated to fighting to end child sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation of children and promote immigrant, indigenous, women and children's rights. She combines her work with her passion for cultural diversity while travels around the world facilitating workshops and lectures to raise awareness on oppression, trauma and sexual violence. Mora is the Founder and CEO of [La Casa Mandarin AC](#) and Co-leader of [Project Envision NYC](#). Nowadays, she stars and co-produces [Secret Survivors Mexico](#), a performance presenting six survivors of child sexual abuse telling their real stories on the stage. Mora is an extremely passionate traveler, an amateur sculptor and an excellent dancer born in Mexico City but feeling a citizen. She loves coffee, trees and butterflies, watches soccer and plays domino. Mora is obsessed with 1970 Kombis and maps.



April, 2017, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ), Display. The day before the US/Mexico display, the Monument Quilt was displayed on the UACJ campus, featuring Quilts made in Mexico City.





September 2017

Gloria Garrett  
is an artist and  
community  
activist.  
Read more  
about Gloria  
on [Page 37!](#)

## Gloria Garrett Quilt Display and Workshop Series

Gloria Garrett's workshops with seven different community centers, focused on African American elders in Baltimore. The Monument Quilt squares created by 50 people throughout the city were displayed at the Rita Church Community Center. Gloria, in partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation, led these workshops at Abundant Life Towers; Bolton North Apartments; Cherry Hill Seniors; Greater New Hope Towers; Pleasant View Gardens; Rita Church Community Center; and Waters Towers. Pictures from the event [can be viewed here](#).





# Monument Quilt Displays This Fall

## September 2017:

Fort Belvoir Quilt Display.  
The Fort Belvoir SHARP Resource Center and AFSC SHARP hosted the #MonumentQuilt at Fort Belvoir on September 14, 2017. The event was in partnership with PAVE-Promoting Awareness Victim Empowerment.



## October 2017:

Quilt Display at JHU.  
Our second quilt display at John Hopkins University was organized with CHEW at Johns Hopkins University, a part of the Student Health Ctr, Women and Gender Resources at JHU, LGBTQ Life at JHU, JHU Bystander Intervention: Every Little BIT Counts, and SARU - Sexual Assault Resource Unit hosted the Monument Quilt at Johns Hopkins University.





**October 2017:**

Display at Case Western University, sponsored by the CWRU Social Justice Institute, Flora Stone Mather Center for Women - CWRU, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, CWRU Green Dot, CWRU Greek Life, SMARTT (Students Meeting About Risk And Responsibility Training), Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research & Education, SAVE (Sexual Assault and Violence Educators), The Feminist Collective at CWRU, Case Western Reserve University's LGBT Center, the Women & Gender Studies Program, the Center for Civic Engagement and Learning, Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, @the National Council for Jewish Women/Cleveland, and ATNSC: Center for Healing & Creative Leadership.



**October 2017:**

Ohio University. Geneva Murray, who worked with FORCE as far back as 2013 and initiated one of the 2014 Tour partnerships, organized the largest Monument Quilt display to date this past fall at Ohio University. The display was hosted by the Women's Center; Ohio University Multicultural Center; Ohio University LGBT Center; Bscpb Ohio U; Center for Law, Justice & Culture; Diversity Studies Certificate Program; Ohio University Division of Student Affairs; Ohio University Department of Social and Public Health; United Campus Ministries; Ohio University's Manasseh Cutler Scholars Program; Ohio University Honors Tutorial College; Multicultural Faculty In-Residence; Ohio Athletics; Ohio University College of Fine Arts; Department of Political Science, Ohio University, Athens OH; Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Ohio University; Psychology; and Between Love and Hate Theme.







## Other Exhibitions

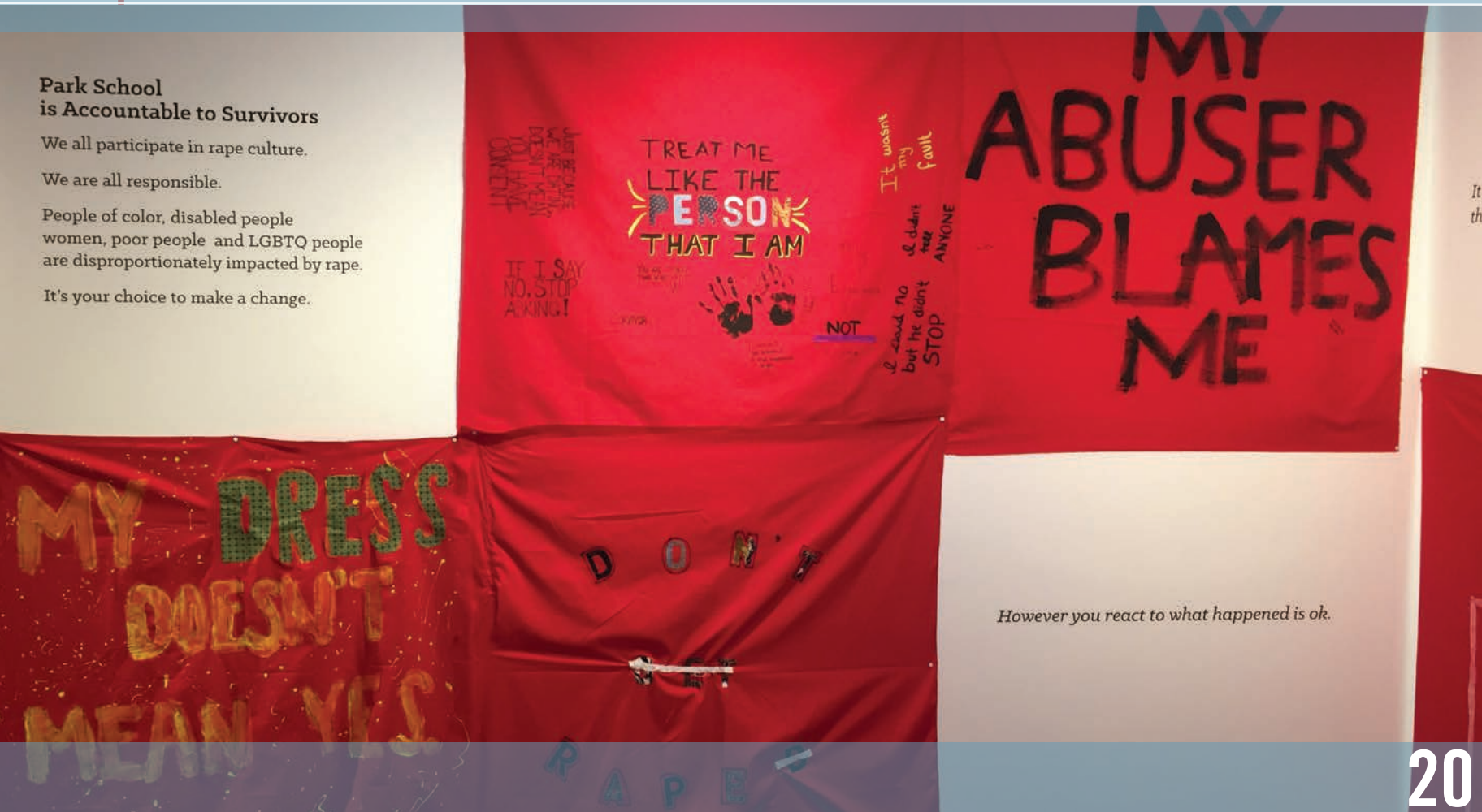
### *Interference Archive, Brooklyn, NY*

