

**GO
RD
ON**

*The residents of
Gordon Plaza
demand that the
city of New
Orleans fully
fund a relocation
off toxic soil in the
9th ward*

FULLY FUNDED
RELOCATION
FOR
**GORDON
PLAZA**
New Orleans

— PLAZA

Acknowledgements

We honor the residents of Gordon Plaza who have been working tirelessly for a fully funded relocation off toxic soil. We extend immense gratitude to all of the artists and organizers of the People's Assembly who have been working for the Gordon Plaza campaign, namely Angela Kinlaw and Antranette Scott. We thank all those who have contributed to this primer and the Artists for Gordon Plaza event, including photographers Zach Kanzler, Terry Hixson, Shannon Rainey, Fernando Lopez, and Times-Piqayune, poets Jewell Prim and Shera Phillips, and visual artist LaVonna Varnado. This primer was designed by Mackenzie Berry and Tina Orlandini.



#FairRelocationForGordonPlaza

The Residents of Gordon Plaza
in New Orleans are demanding and fighting for a

FULLY FUNDED RELOCATION

to move safely off of the toxic soil of the former Agriculture Street Landfill that the city built their homes on. It is currently a Superfund site, where it ranks as the second highest cancer causing area in the State of Louisiana.



#FairRelocationForGordonPlaza



Gordon Plaza Struggle Continues

On June 12, 2019, the Mayor of New Orleans was proud to announce an award of \$12.5 million dollars in FEMA funding that was made available to elevate 52 “historic” homes that have experienced severe flood damage. BUT this celebratory moment proved to be a slap in the face of the Black working class residents of Gordon Plaza, who occupy 54 homes that were built on the toxic soil of a Superfund site (the former Agriculture Street Landfill), and rightly deserve a fully funded relocation.

How is it that the 52 “historic” homes (primarily the property of rich folk or potential tourist attractions) were prioritized over the need for a fully funded relocation of Black working class people that live on dangerously toxic soil?

Just last month, ANOTHER report came out declaring that Gordon Plaza, as a New Orleans neighborhood in the Upper 9th Ward, is within the census tract.



According to the Louisiana Tumor Registry report, Gordon Plaza is found to have the second-highest consistent rate of cancer among all Louisiana census tracts in the entire state.

YET and STILL, the entire city council of New Orleans is silent on this issue.

YET and STILL, the newest mayor, in a line of mayors who “seemed” to care about Gordon Plaza, during election season, is SILENT on this issue.

When will the city of New Orleans really demonstrate an action oriented, resourced investment in Black working class people, with Black working class involvement and community accountability? We cannot wait for that answer!

Collectively, we must demand change! We must organize for what we want! We must organize for what we need! How we gonna make New Orleans rise?

Educate! Agitate! Organize!





Photo by Fernando Lopez

**09|08
2018**

Rise for Climate, Jobs & Justice

Gordon Plaza residents are fighting for a fully funded relocation from the toxic site the city built their homes on decades ago.

A new report by the Louisiana Tumor Registry confirms the findings of previous studies: Gordon Plaza has the second consistent highest rate of cancer in Louisiana. The study consistently found between 125 and 406 more cases per 100,000 residents than the state average. Gordon Plaza homes were built on a city landfill containing arsenic, lead and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons—all known or probable carcinogens according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

Mayor Cantrell: the time to remedy this injustice is now!

