

LAVENDER PHOENIX



The following report includes...a letter from our Executive Director, Yuan Wang; an intro to our new Deputy Director & Cultural Organizer; and highlights from our organizing in 2023, including our Community Safety, Healing Justice, Leadership Development, Cultural Strategy work, & beyond!



DIRECTOR'S LETTER



*"When your hope shrinks
you might feel the hope
of someone far away lifting you up."*

Naomi Shihab Nye
Palestinian American Poet

Dear beloved community,

We began last year by grieving the shootings in Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay. Now, less than a year later, we continue to wake up each and every day in the shadow of mass death. Our government is funding the genocide, displacement, imprisonment, and colonization of Palestinians. They are killing the people of Gaza: the friends and families of people we love, and people who we don't know but who we still love. We organize each other; we sit-in; we make art; we march en masse, and we protest. We continue to fight.

At LavNix's year-end Core Committee Retreat with our member and staff leaders, our facilitator Michael asked us to locate our self-interest in this moment. Not our selfishness, but our "self-interest, rightly understood": **the embodied understanding of what each of us has to gain from our collective struggle**. Eventually, my turn came to share. The grief of the year swept through me. I remembered how it felt, days after the jubilation of Trans March, to learn that San Francisco had allocated \$65 million in additional funds to the police, after cutting the same amount from housing, healthcare, and life-giving community services. I thought of Banko Brown. I thought of Jaxon Sales. After a breath, I burst into loud, achy sobs. When I finally gathered my voice, I said **I felt desperate, absolutely desperate, for reasons to feel hopeful**. The Committee held me with patient, kind eyes.

This year, the sacred duty we hold as organizers has grown clearer than ever—to **give our people real, concrete reasons to feel hopeful**. We carry it with the people of Gaza, who continue to help each other survive and demand the world's support. We witness it in our Palestinian comrades, who have made it a human and political imperative that all of us struggle alongside them for their liberation, and for ours. We honor it in our anti-Zionist Jewish friends, who take over bridge after train station after monument after government building to say, "Never again for anyone."

And I witness this duty lived out by LavNix's own members and staff, who shifted priorities at every level of the organization to meet this moment. Our members sat in at Representatives' offices, helped shut down public buildings, organized thousands of calls for ceasefire, helped guide thousands more to reject pinkwashing, asked funders to support Palestinian-led organizing, and will continue to organize to support Gazans. **These shifts in our day-to-day work only sharpen our visions and values**: we know fighting for a free Palestine frees all of us.



Even through this year of living from violence to violence, from despair to despair, I see us **creating reasons to hope with relentless, loving determination**. In this year alone...

- LavNix's Healing Justice Committee trained nearly 40 trans & non-binary API peer counselors, & provided free mental health support care for 20+ people.
- Our Community Safety Committee distributed 100+ free safety kits, & trained 80+ trans APIs and allies on de-escalation and crisis-intervention skills.
- We graduated 6 young QTAPIs through the 14th year of our Summer Organizer Program, and trained nearly 50 rising organizers through our annual Queer Justice Leadership Exchange and our brand new Rise Up membership orientation program.
- We laid groundwork for bold member-led campaigns to challenge the scale of policing and advance queer visions of community safety in the Bay Area.

...and so much more. Through the love and labor of our members, staff, and supporters, LavNix continues to grow as a political home for our people, and a strategic tool for our movement.

Now, we face a pivotal year in the struggle against the life-swallowing status quo of rising fascism, militarism, transphobia, and more. Through it all, I believe Lavender Phoenix staff and members will hold our communities with love and rigor. We will challenge the ever-expanding policing budgets in the Bay Area; we will continue to provide free peer healing care; we will train rising QTAPI organizers through our leadership development programs; and much more. We refuse to let out-of-touch policymakers and politicians use our existence to perpetuate violence. **We will allow our grief and rage to sharpen us as organizers, and to soften us as comrades**. We will continue to strive, every day, to give each other real reasons to hope.

With love and commitment,

Yuan Wang
Executive Director



TRANS JUSTICE
MEANS
FREE PALESTINE.

NEW STAFF LEADERS!



*We're excited to welcome **Meha Davé** and **Jenica Garcia** to join the LavNix staff team!*



Meha Davé

Deputy Director

Meha (she/her) is a thoughtful, embodied relationship weaver & movement partner who seeks to reflect our aspirations for liberation through our present practices. As our Deputy Director, Meha will coordinate our staff team & resource our organization to help us succeed.

Jenica Garcia

Cultural Organizer

Jenica (he/she) is a skilled artist & a long-time leader in LavNix's Communications Committee, as well as a former Summer Organizer. As our Cultural Organizer, Jenica will help actualize LavNix's visions through communications, cultural work, & storytelling.

LAVNIX PROGRAMS

Cultural Organizing

- Trained 120+ queer, transgender, & non-binary APIs to use **oral histories as a tool for grassroots organizing**.
- Recruited **3700 listeners** to 2 key Dragon Fruit Project interviews.
- Launched a revamped **Dragon Fruit Museum**.

Community Safety

- Gathered 100 community members in a vigil to **honor Jaxon Sales' life** & support his family in their ongoing fight for truth, justice, and safety.
- Trained 60+ trans APIs & allies in **crisis de-escalation skills**.
- Handed out 100+ **free community safety kits** at Trans March.





Healing Justice

- Trained 35+ trans & non-binary APIs in **peer counseling** & healing skills.
- Provided **free peer counseling** for 22 transgender & non-binary APIs.
- Recruited **20 artists to donate art** in a community-wide raffle to raise funds to support a community member's **recovery from Long COVID**.



I loved **holding space for my community** in Peer Counseling! In many ways, **I felt held** by my co-counselors as well.

Trans API Peer Counseling
Peer Counseling Trainee



We started asking each other what **we each needed and wanted**. We moved away from how we were taught to act by society, and towards **embracing honesty and vulnerability**.

Summer Organizer Program
Program Participant

Leadership Development

- Graduated **6 young QTAPI leaders** in the 14th year of the flagship **Summer Organizer Program!**
- Trained 29 organizers in feminist, values-based organizing skills through the annual **Queer API Leadership Exchange (LEX)**.
- Launched "Rise Up", our first-ever **onboarding program** for new Lavender Phoenix members.

Fundraising + Finance

- Recruited **500+ individual donors** in our Give OUT Day campaign.
- Recruited **40+ members to join and fundraise** for Give OUT Day.
- Launched our brand-new **Finance Committee** to support members to co-manage LavNix's resources.