On display throughout 2017. Leadership Team Member Lorena Kourousias was featured on the Interference Archive podcast. She speaks on the intersections of immigration and sexual assault, and her work with Latinx survivors.

[Listen to the podcast here!](#)

### *Park School Artist Residency*

As Artists in Residence at the Park School, FORCE worked with high school students to explore how to use art as an act of resistance against rape culture. Students took part in a quilt workshop and artist talk led by Hannah and Shanti. Their squares were then displayed in the Park School Gallery for the remainder of 2017.



#### **Park School is Accountable to Survivors**

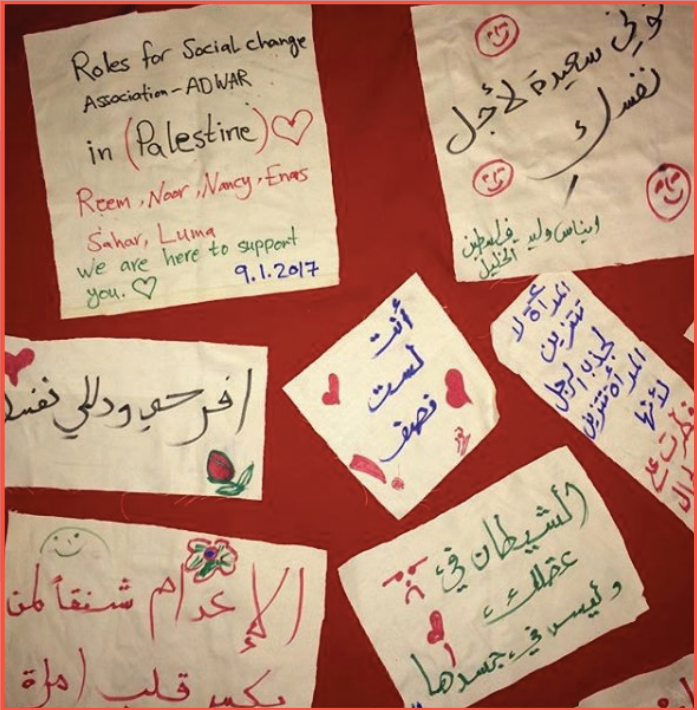
- We all participate in rape culture.
- We are all responsible.
- People of color, disabled people  
women, poor people and LGBTQ people  
are disproportionately impacted by rape.
- It's your choice to make a change.

However you react to what happened is ok.



# Quilt Workshops

Early in 2017, FORCE collaborated with **The Baltimore Transgender Alliance** to hold a series of 3 quilt workshops for trans and gender non-conforming survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. The space was provided for quilt-making, storytelling, and sharing community support. This event created a healing space through collaboration.



In January 2017, **Mora Fernandez**, from La Casa Mandarina (LCM), hosted a training on sexual violence and a quilt workshop for the staff of Roles for Social Change Association (ADWAR) a nonprofit in Hebron, Palestine working for gender equity.

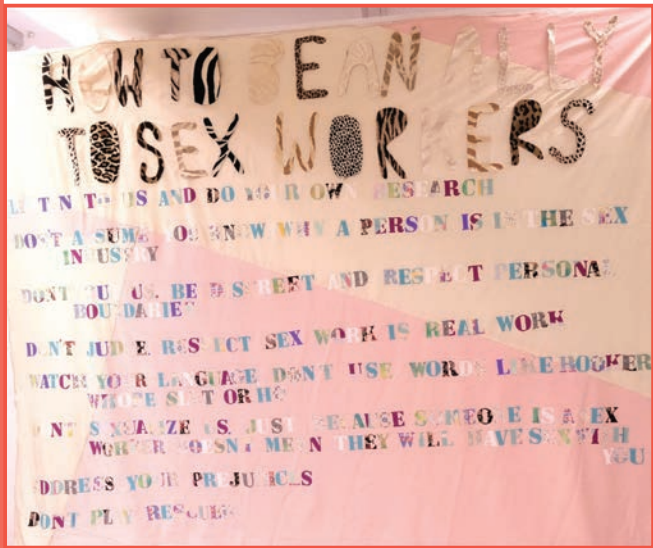
In February 2017, **LCM** hosted a Quilt making workshop in Mexico City for women survivors of sexual and domestic violence as part of a training on child sexual abuse organized by the non-profit CEPACOVIC AC.







On March 12, nine University of Maryland students gathered to create Monument Quilt squares, with donations from Community Forklift and Artist and Craftsman Supply.



**Robin Marquis** was an artist-in-residence with FORCE until June 2017. They focused on creating Quilts featuring the main messages of the Monument Quilt and what it means to be an ally to sex workers. Robin organized Quilt workshops with several different groups, including the Sex Workers Outreach Project. Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)-USA is a national social justice network dedicated to the fundamental human rights of people involved in the sex trade and their communities, focusing on ending violence and stigma through education and advocacy.

Robin also worked with and mentored our Spring 2017 interns, who all hosted workshops with their communities. Huge shout out to Simone, Megan Koeppel, Olivia Cigarroa, Tracy Gao, Udi Onyile, Karina Rahman and Jazmine James, who made Quilts to uplift stories from Members of the Asian Pacific Islander Community, Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, Houseless People, Sex Workers, Victims of Sex Trafficking, Teenagers and Communities in Trinidad. Pictured is a Quilt-in-progress by Tracy.

