

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 25, 2022

Oakland Luminaries Honored in Special “Keys to the City” Presentation with Mayor Libby Schaaf

Free “Love Life Week” event features live music, performances, food, and tributes honoring those who are uplifting love in Oakland

Oakland, CA – As a culmination of Oakland’s first “Love Life Week,” this **Thursday, October 27 from 5 to 7 pm**, the City of Oakland is hosting a free event honoring those who uplift love and help prevent violence in our communities.

During the program, Mayor Libby Schaaf will present keys to the City honoring five Oaklanders who have made an enormous, positive difference in Oakland over many years. “By attaining a Key to the City,” Mayor Schaaf wrote to the recipients, “you are formally acclaimed as a longtime Oakland resident whose achievements are known beyond Oakland and have helped put Oakland ‘on the map;’ whose work has fostered a greater sense of belonging in Oakland; who gives back to Oakland through community service; and whose work exemplifies Oakland values and our unique ethos or ‘secret sauce’.”

Keys to the City will be presented to 5 Oakland luminaries (see below for bios):

- Fredrika Newton
- James Syhabout
- Tommy Orange
- D’Wayne Wiggins
- Goapele

The free event, hosted by Oakland Cultural Strategist [Kev Choice](#), will feature performances by:

- Fantastic Negrito
- Goapele
- The Flannels
- Nadia Elbgal, Oakland’s Youth Poet Laureate
- DJ Saurus

Join Oakland’s artist community, neighbors, City staff, and visionaries for an uplifting gathering of love, with free food, music, and art.

Event Details:

When: Thursday, October 27 from 5 – 7 pm

Where: Frank H. Ogawa Plaza Amphitheater



City of
OAKLAND
California

Media Contact:

Justin Berton
Mayor Schaaf’s Office
Communications Director
(510) 238-7072



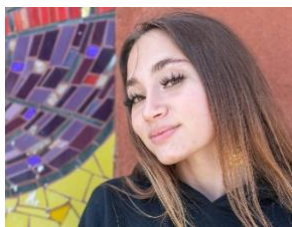
Fantastic Negrito



Goapele



The Flannels



*Nadia Elbgal,
Youth Poet Laureate*

Keys to the City Recipients



DJ Saurus of
Hip-Hop for Change



Fredrika Newton—Retired nurse, former Black Panther Party member, and widow of founder Huey P. Newton. Ms. Newton keeps the Black Panther Party’s radical history alive as the President of the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation and keeper of the Party’s archives.



James Syhabout— Oakland’s only Michelin-starred chef and the proprietor of Commis on Piedmont Avenue, as well as several other restaurants in Oakland and San Francisco. He immigrated with his family from Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand to Oakland when he was two years old, and as the child of a Chinese father and Thai mother, he grew up immersed in traditional cooking methods that he blends with his formal training to create unique flavors that reflect Oakland’s melting pot and have resulted in national culinary acclaim.



Tommy Orange— Native American author of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, born and raised in Oakland’s Dimond District. He is best known for *There There*, his 2018 debut novel, which follows the journey of 12 “urban Indians” living in the greater Oakland area who converge at a stadium powwow, reconnecting over their Native identity. Orange has received the John Leonard Prize, the PEN/Hemingway Award, and the American Book Award.



D’Wayne Wiggins—Musician, guitarist, composer, and producer best known as a member of the multi-platinum-selling 1990s R&B/Soul/Rock act Tony! Toni! Tone! Born in West Oakland and raised in East Oakland, Dwayne Wiggins is a musical ambassador of Oakland’s culture as well as a dedicated community leader who has helped nurture a generation of artistic Oaklanders.



Goapele—Oakland-born neosoul artist whose 2001 hit *Closer* has been listened to over 8 million times on Spotify alone. She has appeared on television in and movies as an actor, produced an experimental short film, and continues her career as a recording artist, with her sixth album due to be released soon. Outside of her artistic pursuits, Goapele works with the Imagine Justice Organization, A New Way of Life Foundation, and the Agape Spiritual Center to advance social justice.

Previous honorees:



Arabella Martinez—Founder and first CEO of the Unity Council, and spearheaded the nationally acclaimed Fruitvale Transit Village project. Her work generated more than \$200 million in support of the Unity Council, its transit village development and open space initiatives. President Jimmy Carter appointed Ms. Martinez Assistant Secretary for the Office of Human Development Services, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare,

making her the first Latina appointed to a sub-cabinet level position in the history of the nation. She has been recognized with more than 25 honors and awards at local and national levels over her extensive career. Mayor Schaaf presented Ms. Martinez a key to the City at her State of the City address last week.

Mistah F.A.B.—American rapper, songwriter, entrepreneur, community organizer and activist. Organizes annual Thanksgiving turkey giveaways, backpack and school supply drives, holiday toys event and various charitable events benefiting cancer patients and domestic violence survivors.

Bishop Yvette A. Flunder—Founded Ark of Refuge, Inc., which provides housing, direct services, education and training for persons affected by HIV/AIDS in the Bay Area, throughout the USA and in three countries in Africa – starting at a time when HIV/AIDS was still heavily stigmatized.

Marilyn Washington Harris—Following the tragic murder of her 18-year-old son, founded the Khadafy Washington Foundation for Non-violence, which supports many efforts to prevent violence and support Oakland families who have lost a loved one to homicide.

Russell Jeung—Co-founded Stop AAPI Hate, helping to raise awareness of how racialized rhetoric around the novel coronavirus’s origins has uniquely targeted people of Asian descent while fueling a new generation of intersectional activism.

Background

On October 18, 2022, the Oakland City Council declared the week of October 20th as “Love Life” Week in the City of Oakland. “Oakland Love Life” is the official motto of the City of Oakland, adopted in April 2016, in memory of 16-year old Lo'Eshe Lacy. Lo'Eshe in Nigerian Igbo means "love life," a rallying cry to embody Oakland love.

The "Love Life" motto responds to our communal desire to build an inclusive, equitable, and authentic Oakland. It demonstrates a united care and concern to inform and guide our practices in our quest to make Oakland a safe, just, sustainable, equitable, creative, vibrant, and loving city. We seek to denounce violence and all the conditions that create violence. This motto is a commitment to vehemently working against these conditions to create a safe space for all to operate in love and peace in our communities, as well as modeling love as we do this work in every department of government.

###