



# Northside United

Issue #6: Summer 2016

## Get to Know Your Neighbors: Phoebe Brown

Community activist Phoebe Brown arrived in Ithaca from Harlem twenty three years ago and has lived in the Northside Community for fifteen years. She raised her daughter, Rasheeda, and her sons, Abdul and Lester, here. Phoebe said she wanted to come to this neighborhood because she really liked the area. The apartment she occupies faces Cascadilla Creek with a park right in front of it. She can sit in the sun and listen to the birds and generally enjoy nature. She felt there was a great community spirit in the housing complex with local activities such as picnics and BBQs. Many of these activities have stopped and Phoebe would like to see this community spirit revived.

Currently, Phoebe is Coordinator for the Ultimate Reentry Opportunity Mentee Program which is part of the Multicultural Resource Center of Co-

operative Extension. This program is for people who have recently left prison or jail and who would benefit learning from those who have been in the same situation and have succeeded outside. Five mentors (all ex-inmates) have been trained and are ready to take on this role. Phoebe is working closely with the Jail, Probation and OAR to match these mentors successfully. Phoebe has also been active in the Black Lives Matter movement and in the current book read, *The New Jim Crow*.

Many people who don't know Phoebe may still know who she is. She has a great sense of style and dresses in charming, inventive outfits which make her a standout in any social setting.



**Phoebe**

Phoebe Brown

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## A New Group for Young People Who Want to Help

"I think this program is great," says Emma Grace; "it promotes being active in the community when you're still young. I think it's important to know that you can do good things wherever you go."

Emma is talking about the Youth Organizing Fellowship, a new group of young people, aged 15 to 18, which has been meeting since March. They are working to build community organizing skills to help make Ithaca an even more equitable and socially just environment.

In interviewing three of the

group, Emma, Ahja Grace and Tenzin Tenzin, it became clear that they all had received encouragement and role modeling from their mothers, who are interested in politics and/or active in their community. But more than that, they each expressed passion about trying to make life better, particularly for those whose voices are not usually heard. They are especially sensitive to the needs of young people, the undocumented, and formerly incarcerated. Both Grace and

**New Group**

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## Announcements

Every other Wednesday the Ithaca Police Department will be meeting to discuss police-community relations at 1 p.m. in the Office of Chief Barber. All community residents are welcome.

Next meeting is August 3.

Free summer meals for all kids 18 and under. No registration or paperwork necessary. Local site is Northside Community Center.

The schedule of meals:

June 27 through September 2, Monday–Friday

Breakfast 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Lunch 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Northside will be offering fresh, locally grown produce when available from the Youth Farm Project.

Check for more information on Facebook: 'Tompkins County Free Summer Meals for Kids' to stay up to date on changes, menus and more.

Our region is suffering from a severe drought. The

**Announcements, Continued on Page 2**

# Come join the Celebration!



Northside United invites you to the third annual community party August 13, 3-6p.m. at the Quaker Meeting House on the corner of Third and Madison streets Food, Fun and Entertainment for all!!

## Kid's Activities

Hula Hoops • Face Painting • Enormous Bubbles • Coloring • The Physics Bus  
Anarchy Zone (trucks, shovels & lots of dirt!) • Make a friendship bracelet

## Food

Pizza • Hot dogs • Ice cream • watermelon • food cooked by the Burmese community and the Friend's Meeting

## Tables

Clothing Exchange • Garden Produce • Master Gardening / Compost ideas  
• I/WH/

## Entertainment

salsa dancing (with lessons!) • Tibetan dance • Hip hop artist • Asian women's fashion show • CUMEP performance • double dutch • and more!



## Announcements, *Continued from Page 1*

City of Ithaca is implementing water saving measures; businesses and residents are being asked to do the same.

The City's emergency announcement with suggestions for ways to save water can be found online here:

<http://www.cityofithaca.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=101>

## Phoebe

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Phoebe loves to shop in all the local thrift shops and takes advantage of the low prices to buy unusual articles of clothing and mixing and matching. Phoebe laughs when she says, "Sometimes people will say to me, 'Phoebe, you are a little over the top.'" But no one says she doesn't always look terrific.

Phoebe has been part of Northside United since its start. She feels it is important that a community be a champion for itself because the community has the answers. Getting together with others and speaking in a united voice is an effective way to make social change. She is happy that groups of people who didn't know each other are meeting at NU and she wants to keep the momentum going.

"I love people and am passionate about seeing everyone in a better place." says Phoebe, "I am always working toward equality for everyone. No one should be left out!"

## New Group for Young People

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Ahja mentioned that their studies at the New Roots School had made them more aware of social justice issues.

Besides developing their skills, these young people have explored different kinds of projects to work on. The first, which is called Participatory Budgeting, is based on successful programs in Boston and Toronto. Youth Organizing Fellowship members will be going door to door interviewing people to ask about the kind of youth and neighborhood improvement programs they would like to see in Northside. Some canvassing will be done in Southside and West Hill as well.

A public forum will be held on August 20th at the Quaker Meeting House to share their results. Proposals that generate the most support will be put on a special ballot. They plan to work with Common Council and other sources to obtain funding. They will also ask that all people older than 12, as well as those previously incarcerated and undocumented, be able to vote on these projects.

It is an exciting project. Although it is hard to talk with people you don't know, all three teenagers felt that people are often more open than expected. The three have energy and optimism and want to know what Northsiders care about. So Northsiders, here is a chance to tell them what you think!

*(This is the first half of a two part article)*