

OAKLAND DIRECT ACTION COMMITTEE (ODAC)

Oakland Direct Action Committee (ODAC) was a grassroots organization concerned with finding and filling the countless needs of the Oakland community. At the Center, 9435 East 14th Street, there were daily classes in English, mathematics and Black History. There was also legal and medical assistance for needy people and youth groups. In effect, ODAC was a center where a wide range of requests, problems and needs were dealt with by dedicated volunteers who were aware of and sympathetic to the complexities of life in the Black community.

ODAC was formed in 1964 under the leadership of Mark Comfort. In November of that year, ODAC sent Mark Comfort to Lowndes County, Alabama, to work on voter registration. An alliance was formed with Tom Hullet, Chairmen of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization.

In 1966, the Parents Association for Better Schools was formed by adult members of ODAC to press for free school lunches for needy children in the Oakland Public Schools. This project was successful, and the parents went on to form the Ad Hoc Committee for Better Schools, which then worked with the Oakland School District in an effort to improve the quality of education offered to all children in the District.

In 1966, Mark Comfort was a candidate for the State Assembly and 4th in a field of nine in a campaign run almost entirely without funds.

In August of 1967, ODAC gathered fifteen tons of food and medical supplies for Lowndes County to help freedom organizations care for victims of poverty and discrimination. As part of the Poor Peoples' Campaign in Washington DC, in May and June of 1968, ODAC formed a Western Caravan to Resurrection City. ODAC had the responsibility of safely transporting three busloads of people to and from Washington and of caring for them while there.

A "Black Happening" was staged in East Oakland on July 20, 1968, to promote better community relations, awareness of Black culture and heritage, awareness of the political situation in the community, and above all, awareness of self. All food and entertainment was donated. This event was an overwhelming success.