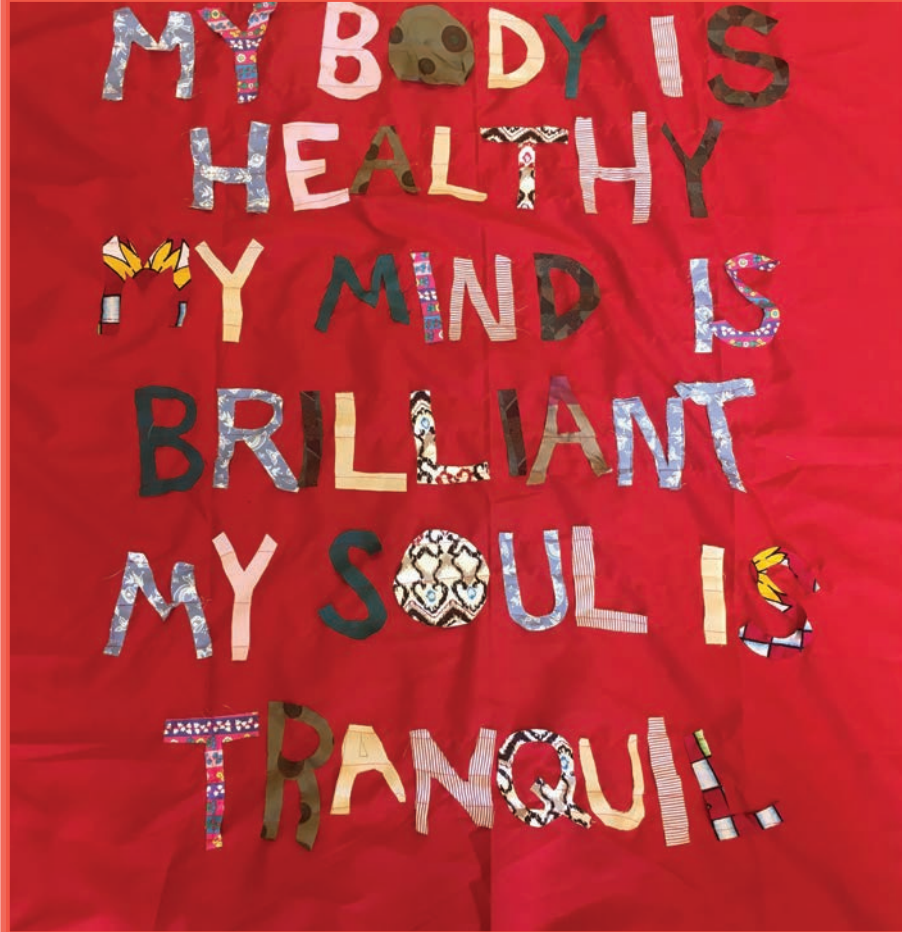




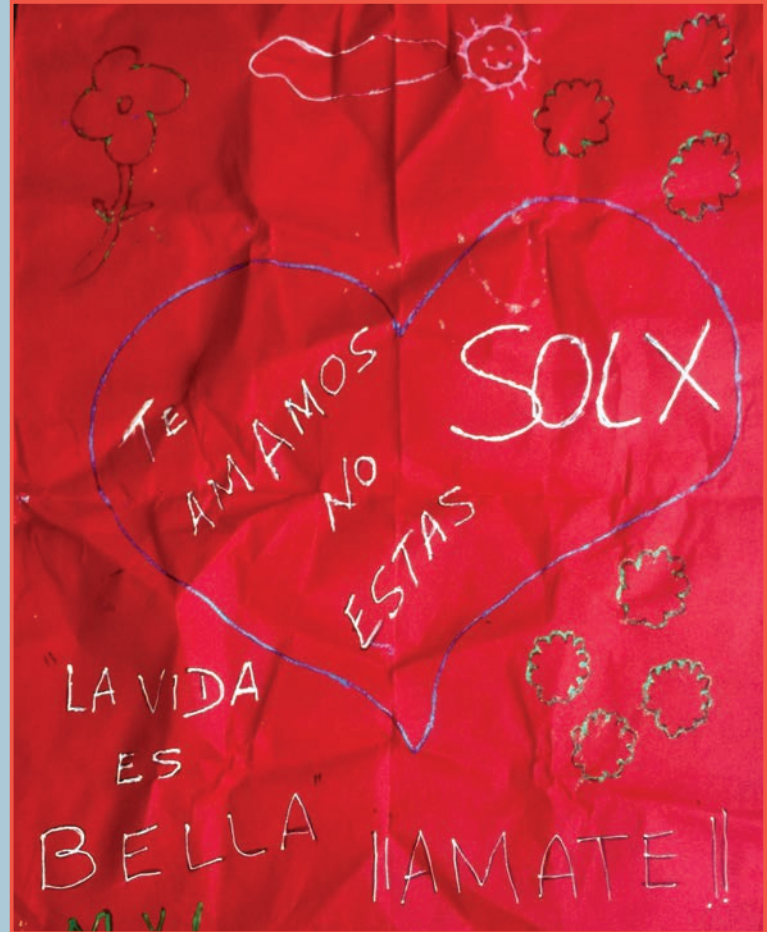
A red and white quilted blanket is laid out on a wooden floor. The blanket features the text "LOVE NOT SHAME" in large, bold, block letters. The word "LOVE" is in blue, with a small orange heart symbol replacing the letter "O". The word "NOT" is in yellow. The word "SHAME" is in blue. The blanket has a white central panel where the text is printed, and the rest of the blanket is red with white and yellow accents.







Leadership Team member **Rachel Gilmer** displayed a section of the Monument Quilt at the [Florida March for Black Women](#), in solidarity with [Black Women's Blueprint](#). The march centered the experiences of Black Women as racial justice issues, and Black lived-experiences related to gender, sexuality, gender identity as racial-justice-issues. Pictured here is the banner FORCE created for the march with the STAR TRACK Adolescent Health Program in Baltimore in their support group, Positive Thinking, which supports individuals between the ages of 12-26 who are HIV positive, a a Quilt from the Free Marissa Now campaign on display in Miami.



In July 2017, **LCM** hosted a Quilt workshop at Universidad del Valle de Tlaxcala as part of a Gender Violence Diplomat for female directors of local institutes organized by Tlaxcala Women State Institute.







