WINDCALL INSTITUTE

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Guiding organizers through an arc of transformation towards liberation
SYNCHRONIZING TO THE RHYTHMS OF NATURE

Windcall is an invitation to refuel our Staying Power for the long haul.

Movement organizers are exhausted from back-to-back intense actions to defend and keep our communities safe in the midst of anti-Black, anti-Asian, and anti-immigrant attacks, on top of the recovery efforts from the pandemic. Windcall has responded by expanding our offerings for organizers to catch their breath and pay attention to their own health.

The trauma endured over the last few years will take a long time to heal. The pain can be overwhelming, especially in isolation. We seek community to connect with each other, to grieve and to heal. The moment calls us to slow down and feel the circadian rhythms of our hearts, minds, and spirits aligning to the natural rhythms of the planet.

Symbolic structures and rituals bind people together – Windcall turned our initial response to the pandemic, an offering of mutual aid from our alumni and trainers through wellness practices and a collective space for grieving and healing, into a virtual community of practice that gathers four times a year. Every equinox and solstice, our Seasonal Practice Series aligns organizers to the passing of the seasons while learning a wellness practice as a ritual to foster community and resilience.

Paradoxically, virtual tools also fuel our isolation. The fleeting quality of virtual information and communication erodes deeper meaning and stillness. So, while Windcall uses virtual tools to process our collective crisis, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our signature residencies: in-person retreats to experientially slow down into stillness and connection to nature with plenty of individual and group reflection touch points.

At Windcall organizers experience freedom, connection and rootedness. Our movements for justice become more resilient as we embody our mutual interdependence with nature, life, and each other.

Wishing you peace and wellbeing,

Viviana Graciela Rennella
Executive Director
Windcall Institute
FOR THE LONG HAUL

We envision a healthy, vibrant, and deeply caring justice movement stewarding our communities and planet with love and intention.

The Windcall Institute nurtures and develops resilient leadership among community and labor organizers working for social justice in low-income communities and communities of color. The Cohort and Breather retreats of our flagship Residencies Program provide respite to cultivate spaciousness and access to healing justice practices. Our Staying Power Program provides ongoing learning for healing trauma and embodying liberation in beloved community.

Windcall heals organizers now so they can sustain for the long-haul.

Windcall offers a unique and comprehensive model that approaches resiliency holistically through transformative practices that strengthen the mind, body, and spirit of movement organizers. By reshaping organizers’ connection to nature, self, and community as a form of healing, our model realigns the organizing purpose to long term sustainability. We ground our model in the four elements of nature to guide organizers on a journey from healing trauma to embodying liberation.

EARTH.
Ground in Nature with contemplative practices & rituals.

WATER.
Care For Self with Body Awareness and Healthy Habits

AIR.
Cultivate Spaciousness including Solitude, Silence, and Technology Fasting.

FIRE.
Creatively Express & Reflect, including Peer Support, Coaching & Integration.
RESIDENCIES

In the 1980’s, the Windcall Institute was a pioneer in residential sabbaticals for movement organizers and has continued awarding Residencies for over three decades, offering life changing experiences to more than 650 community and labor organizers from across the country and all sectors of social justice movements.

Fall 2021 alumni from Left: Erika Murcia, Birth Detroit; Laura Martin, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada; Steve Diaz, LA CAN; Xan West, OneLife Institute for Spirituality & Social Change

The Windcall Residency is a nine-month experience that provides leaders with a highly supportive environment in three phases:

1. SETTING THE COURSE
Through virtual orientations and grounding activities, residents set their intentions and receive support with logistics.

2. EMBARKING ON THE RETREAT
Windcall’s 1-week Mindful Breather and 3-week Cohort residential retreats remove outer pressures and internal constraints that inhibit organizers’ renewal and provides space for a self-guided exploration of practices that lead to long-term sustainability and resilience. Scientific research has shown that it takes 21 days to stop old habits and develop new healthier ones.

3. BRINGING WINDCALL HOME
Residents receive support to integrate reflections and visions into their lives and work through: six sessions with a Windcall coach, debriefs with staff, virtual webinars with their peers, and a two-week, written and video guide with healing justice practices to follow at home.
OUR REACH

WINDCALL OFFERS ITS RESIDENCIES IN SEVEN STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

In 2021 in response to unprecedented trauma, Windcall hosted the greatest number of residents in the organization’s history - **37 at eight locations** across the country. We continue to grow our partnerships with homeowners and retreat centers to offer organizers respite in pristine natural settings. In partnership with **17 hosts and three site coordinators**, we held residencies at the following locations:

- Olympic Peninsula, WA
- Point Reyes, CA
- Santa Fe, NM
- Cosby, TN
- Upper Tar Pamlico River Basin, Berea, NC
- Topsail Island, NC
- Pinelands, NJ
- Old Lyme, CT

“**Showing up on purpose requires that you understand why you are and how you are, so that you are leading from the base of your gifts and your own power that we all have. We get to access all the power around us when we ground into our ancestors which includes not just our own but the people who stewarded the land and dip into the gratitude for the everyday magic that surrounds us.**”

-Grace Gamez, Program Coordinator, ReFraming Justice; Spring 2021 alum, Old Lyme CT.
In 2021, Windcall launched a new partnership with homeowners in Point Reyes, CA that provided sanctuary for Bay Area leaders to experience respite.

