FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Restore Oakland Community Spokespeople

Jason Toro, Community Works Executive Director:

“Community Works is thrilled to partner with Restore Oakland to offer an alternative to youth incarceration at Restore Oakland. Our Restorative Community Conferencing (RCC) program diverts youth under 18 and young adults 18 to 24 out of the traditional justice systems and into a restorative process where they will meet the needs of those they harmed by their actions. Rather than focus on punishment and isolation, RCC relies on accountability and making amends so that the relationships between the person harmed, the responsible youth, and their community can be repaired.”

Tracey Bell-Borden, Ella Baker Center member:

Tracey Bell-Borden is a personal jewelry designer, artist, cook, educator, and entrepreneur.

“It is such an inspiration to have Restore Oakland in the community that I grew up in. To be able to have all the resources in one building is revolutionary. This area is just now becoming gentrified but to have Restore Oakland planted here, seeing all the different collectives that are coming together (Ella Baker Center, Causa Justa/Just Cause and ROC United) actually gives us a lot of hope.

I was raised in Oakland and have been well known as an artist for over 20 years, but it is likely that I won't be able to live in the city that I was raised in. Restore Oakland is being a part of the solution to address some of the ailments that we've been fighting. It’s nice to see a positive change coming that isn't about gentrification, but something being built for the community. Having a place where I can send people and get what I need for myself is one of the greatest assets that Restore Oakland can give to the community, that's so monumental.”
Carolina S., COLORS Hospitality Opportunities for Workers (CHOW) student with ROC United:

"With Restore Oakland being in the heart of the Fruitvale, we always talk about unity, but I think it’s very much needed for people to truly find common ground in our humanity, because my humanity is tied to your humanity. Working in the restaurant industry, it’s a very hard way to make a living. It’s been a lot of heartbreaks and disappointments, and these experiences are like the reality for so many folks. I feel like being in CHOW, for me, it was good to just have other folks to talk to about my experience as a restaurant worker, but to also have a woman of color teaching the classes. Oftentimes, being in this urban jungle, it's very isolating but we’re not meant to be living that way, we’re actually meant to be socializing - CHOW provides that in a way.

It's also a very profound concept for us to understand that as long as folks that are coming from Mexico, Central and South America are being detained, as long as this government that we have in power right now keeps getting away with that, it’s bad news for us all, even people who are on this side of the border. It's awesome that there's a place like Restore Oakland available for folks, and to be able to teach folks about what’s really happening with these issues."

Restore Oakland (restoreoakland.org) is a training and community power-building center where local residents can dream, organize, and act together.