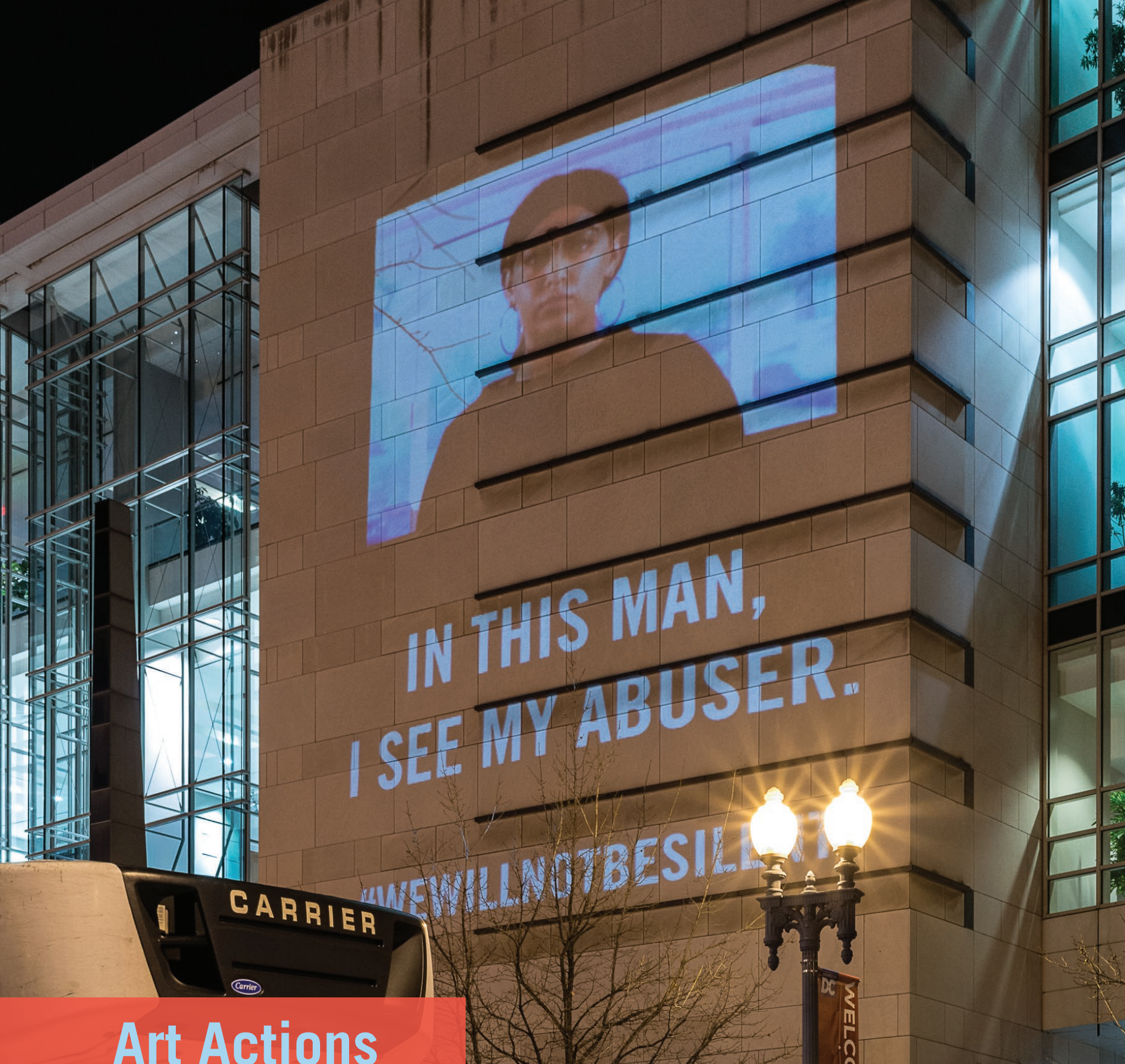
*Baltimore Ceasefire Banner and March*

The August 2017 Baltimore Ceasefire/Baltimore Peace Challenge, organized by **Erricka Bridgeford** and **Ellen Gee** with a team of many others, was a historic moment for Baltimore City. There were over 50 events hosted in solidarity with the Ceasefire, building powerful healing spaces for community members. FORCE hosted a quilt workshop in solidarity with Baltimore Ceasefire, creating a banner based on participants personal stories and experiences for the Baltimore Ceasefire Peace Walk & Vigil.



In September, **Aliya Webermann** hosted a workshop sponsored by the UMBC Women's Center as part of Critical Social Justice week.





## Art Actions

In collaboration with DISCLOSE, an Oakland based artist collective, FORCE kicked off 2017 by projecting stills from DISCLOSE's documentary on gender based violence onto the Washington Conference Center, the site of an Inaugural Ball, during Trump's Inauguration. This projection was part of a weekend long action where we hosted an online survivor forum and quilt workshop. This action highlighted the normalization of rape culture in our country, created visibility around our solidarity with one another as survivors resisting this administration, and encouraged survivors to explore what new blueprints of resistance could be created in the next four years.





January 2017

## In This Man

In collaboration with **DISCLOSE**, an Oakland based artist collective, FORCE kicked off 2017 by projecting stills from DISCLOSE's documentary on gender based violence onto the Washington Conference Center, the site of an Inaugural Ball, during Trump's Inauguration. This projection was part of a weekend long action where we hosted an online survivor forum and quilt workshop. This action highlighted the normalization of rape culture in our country, created visibility around our solidarity with one another as survivors resisting this administration, and encouraged survivors to explore what new blueprints of resistance could be created in the next four years.

In This Man was created with **Jadelynn Stahl's** leadership. Jadelynn Stahl is a radical, interdisciplinary performance artist, activist and community organizer based in Oakland, California. Fusing elements of durational art, video, ritual and burlesque, Stahl offers her body as a site of artistic investigation, exploring somatic and psychological expression in relation to legacies of trauma as well as cultural, racial and sexual identities. Stahl is the founder and lead coordinator of the DISCLOSE, a queer, Oakland-based collective of artists and educators committed to organizing arts-based community engagement in the eradication of sexual violence. In addition, Stahl acts as the LGBTQIA+ Program Manager and Outreach Clinician at BAWAR. Jadelynn is part of the Monument Quilt Leadership Team and is the founder and a Core Collaborator of DISCLOSE. DISCLOSE is a Bay Area, art-based collectivist organization founded in the Spring of 2013 to address the pervasive issue of sexual violence. We aim to actively consult with and engage our diverse communities through outreach, direct action and participation in various forms of art activism in order to facilitate dialogues that address the complex oppressive systems that allow sexual violence culture to thrive. Learn more at [disclosesilence.org](http://disclosesilence.org).