Point Reyes lands and shores were the ancestral home to the Coast Miwok people for millennia. The bioregion is defined by water, including Tomales Bay and the Pacific Ocean with its rich tidal estuaries. Water holds memory and when we are close to it, it can remind us of what was and what will be - both for our ancestors and those who will come after us. Point Reyes is also rich in wildlife diversity and the area’s parklands, trails and pristine ocean beaches offer organizers a rich invitation to connect with the living world.

Steve Costa envisioned the idea of Point Reyes Sanctuary in 2020 after selling the beloved Point Reyes Books, an independent bookstore and hub of activism in the town of Point Reyes Station. With a deep desire to serve the social and environmental justice movements at this critical time and as a way to bridge his experiences and relationships in West Marin and Oakland, Steve thought of inviting friends and community members to offer their homes or vacation rentals to Bay Area frontline justice organizers for a respite retreat.

Upon meeting Windcall, Steve realized that he did not have to design new programming. Enlisting the support of Suzanne D’Coney, who embodies radical hospitality in her event coordinating work, they became Windcall’s newest site partner. In 2021, nine homeowners in West Marin hosted 16 organizers from across the Bay Area.
STAYING POWER

Windcall Institute’s Staying Power Program cultivates the resilience of movement organizers to sustain their transformative and critical work on an ongoing basis. The vision arose from residency alumni who met to discuss how to integrate the Windcall “magic” in their work and strengthen their staying power in the movement for the long haul.

Over the years, Staying Power alumni and trainers designed curriculum based on Windcall’s four elements of healing justice that foster mental, emotional, physical and spiritual balance holistically. Centered on nature-based, trauma-informed, somatics and creative expression practices, Staying Power’s approach to embodying liberation is attuned to our movement organizers’ needs for grounding, spaciousness, expression, and radical self care.

The training curriculum has evolved to offer:

- **A seasonal practice series** to engage alumni and movement organizers in ongoing practices and collective space for grieving and healing in a community of practice.
- **Organizational residencies** for movement teams to practice together and strengthen their internal capacity with healing justice policies.
- **Affinity circles** that offer space for emerging visions for our alumni network. Expanding on Windcall’s fire element with peer support, the alumni circles surface ongoing healing justice needs and innovations implemented by our alumni.
STAYING POWER IMPACT

THE STAYING POWER PROGRAM REACHED NEW HEIGHTS IN 2021 AS A RESULT OF INCREASED CAPACITY

In 2021, the Staying Power program:

- Engaged **85 people** in its virtual offerings.
- Facilitated **2 movement formations** in organizational residencies.
- Recruited a growing cohort of participants (over 15) for multiple practice sessions over the year.
- Received high evaluations - Sessions received between 4.5 and 5.0 ratings.
WHAT'S AHEAD

Windcall has ambitious goals in 2022 to build the resiliency of movement leaders. Specific work for the year include:

• **Host 50 residents in 10 sites** across the country, including our newest partner Foxfire Ranch, owned for generations by a Black family in Mississippi.

• **Cultivate a Community of Practice** by registering 250 people to attend our "Elements of Healing Justice" series.

• **Build Windcall's alumni engagement network** through affinity circles by recruiting 50 people to participate in three affinity groups. Our alumni affinity circles will gather both virtually and, when possible again, in real life.

• **Deepen WC's transformative and systemic capacity building** by providing three organizational residencies. Windcall will provide assessment and support to organizations, networks, foundation grantee cohorts, and other formations through coaching, planning and facilitation of their organizations' culture, policies, processes, and practices.

Fall 2019 alumni from Left: La'Tasha Mayes, New Voices for Reproductive Justice; Jihan Gearon, Indigenous Environmental Network; M. Adams, Freedom Inc.
BOARD & STAFF & SUPPORTERS

THESE TALENTED INDIVIDUALS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN HELPING WINDCALL ACHIEVE ITS VISION. WE HOLD DEEP GRATITUDE FOR EACH ONE FOR THE SUPPORT THEY GIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION.

Advisory Board
Strela Cervas
Katelyn Johnson
Kelley Weigel

Staff
Viviana Graciela Rennella, Executive Director
Jayeesha Dutta, Program Director

Core Consultants
Cassie Gardener Manjikian, Interim Residency Program Coordinator
Brigid Hall, Development + Finance Advisor
Becca Williams, Administrative Associate

Trainers
Raynelle Rino
Idrissa Simmonds
Patrick Brown

Site Coordinators
Leslie Moody & Mitch Ackerman
Jerry Austen
Suzanne D’Coney

Site Hosts
Point Reyes Sanctuary, CA - Steve Costa & Kate Levinson, Helen Cohen & Mark Lipman, Phil Jonik, Kirk Marckwald & Chris Desser, Eleanore Despina & Bing Gong, Tess Ayers & Jane Anderson, Steve & Julie Kimball, Maureen Kennedy, Mike Durrie & Catherine Lucas, Julianne Havel.
Olympic Peninsula, WA - Merrill Weyerhaeuser & Pat Welly
Rancho Gallina, NM - Leslie Moody & Mitch Ackerman
Laurel Springs, TN - Resort staff
Respite in the Round, NC - Kristen Cox
And Roses, NC - Tema Okun (WC alum)
Pinelands, NJ - Miriam Ackerman McBride & Brendan McBride
Old Lyme, CT - John, Linda, and Sara Sargent