

Dear Friends,

Happy Black History Month! In 1976, two years after Bet Tzedek’s founding, President Ford became the first president to officially recognize Black History Month. At Bet Tzedek, we dedicate this month each year to celebrating the rich cultural heritage and foundational contributions of Black Americans upon which our country is indebted.

As legal advocates, we shine a light on the history of American law and jurisprudence, and the Black Americans who shaped both. Awareness of that history is paramount, as our constant vigilance of the law in the effort to promote justice cannot succeed without an understanding of how the law was constructed, oftentimes creating the very structural injustices which we are currently working to dismantle.

For instance, we acknowledge Los Angeles’ dark history of redlining, segregation, and racially motivated zoning laws. **The entrenched impact of redlining is one of the reasons Bet Tzedek has partnered with the County of L.A on our “Leaving a Legacy” program**, which helps ensure that low-income Angelenos are able to pass down their homes or other assets to their kids and grandkids so that these families can build intergenerational wealth. This is just one of our [many services](#) to help individuals who have faced systemic oppression.

Throughout February, we are sharing civil rights stories and legal victories, uplifting activists and business owners, celebrating Black joy, and highlighting the barriers Black Angelenos face — historically and currently — along with how Bet Tzedek works to break them down. You can join the conversation on our **social media accounts**, found at the bottom of this news digest!

Join Us March 5th for Our Spectacular Annual Gala!



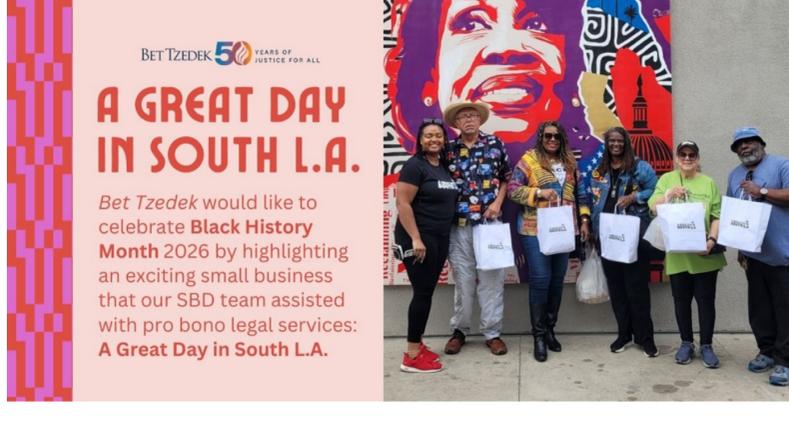
Mark your calendars for **Bet Tzedek’s Annual Dinner Gala**, the highlight of our fundraising efforts, on **Thursday, March 5th!** This exciting celebration unites our community in the pursuit of justice for all.

The energy will be palpable as we bring together more than 1,000 of SoCal’s attorneys and civic leaders, philanthropists and activists, media, banking and financial services professionals, and friends old and new!

Be a part of something extraordinary, where each contribution makes an impact on the lives of more than 70,000 low-income Angelenos annually. Together, we’re not just dreaming of change — we’re making it happen!

[GET TICKETS & DONATE](#)

Local Black-Owned Small Business Owners Make Their Communities Thrive: A Great Day in South L.A.



Janae Green founded A Great Day in South L.A. in Spring 2024, launching one of the most creative, educational, and immersive tours in the heart of Los Angeles. Through our small business program, **Bet Tzedek assisted Janae with registering the business’ trademark, drafting their liability waiver for the tours, and drafting the employee handbook.**

From their website: “Our motto is Preservation and Celebration in South L.A.! We celebrate people, power, and purpose to explore the vast and storied history of the Black experience in Los Angeles from the late 1800s to the 1970s. Our mission goes beyond exploration. We’re devoted to community engagement, supporting local businesses, and actively contributing to social impact initiatives. Through our tours, we aim to foster a deeper connection between our guests and the vibrant communities we visit.”

Bet Tzedek is honored to have assisted Janae with her innovative and valuable small business!

Bet Tzedek President Urges County to Oppose Federal Freeze and Save Lives

Last month, Bet Tzedek’s President & CEO **Diego Cartagena** represented Bet Tzedek in delivering comments at the County Board of Supervisors in support of Item 53G, **Holding the Line for Working Families Against Attacks on Federal Funding for Los Angeles County Residents.** Below are Diego’s comments:

Why This Motion Matters

- The federal freeze on CalWORKs, child care subsidies, and Social Services Block Grants is not an abstract policy change — it’s a direct threat to the people we serve every day. These programs are lifelines for seniors who rely on in-home support and for youth aging out of foster care who need stability to avoid homelessness.

Impact on Seniors

- Social Services Block Grants fund critical programs that allow older adults to remain safely in their homes. Without these supports, seniors face increased isolation, health risks, and potential institutionalization. At Bet Tzedek, we see firsthand how losing even modest assistance can push seniors into poverty or force impossible choices between rent, medication, and food.

Impact on Foster Youth

- For current and former foster youth, childcare subsidies and CalWORKs are essential. Many are young parents striving to complete school or maintain employment. Freezing these funds means they risk losing jobs and housing, perpetuating cycles of instability. Our legal advocacy often focuses on preventing homelessness among youth aging out of care. This freeze undermines those efforts and places thousands at risk.

Thank you, Diego, for delivering powerful comments that reinforce Bet Tzedek’s mission of “Justice for All.”

Sign Up: Our Free Legal Name & Gender Marker Clinic!

Register for our FREE legal name and gender marker change clinic on **February 25th, March 11th, and April 25th!**

[SIGN UP HERE!](#)

Bet Tzedek supports transgender and gender non-conforming individuals with updating their legal names and gender markers on identification documents to align with their gender identity. These documents are essential for applying for public benefits, receiving healthcare, starting new jobs, and enrolling in school.

Share this with someone who needs this resource and with your network!

What We’re Reading: James Baldwin, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*



In *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, James Baldwin examines the murder of Atlanta children not simply as a crime story, but as a moral reckoning. Baldwin challenges readers to look beyond official narratives and ask whose experiences are believed, whose suffering is dismissed, and how systems meant to protect instead often obscure the truth. **The book insists that justice cannot exist without attention, empathy, and a willingness to confront uncomfortable realities — especially when the victims are poor, Black, or otherwise marginalized.** Baldwin reminds us that “evidence” is not only what appears in court records, but what is lived every day by those denied dignity and protection. **Bet Tzedek’s mission — to pursue justice with compassion and urgency — embodies that lesson**, transforming unseen suffering into recognized rights and ensuring that the stories too often ignored are finally heard.

Join the Bet Tzedek Team!

Have a passion for helping underserved residents in the community? Please apply for a chance to take a leadership position with dedicated staff and volunteers who help over 70,000 people per year.

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