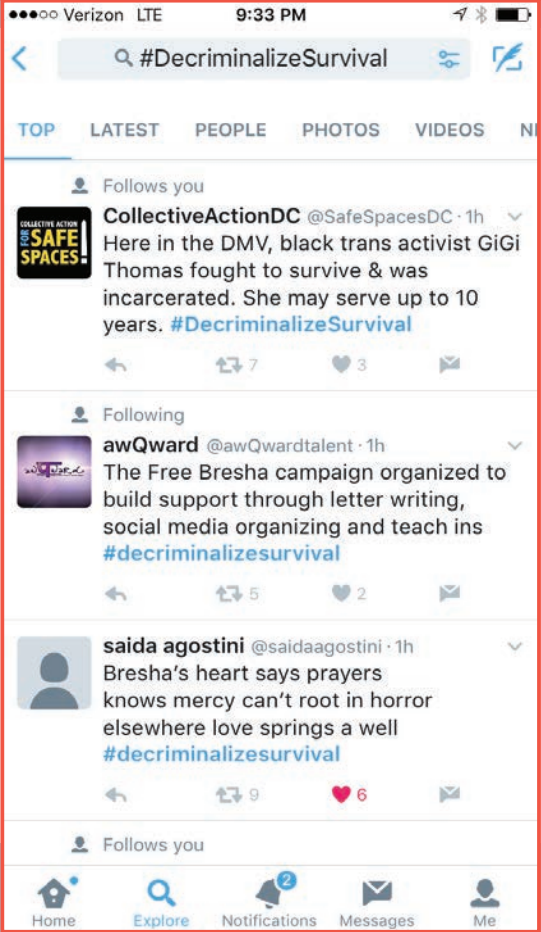
# Decriminalize Survival and Love Poems for Bresha

In May 2017, we organized Love Poems for Bresha, a national action that took place in six cities, thanks to local partners and organizers. These poetry readings featured drummers, and libations were poured to Black girls, cis and transgender women who have been criminalized for their survival. Poets were asked to read their own love poems to celebrate Bresha. The intent of these spaces was to create a community where Black women and girl survivors were being uplifted in love and honored. The focus was specifically on **Bresha Meadows**, a teenager who killed her abusive father in self defense, after seeking help and not being given support, and who was criminalized for her action.

About **awQward**: As activists and organizers, we often ask ourselves, “What would a world free of oppression look like?” awQward believe it is through art that we are able to even begin to imagine such possibilities. awQward believes in a world where art is an act of service and all creatives are historians that are documenting culture, movement and future. They believe in an arts practice in which we are able to care for ourselves and our community through fair wages and a redistribution of resources from institutions that have historically stolen from the Brilliance, Wealth, and Labor of Black & Brown bodies. awQward exists in opposition to transphobia & transmisogynoir. They exist in opposition to white supremacy. They exist in opposition to Islamophobia. They exist in opposition to anti-Blackness. They exist in opposition to ableism.



The Love Poems events were then followed up with Decriminalize Survival, an online twitter haiku open mic, co-hosted by awQward, a queer and transgender people of color talent agency. Decriminalize Survival took place on May 22nd, the day Bresha accepted her plea deal. It was a space to honor Black girls, femmes, transgender and non-binary individuals who have been criminalized for defending themselves against domestic and sexual violence.





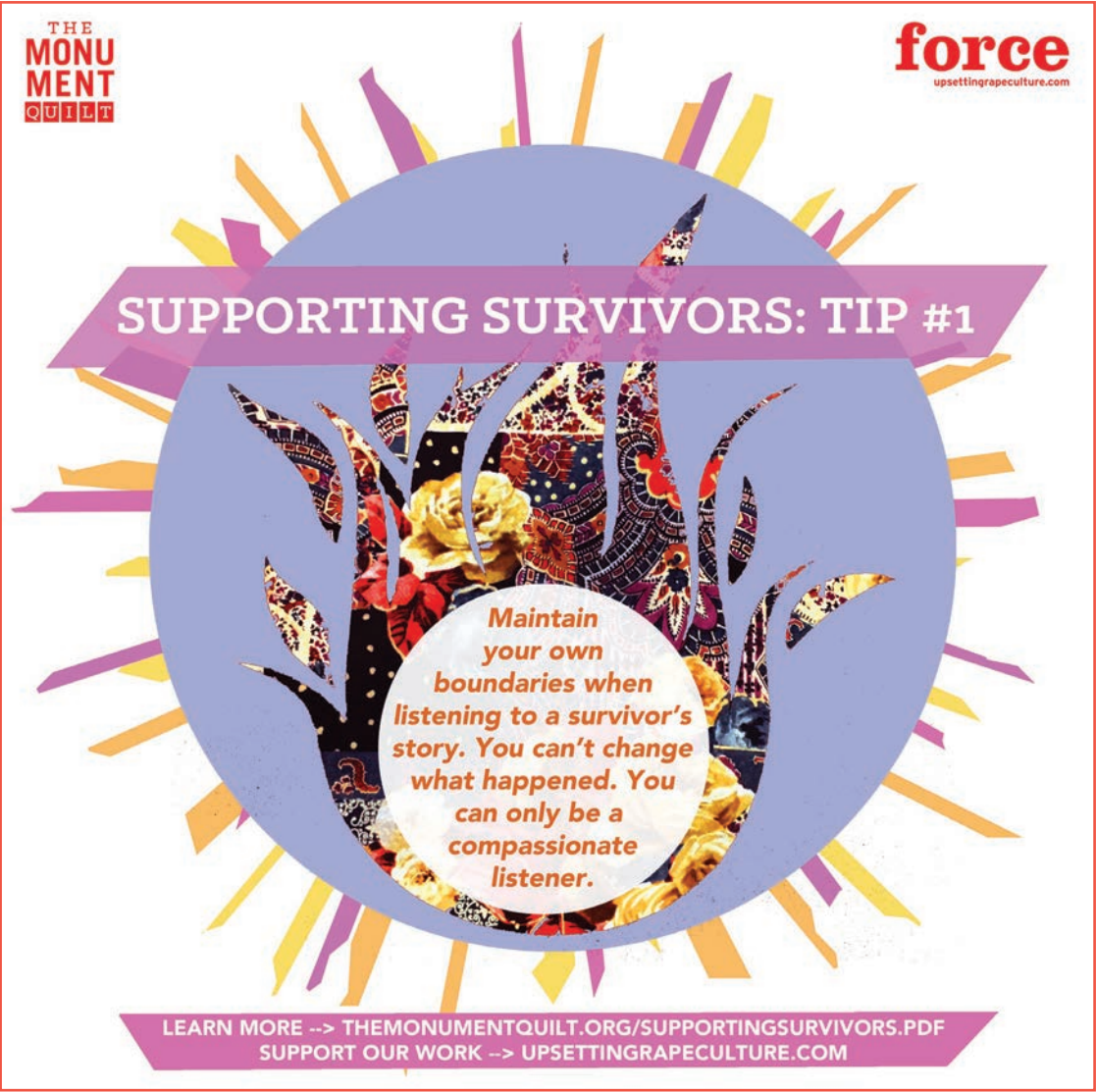
# Every Time We Say Your Name, It Is A Prayer

