MISSION

What we do today and tomorrow towards our Vision

Oakland Leaf actively works in solidarity with Oakland inner-city youth, their families, educators, artists, organizers, and community based organizations for individual, collective, structural, and environmental transformation. Together we build towards connection in a more just, self-determining, ecologically sustainable, artistically rich, and loving society.

We put into action multiple ways of teaching, learning, doing, critical sense making, and knowing to understand our realities, oppressions, and our developing identities, which in turn are needed for positive action. Because healthy community minded folks are central to sustaining our movement, we work to provide supportive & nurturing leadership to those within Oakland Leaf, to build over the long haul as family.

Through this sustained commitment as family, rather than serving, we struggle together in solidarity, because this is where power lies. So we do this with multiple roles for involvement, not just during active social resistance, but also by intentionally cultivating celebration, self-determination, and community dialog.

We plant seeds to grow. We root in, rise up, and branch out. We're commited to stay.

IDENTITY

Who we are

We act and interact in solidarity with Oakland inner-city youth, their families, educators, artists, organizers, and Community Based Organizations. We actively work within our community in

*elementary & middle schools during after school hours;
*family resource centers;
*high school critical media leadership & production program;
*green spaces for natural food resources;
*arts, justice, & physical movement –based summer day camp;
*public community events;
*socio-cultural summer expeditions for high school age youth;
*youth internships; teacher development; and
*our community center, known as the *Mother Garden*.

CORE VALUES

Why we do what we do

As Oakland Leaf, we recognize ourselves as historical beings who are affected by history, but not predetermined by it. We are co-creators in making history. We're here to stay and so with these 6 core values as our foundation, we struggle in solidarity towards our vision.

WE DARE TO STRUGGLE. We believe struggle is an opportunity for growth and progress. To live up to the often used label of "Revolutionary", we must know struggle because we do not accept things the way they are. We seek change, and so must struggle.

LOVE IS AN ACTION. We believe authentic love shows commitment. Love shows dedication. We commit to cultivating love within ourselves, for each other, and the work we do over the long haul. We're here to stay.

WE CULTIVATE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY. We believe that community transformation can only occur through long term collective struggle. We aim to develop more sustainable funding sources, leadership, and commitment to the community. Cultivation takes time, and so we commit to intentionally investing time in our people.

EDUCATION IS THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM. We believe education is the key to open doors for transformative opportunities to help learn who we are as individuals, identify obstacles, & break through the barriers as life-long learners. We educate with urgency and intentionality because our commitment to youth is that they return to work in solidarity with us when they are adults and take Oakland Leaf to new heights.

ART & CULTURE TRANSFORMS. We believe that we must be critical consumers of art and culture. We also need to be critical contributors and producers of art & culture. Whether we are consumers, contributors, or producers, we recognize that art and culture heals, celebrates, and transforms others and ourselves.

PEACE IS A PROCESS AS WELL AS AND END GOAL. We believe that we must individually and collectively work at peace. We must work towards peace. We must act with peace first in mind. This happens through deep work within ourselves and amongst each other, so we recognize that peace is not inaction nor is it easy or harmonic. Peace is a constant struggle, and so we sometimes must use more assertive tools of nonviolent direct action.

VISION

What we see today and will continue to improve for our future

Through our work at Oakland Leaf, we contribute to a more connected, just, self-determining, ecologically sustainable, and loving society.
Our collective struggle and consciousness nurtures us to "be the ones we have been waiting for," as poet June Jordan once said. We cultivate youth and adult relationships by acting and interacting as family through the interweaving of Social Justice, Urban Ecology, Youth Empowerment, and the Arts.

Through our work as a multi-generational community, we honor the legacy of our ancestral traditions and historical struggles. In recognizing this, we practice & engage in culture production by contributing to and co-creating:

** teaching & learning spaces that cultivate creative & critical action within a loving and familial environment
** art, music, dance, and community events
** products that influence thought, celebrate the expression of ourselves, and challenge mainstream ways of being & thinking
** green spaces & natural food resources
** a network of supports to make resources accessible to families and ourselves
** work practices & celebrations that honor, nurture, & sustain ourselves as people
** a center to house our work & each other over the long haul.