



REDEEMER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

SOUTH LOS ANGELES | WINTER 2022 UPDATE

NIH Funded Pediatric Lung Health Study

We are grateful for our research partners who are making visible the health harms of neighborhood oil drilling. Presently, we are working with a team from USC, Occidental College, and University of Colorado - Boulder on a five-year, \$5 million National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded research grant to understand pediatric health impacts of neighborhood oil drilling. Working with residents, we have installed weather stations around the Murphy Drill Site to better understand how air moves across the site and then through the community. This data will help us locate air monitors at local residences to collect pollution data. Next year we plan to test children's lung health and capacity at nearby schools.

Neighborhood emPOWERment

Two years ago we launched the emPOWER program in partnership with the Liberty Hill Foundation to help low-income neighbors access reduced utility rates and clean energy rebates that often go unused in communities like ours. These programs provide vital financial assistance to neighbors while improving public health by reducing pollution. Our staff have helped nearly 3,000 residents with compassion and love. Frequently, their assistance extends beyond the programs. In one memorable instance, a family suddenly displaced due to an estranged husband, found Martha arranging furniture and kitchenware donations from a local congregation. She also organized a team of volunteers to help this large family move into their new home. The program has been a source of joy as we meet neighbors and share resources.

Come & See!

JOIN US FOR A
NEIGHBORHOOD
TOUR

We would love to
share with you, your
family, friends, and
church the work of
building and
becoming the
beloved community.

EMAIL:

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to schedule a tour



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BEFORE

Aerial footage of the Jefferson Drill Site
Photo credit: Caitlyn Hynes and Travis Smith-Evans



AFTER

The demolished site at sunrise

Beauty FOR ASHES

\$10 Million Grant to Buy the Jefferson Drill Site

Three years ago we celebrated an agreement to close the Jefferson Drill Site. This victory culminated years of prayer, community organizing, and advocacy in the face of constant health and safety threats. Mustard seed-sized faith was moving a toxic mountain named Sentinel Peak Resources out of our community. We celebrated and then got to work.

We knew that if we did not prepare to shape the future of the site, the slow violence of oil extraction would be replaced by the violence of displacement. Drive-by developers are rapidly remaking our neighborhood, driving up rents and tearing down homes to build student housing.

While the oil company started capping the oil wells and demolishing the oil works, we went to work bringing neighbors together to imagine what might take the drill site's place. Our community quickly coalesced around creating a public park, affordable housing, and a community center.

Next, we reached out to an experienced park developer, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust. Over the last three years we worked together to create a park plan with neighbors, a site remediation plan, and a strategy for raising the acquisition capital.

RCP's board chair, Rev. Bob Gay, and president, Richard Parks, reached out to our State assembly member Reggie Jones-Sawyer to share the community's vision. He went to work securing a \$10 million state grant to help purchase the property!

This past week we signed an agreement to acquire the drill site! We have an enormous amount of work to do in the coming months to complete our environmental due diligence, map out the clean-up process with regulators, and secure funding for the park development. But we continue to see God making a way where no way existed, providing resources far beyond what we had, redeeming decades of neighborhood harm, and giving us beauty for ashes.

Adventures Ahead Celebrates 25 years!

Years ago Adventures Ahead started in one living room, then added another living room next door, and then a third across the street. Over the next 25-years hundreds of kids have learned to read, developed as readers, and received help with their homework. Lauren Tigrett has worked with most of those kids over her 18-years with the program. Likewise, hundreds of volunteer Reading Buddies have mentored kids and found joy in helping children grow as readers.

Emerging from COVID, our students continued to close the achievement gap making an average of 1.4 years of reading progress over the year, just shy of our 1.5 year goal.





MURPHY DRILL SITE

Over the last three years we have turned our attention to closing the last oil drill site in our neighborhood and the last one in all of South LA.

Last year, a USC, Occidental College, and University of Colorado Boulder study found that residents living within 1,000-meters of the drill site had a substantial loss in lung capacity, health, and function. The losses were equivalent to daily exposure to secondhand cigarette smoke and appeared permanent. A second study published last month found clear evidence of toxic trespass into the bodies of residents living within 1,000-meters of the drill site. A toxic metal signature of oil field operations was found in the toe nail clippings of hundreds of residents.

1,300 K-12 students attend three schools less than 1,000 feet from the drill site. Who would sacrifice 10% of their child's lungs so an oil company could make money? Yet, this is the sacrifice that the City has imposed on children in our community.



Over the last two years we have documented numerous violations at the drill site:

- Methane leaks more than twice the explosive level
- Workers leaving the drill site unattended at night
- A radiation truck illegal for roadway use transporting and deploying radioactive isotopes
- Workers without required personal protective equipment getting drenched with oil
- Workers smoking on the drill site.
- Unpermitted acid maintenance pumping 10,000+ gallons of toxic acid and carcinogens into the ground
- Degassing 21,000-gallon fractanks that were prohibited for use within 1,000-feet of a school



The well-documented violations finally moved the City to hold a public hearing in April. The community showed up in force to ask for three protections the City had given to wealthier, whiter, West LA neighborhoods 20-years ago:

1. Enclose the drill site to contain toxic fumes
2. Use electric workover rigs instead of diesel
3. Power the facility with an electric utility connection instead of methane combustion.

The City has still not published a determination, but indications are that it will not protect children in our neighborhood as it does in other communities. Please join us in praying for a just outcome – one that protects the public's health and safety. If you live near LA, join us for a neighborhood Teach-In on Saturday, January 14 over the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend. We will call on the City to end its decades of disparate and discriminatory treatment of South LA. As Dr. King noted, "Justice too long delayed, is justice denied."



State Recommends \$26 Million for Normandie Beautiful

What do you do when every major boulevard in your community is on the City's High Injury Network – the 6% of streets that account for 70% of fatalities and serious injuries for people walking and biking?

The impact of racism, redlining, and historic disinvestment hits close to home. Our neighbor Dina navigates using an electric wheelchair. A few years ago, she was struck by a car as she crossed Normandie Ave. on her way to the market. The crash threw her face first into the street. The driver sped away as other neighbors came to her aid. Over the last four years hundreds of neighbors like Dina have helped shape a vision for taking Normandie Ave. off the High Injury Network and making walking, biking and rolling safe alternatives

to transportation modes that pollute the air and harm our health.

We surveyed neighbors door-to-door, organized town halls, engaged youth in a photovoice survey, organized community bike rides, hosted walk audits, and addressed countless community meetings and church services to develop a shared vision for safe routes to school.

Recently, the California Transportation Commission staff recommended \$26.2 million in funding to make the Normandie Beautiful vision a reality! The funding will go to the City to design and build the improvements. The grant will repair two-miles of broken sidewalks, install pedestrian lighting, plant street trees, replace asphalt with landscaped medians, install signalized pedestrian crossings, create two bike routes on parallel streets, and more. Nearly 9,000 students attending 14 schools along the corridor will benefit.



We are excited to create safe routes to school and to make walking, biking and rolling fun and safe for everyone.

JEFFERSON BEAUTIFUL

Breaking Ground in 2023

The Normandie Beautiful project will intersect our earlier effort called Jefferson Beautiful. This \$12.3 million safe routes to school project passes in front of the former Jefferson Drill Site and future park site. Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2023. Taken together, these street improvements will begin to create a network of healthy streets throughout our community.