At the former site of a monument to Roger B Taney -- the Supreme Court Justice who is considered the “father” of the confederate movement -- FORCE supported the Rooted Collective for a healing ritual to honor enslaved Black folks who existed outside of dominant cis heteronormative narratives. Through this action, Rooted lifted up the lives of our ancestral elders, and engaged in healing work within a nation that continues to violate black sexual agency and gender self determination, even while pulling down confederate monuments.

The Rooted Collective is a liberatory gathering of Black LGBTQ people to define, dream, and expand on the ways in which we heal from oppression and practice joy and pleasure. As they say, “We root our work in the knowledge that healing for all Black people is political resistance.” Learn more at [bemorerooted.org](http://bemorerooted.org).

## Sharing Self Care

In the midst of the #metoo movement, we found that a number of our community members were feeling flooded by their timelines. We wanted to create spaces on social media where folks could share self care strategies with each other. Studio Director, Shanti Flagg transformed excerpts from FORCE’s Knowing How to Support Survivors Guide into compelling graphics. The guide, written in large part by Leadership Team member **Kate Bishop**, is available online.





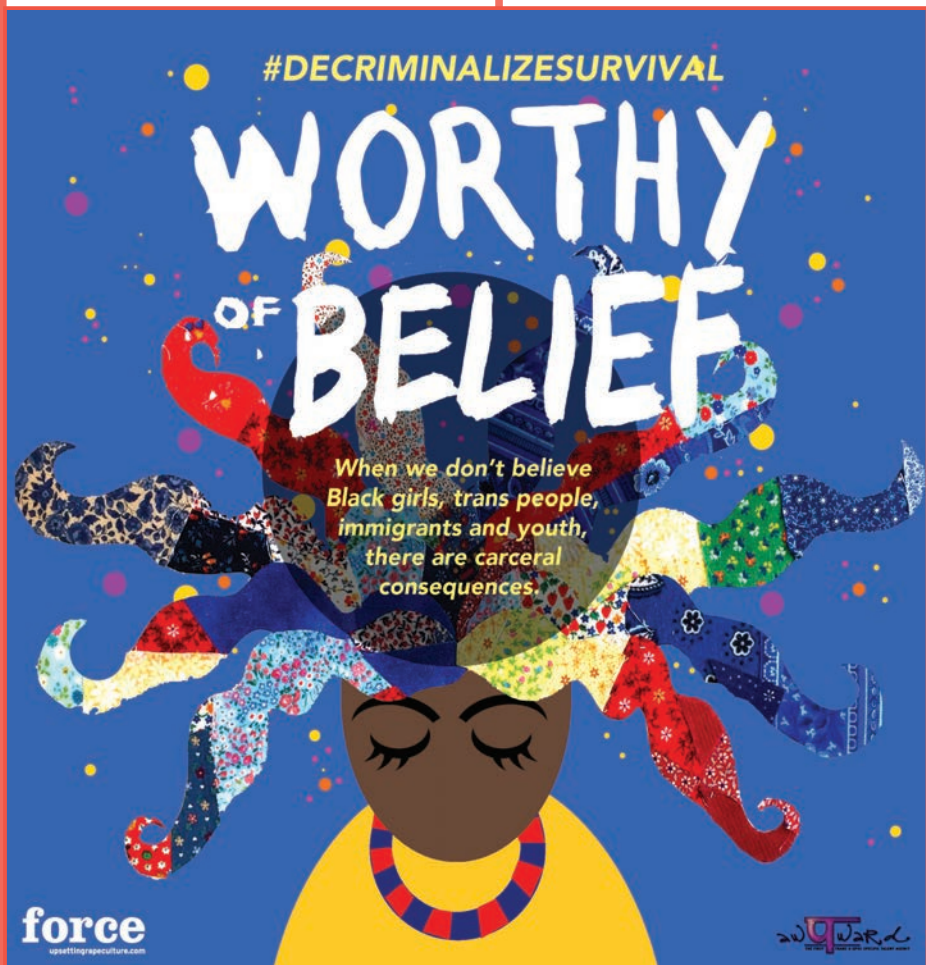


## Worthy of Belief

When Betsey Devos was invited to speak at University of Baltimore's graduation, FORCE organized a series of action to show our resistance. As 45's administration's continues to attack survivors - at home, abroad and on campus. 45 revoked the visas of nearly 60,000 Haitian immigrants. Roy Moore nearly won a Senate seat in Alabama - a man who dreams of an America where Black people were enslaved - and has had nine women allege assault against him. DeVos has raised the burden of proof for survivors on campus - making it harder for college students who experience sexual violence to seek justice. The lesson we as survivors learn again and again, is that rape is an American institution - and that speaking out harms us, and makes us more vulnerable within a toxic culture that seeks to punish survivors for asking to be believed. While belief is a luxury for any survivor, we know that for survivors of color, queer and trans folks, folks with disabilities, immigrants and/or undocumented people, youth and Muslim communities, belief in our histories -- the things that have happened to our bodies -- becomes nearly impossible. We believe it doesn't have to be this way. In response, FORCE hosted a google hangout conversation on what it would mean to create a new tradition of belief in America. FORCE joined with awQward, GLSEN Maryland, JHU Sexual Assault Resource Unit, End Rape On Campus, and the Marsha P Johnson Institute to host this conversation. The online action followed a protest that FORCE participated in with GLSEN Maryland and University of Baltimore faculty and students outside of the graduation ceremony.