**GORDON PLAZA
RESIDENTS
SUFFER SECOND
HIGHEST CANCER
RATE IN LA**

Health Effects in the Neighborhood



Photos of Moton Elementary School, which was closed due to dangerous levels of lead in the soil. Taken by Terry Hixson



Residents Organize



Photos by Terry Hixson



HOW MANY

How many
How many lives must be lost
How many battles must be fought
How many years must we wait
How many deaths must it take?
How much blood is on their hands
How much blood soak these lands
They've chosen to discard us like the waste that festers beneath
our homes
They are hoping we are forgotten like the long list of loved ones
who have past on
They are banking on the premise that we are isolated and alone
They've chosen to discard us like the waste that festers beneath
our homes
oh, but we are the chosen ones
We have been burdened with this cross
And we've decided to take it up and walk
We have decided to fight
We won't lay down and die
Now is the time
Lets rise
Yesterday while we were sleeping
Yesterday while we were weeping
They were cashing checks that keep our bodies from breathing
I said yesterday while we were sleeping
Yesterday while we were weeping
They were cashing checks that keep our bodies from breathing
They've come for us, were not going without kicking and
screaming
Bleeding
Our blood ain't cheap,
This is no easy defeat
Stop and think
We walk down these streets that have murdered us
Past the trees that have born the fruit of our black bodies slain



We are witnessing a lynching of an entire community at the hands of
those sworn to protect and serve
The past is right now
We are the ones we've been waiting for
We are called to this cause
We are purposed for this fight
We've got to take our freedom
With our strength and with our might
No I'm not asking god for the serenity to accept the things I cannot
change
I'm asking God for the courage to change the things I cannot accept.
How many tears have been cried
No more tears, we must fight
I said how many tears have been cried,
No more tears we must fight...

Canvassing at Essence Festival 2019



Organizers canvas at Essence Festival 2019 outside of the Convention Center, referencing the article about Gordon Plaza and resident Shannon Rainey in the July/August 2019 issue of Essence Magazine.

Photos by Terry Hixson



DIRT

B Y J E W E L L P R I M

This dirt is rancid with tears
It stinks
Flowers were never meant to bloom here.
These lives were forced to give too much here.
Give up the right to a beautiful home,
One that is perfect for casting roots,
One that would let them
Plant seeds
And watch those little children go,
Watch them grow.

Run!
In this DIRT,
This dirt is sticking
In a way that's different,
But recognize that it is the same in many, many places.
This dirt leaves the cancer in you.
You're tracking around medical bills you can't afford,
And smelling the taste of the death
That is dwelling over you,
You,
And your neighbor's heads.

Why
Didn't they tell you this was BAD dirt?
Why didn't they tell us?
That this foundation
Was built to harvest thorns,
And not daisies.
That the happy home
You were promised
Would cost you the life that you have every right to?

Why aren't you listening?
Why aren't they listening?
Cant you see it?
LOOK
Look
This dirt...



GORDON PLAZA



Maybe this death is in a language
 You've never heard.
 I guess this would never
 Be the insidious dirt
 You were given to make a house a home.
 Your dirt would never be my dirt.
 Ain't that something?
 huh

Is it weird to say that all dirt
 Should be equal?
 That everyone deserves to live,
 In a place where the land they stay on WONT
 Kill them?
 That just as you are important,
 I too,
 We too,
 THEY too are equally important?
 Is that a foreign language
 Too?

What does it mean
 When your government kills you,
 With deathly dirt?
 Do they not care?
 Who do they care about more?
 Why, maybe they're mistaken!
 Once again,
 They think,
 That this dark and deadly dirt
 Is supposed to be matched,
 With our dark and beautiful skin?

My ancestors didn't die,
 In this VERY LAND,
 By the hands of slave masters
 For my people,
 To die today,
 By the hands of this poisoned dirt.

SAVE THE DATE

THE AMERICAN DREAM DENIED: THE NEW ORLEANS RESIDENTS OF GORDON PLAZA SEEK RELOCATION

AN EXHIBITION AT NEWCOMB ART MUSEUM AT
TULANE

AUGUST 21 - DECEMBER 14, 2019

OPENING RECEPTION

SEPTEMBER 5, 2019, 6-8 PM

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The American Dream Revisited: The Residents of Gordon Plaza's Struggle to Leave the Agriculture Street Landfill Behind - organized by Tulane's environmental studies students- explores the lived experiences of communities impacted by pollution, and its concomitant effects on health and environment.