WE have to unite to reclaim & keep OUR land

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference
January 30, 2015 – Baltimore, MD

T.R.U.S.T. South LA

Tenemos que Reclamar y Unidos Salvar la Tierra-South LA

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T.R.U.S.T. South LA – *Tenemos que Reclamar y Unidos Salvar la Tierra* - South LA – is a community-controlled land trust established as a *democratic and permanent steward of land*, to challenge the role that speculators, absentee owners and corporations have played in deciding our neighborhood’s future.
Housing in Our Community in 1999

- Community-serving Housing
- Housing in transition from Community-serving to Student-serving
- Student-serving Housing
Community-serving Housing

Housing in transition from Community-serving to Student-serving

Student-serving Housing

Housing in Our Community in 2009
Our Daily Experience

Displacement!
BUT, just head South past MLK...
Our Approach: Establish community control over land

A community-based approach to planning, housing, and community development.
Leadership Development, Base-Building & Community Planning
David & Delmy: Slumlord tried to evict their families and 46 neighbors

Jeff Greene
Net Worth $2.3 B As of March 2013

At a Glance
Age: 58
Source of Wealth: real estate, investments, self-made
Residence: Palm Beach, FL
Country of Citizenship: United States
Education: Master of Business Administration, University; Bachelor of Arts / Science,
Rolland Curtis Gardens: site map
• In July of 2012, after **15 months** of organizing a tenant-led campaign, T.R.U.S.T. South LA and Abode Communities purchased the property.

• **Organizing tactics:**
  tenant solidarity, legal/state notification requirements, code enforcement, support of public officials and City departments,
Rolland Curtis Gardens: Theatre of the Oppressed
• Real Issues + “no power” = attack low-income
• NIMBY contradictions and wavering alliances
• “Concentration of Poverty”
• USC, Working-class homeowners of color and low-income “hood element’ renters of color
• Local developer and “broken promises”...
!!VICTORY/VICTORIA!!
What TRUST South LA has learned about shifting power:

- Effective organizing work must be grounded in shared values
- Start with context: gather the facts together
- Collective analysis produces a more thorough result
- Establish allies, including advancing an insider/outsider strategy
- Identify points of leverage, and plan strategy with both allies and community leaders
- Be creative!
- Leadership development is critical, and must be on-going
- The power of many must be built by the many, not crafted by a few
Closing

- Q&A