# gather TOGETHER

**Gather Together** is FORCE's Baltimore based collective of survivors committed to fostering a network of people building a city where rape no longer exists. Gather Together was born out of FORCE's commitment to uplifting and affirming survivor voices. It offers a range of peer led healing activities for survivors, including skillshares, where community members teach strategies to foster resilience, and regular forums on survivor healing. Our most recent project is a survivor listening campaign building a community of survivors in Baltimore dedicated to ending rape culture in our city.





# Thrive: Survivor Skill Shares

Designed by Gather Together, Thrive is a space for people impacted by sexual and domestic violence to grow, learn, and heal as a community. Each monthly workshop focuses on a different theme ranging from visual and performing arts, to restorative healing, to sex education. Each month a guest facilitator created a healing space and shared resources as take-aways after the event. Our goal is to share skills for healing, surviving, and thriving, and to build community connections to show that we are not alone on our healing journeys.



A Thrive activity book makes the monthly workshops available for people anywhere, anytime. The workbook, which [can be found here](#), included activities ranging from breath work, to healing crafts, to writing prompts, based on workshops by Saida Agostini, Aayesha Aijaz, Alanah Nichole Davis, Jordannah Elizabeth, Shanti Flagg, Ignacio Rivera, Monica Yorkman, Noelle Imperato, Shawna Murray-Browne, and Rhonda Robinson.

**Shawna Murray-Browne LCSW-C** was one of the Thrive facilitators and has acted in an advisory capacity with Gather Together. Shawna, is the owner of Kindred Wellness, LLC, an integrative practice dedicated to honoring culture, expanding mindfulness, and holding safe space that empowers professionals & families to heal themselves. Her workshop was QiGong to Honor Our Bodies. As she stated: “Our bodies are filled with messages; some we should hold close and others we should release. This QiGong Skill Share was a safe space for listening to our body’s messages, exploring simple QiGong Movements, Mindfulness meditations and Ancient Healing Sounds for healing ourselves gently.” Learn more about Shawna’s work at [www.ShawnaMurrayBrowne.com](http://www.ShawnaMurrayBrowne.com)



# Extant Arts in Baltimore

Extant means still in existence; not destroyed. Extant Arts was created by members of Gather Together, and was intended to celebrate resilience of survivors, instead of focusing on our stories of trauma. Kafi D'Ambrosi organized the Extant Art festival, at Ynot Lot on Saturday October 28th, featuring healing art activities, performances, and art for sale, all by and for survivors. The Gather Together collective invited the community and its neighbors to come and celebrate survivor voices and history. This event was also supported by the Grit Fund, a Regional Regranting Program administered by The Contemporary and funded by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. The lineup of performers included Mama Ama Griot, [Deletta Gillespie](#), [Performing Artist Coach](#), [Joe Keyes](#) and [The Late Bloomer Band](#), [QueenEarth](#), [Simply Sherry](#), [Alanah Nichole](#), Alex Alexander, [Ama Chandra](#), [LOVE the poet](#), and DJ Chuck Maddox. About 200 people attended the intimate community event.



**Kafi D'Ambrosi** is a member of Gather Together and Extant Arts Director. She is also an acclaimed photographer, and has over 20 years experience in event planning and 7 years experience in curating. Kafi has been involved in the local Baltimore art community since 2011. She managed and worked out of the Load of Fun Building, (currently Motor House) from 2011-2012. She then opened the STUDIOKAFI PHOTOGRAPHY studio in the Station North Arts district in 2012 creating a work and event gallery for local artists. Her portfolio is comprised of work with a concentration on family, artists and social commentary. Her work has been exhibited at The Walters Art Museum, The Baltimore American Indian Museum, the James E. Lewis Museum, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum and the Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute.





# Survivor Organizing Campaign launched!

FORCE is in the midst of beginning a participatory action research project, where survivors and people impacted by sexual and domestic violence will be interviewing each other about their experiences and the issues that matter most to us. The action research will be compiled into a PDF featuring stories and information directly from survivors, and will include a survivor convening in spring 2018.

## Development News

### Thank you to the foundations funding FORCE this year:

NoVo Foundation Move to End Violence: \$50,000

Krieger Fund: \$20,000

Robert W Deutsch Foundation: \$15,000

The Grit Fund: \$6,000

Baltimore Community Foundation Renewal Fund: \$5,000

Creative Baltimore: \$5,000

MECU Neighborhood Arts Grant: \$1,000

T Rowe Price: \$1,000

#### Donor Spotlight

“I have been a big supporter of FORCE since first hearing about the unique ways in which they use art to provoke conversations about difficult topics, always with an intersectional lens. Upsetting rape culture is a daily battle, and FORCE’s work is playing a large role in helping to shift our culture.”

-Theo George



#### Saida Agostini, FORCE Chief Operating Officer, Awarded Move to End Violence Fellowship.

Saida Agostini was awarded a prestigious fellowship as part of [Cohort 4 of Move to End Violence’s Movement Makers fellowship program](#). A program of the [NoVo Foundation](#), this new cohort unites leaders working across the intersections of many of the most powerful movements to end violence against girls and women in all forms, including domestic violence, commercial sexual exploitation, sexual assault, environmental injustice and more.



## Honorees

Hear Our Stories is an annual celebration of resistance, change making and movement building. The evening featured poetry, song, storytelling, featuring Deletta Gillespie and Ti Coleman. It was a space to honor the people who make FORCE’s work happen every day. Here are snapshots of just a few of over 220 volunteers who worked with FORCE this year.

**Aayesha Aijaz** is Baltimore native instinctual artist, healer and storyteller. She is the first born to immigrant parents, a woman of color, and a Muslim. When she’s not cooking for everyone she loves or teaching workshops, she spends her time advocating for survivors of sexual assault, victims of police brutality, neurodiverse children and adults, and others in needs. Her current medium of healing, art making, and storytelling is through henna, sewing, cooking, painting, writing, meditation, and facilitating conversations between strangers. She aims to break the silence that surrounds mental illness, sexual and domestic assault, and childhood trauma. She is also the founder of Strvnge Encounters which serves as a platform for immigrant people, people of color, survivors of intimate partner violence and more. She is currently pursuing her Masters degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Johns Hopkins University.



**Gloria Garrett** is the Mother of Makeup Art. She started painted with makeup 12 years ago when a young relative died suddenly. She illustrated greeting cards and inspirational children books in black and white with ink pen. She was allergic to the smell of oil paints. She asked God to bring the beauty and color back to her life after her nephew’s death. Her mother gave her some makeup and she figured out how to add color to her pictures and her life. Art healed her soul. When she was young, Gloria was assaulted while she was walking her three children. This frightened her. She had to learn to trust God. A friend helped her with supporting words to continue to live her life. In 2017 she lead seven Monument Quilt Workshops with senior citizens in Baltimore City. She truly believes that sharing your story through art can heal.



**Carly Goldstein** is a volunteer who has been working with FORCE since the summer of 2017. She has always been an active in fighting for equality for all people and became a part of the Gather Together movement to support survivors. Carly hopes that this work will help bring about much needed cultural change and provide a platform for survivors, who are and should be the most important voice in telling society how they can help to end sexual assault and violence.



**Devin Harsch** is originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and is currently a student studying Neuroscience and Philosophy at Johns Hopkins University. He began volunteering with Force to help combat rape culture and give a voice to survivors.

**Ama Chandra** is a soul musician, an artist, and activist. She produces work that create healing for herself and for communities, including a production called “I Lived, Dammit!” a solo show about her healing and resilience after a traumatic assault. Ama is also the founder of She Be Warrior, through which she organizes empowering excursions for women and survivors of abuse to learn new skills.







**Latrina Gilliam** is a leader in Gather Together, and is a Baltimore native who has worked her way up the corporate ladder from data entry to becoming one of the top account managers at a nationally known company. She is also an entrepreneur with her own company and she is a Real Estate agent with Keller William Legacy Metropolitan. Latrina is also very passionate about her community. She promotes health family because she believes that health families equal healthier communities. She is a member of the outreach ministry at First Charity Baptist Church who provides resource to disadvantaged communities. She also partners with other nonprofit organizations such as the House of Ruth as storyteller, the Baltimore County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team who mission is to strengthen the community through their recommendations to prevent deaths related to Domestic Violence, and Gather Together which is a collective of survivors who advocacy and empower other survivors. The bible states that “Faith without work is dead”. So we can’t just pray for change, we must create change.

**Isadora Schaller** is a sophomore at Johns Hopkins University from Hamilton, NY majoring in International Studies and Sociology, and minoring in Women, Gender, and Sexuality. She is a member of the competitive Model United Nations team, Alexander Hamilton Society, Student Ambassador Board, Women’s Club Soccer, and leads Bystander Intervention Training for first-year Hopkins students. She is greatly enjoyed interning with Force during the summer of 2017, as she is passionate about promoting gender equality and supporting survivors.



“I volunteer with FORCE for a lot of reasons. The first is easy and maybe a little selfish - I love to sew. Volunteering in the studio gives me a chance to indulge in sewing while giving back in a meaningful way. But more importantly, I volunteer because I deeply believe in the mission of the work brought forth by the tireless, creative, thoughtful and super smart people of FORCE. I remember visiting the AIDS Quilt in Washington, DC in 1987. The magnitude of the project, honoring and elevating individual voices and their communities of supporters was palpable and a tipping point for how we viewed the issue of HIV/Aids. I cannot wait to see FORCE’s Monument Quilt culminate in the same way in Washington DC, honoring and elevating and changing the way we support survivors of rape and abuse. For every stitch, every quilt workshop, every gathering of voices - I’m honored and humbled to be a part of it and will continue to do what I can to support the tremendously significant work of FORCE.”  
- **Sally Hess**, volunteer

Special thanks:  
**APO at JHU:** Alpha Phi Omega is a service fraternity is to assemble college students in a national service fraternity in the fellowship of principles derived from the Scout Oath and Law of the Boy Scouts of America.

**2640** is a noncommercial, cooperatively managed space for radical politics and grassroots culture. 2640 came to our rescue in October when the Quilts got wet and we needed a space to dry them out!



# 2nd Annual Hike For Healing

FORCE hosted the 2nd annual Hike for Healing, a national day of visibility for survivors, with a central event in Baltimore. Our hike in Druid Hill Park featured healing activities in a pavilion for those who were not able to participate in the walk along with a free yoga session. About 50 people participated in the Baltimore event, with additional hikes in Maine, New York, Colorado, and beyond. We raised a total of \$43,961 from 340 donors. 47 people signed up to help fundraise for this annual campaign. Here are some highlights about people’s efforts to support this national day of visibility:



**Richael Faithful** hosted an Ancestral Walk for Healing in Washington DC. This nature walk started at the African American burial grounds at Walter Pierce Park, and continued through Rock Creek Park. Along the way, certain spots were marked through ritual to honor the many survivors who experienced imperialist and slave rape culture. As Richael said, “Along the nature walk, participants acknowledged the legacy of pain, reclaiming sovereignty of our bodies and land, and calling on other elements of nature to help our healing, and commit our support to ending system-sanctified violence.” Richael Faithful (they/ them/theirs) is a multidisciplinary folk healer and spiritual activist rooted in the Black tradition of conjure. Faithful supports national and local activists of all backgrounds, particularly leaders in the Movement 4 Black Lives. They are known for creating spaces to help activist identify and process trauma and invest into healing justice movements. Learn more at [www.richaelfaithful.com](http://www.richaelfaithful.com)

**Leigh Ann Sham** has been part of the Monument Quilt Leadership Team since the team first formed in 2014. For this year’s event, Leigh Ann ran her first marathon - 26.2 miles & countless training miles for the Monument Quilt & survivors of sexual violence. As part of the fundraising team, she coordinated a \$15,000 material donation to the Monument Quilt, has written hundreds of social media posts and emails, and was part of the team that came up with the original idea for Hike for Healing. Outside of FORCE, Leigh Ann works in fundraising for medical education and research at Georgetown University. She is also a mom to two adorable tuxedo cats, a runner and an avid coffee drinker.





# Thank you to the individuals who donated to FORCE in 2017!

Aaron Heinsman  
Aaron Merki  
Adiel Suarez-Murias  
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