

Angela Lang: Black Leaders Organizing for Communities

Rebecca Below, *Civil Rights*

Angela Lang was born and raised in Milwaukee’s 53206 zip code. The 53206 zip code has the highest incarceration rate of any zip code in Wisconsin per capita. This zip code also has the dubious distinction of being home to one-third of the vacant lots in the City of Milwaukee and of being a zip code where two-thirds of its children live in poverty.

She believes in transformative change in her community, and believes in effecting this change by mobilizing the community and developing young leaders of color. As Executive Director of BLOC (Black Leaders Organizing for Communities), Angela Lang believes

in a unique way of organizing.

BLOC’s work starts by asking the community a question: “What would it look like for your community to thrive?” BLOC’s work strives for transformational change in the areas of need identified by the community. In expanding the idea of civic engagement beyond just voting, and centering those most directly impacted, BLOC ensures that quality of life and access to opportunities are always at the center of the work they do in their communities.

Fundamental to BLOC’s philosophy around the organizing work it does, BLOC’s Ambassadors and staff

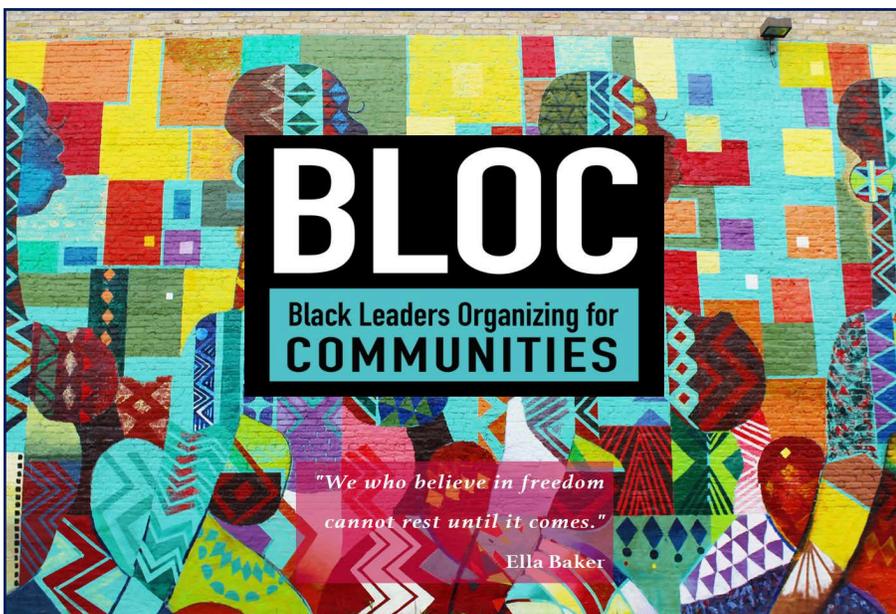
are all a part of the communities they organize. BLOC Ambassadors participate in robust and ongoing education and training to empower them to be well versed in civics and civic engagement and thereby better serve their communities.

BLOC’s successful and ongoing engagement (BLOC’S philosophy is that organizing is a year-round activity) with the communities it serves has caught the interest of several local, state, and national politicians who have participated in BLOC’s “Silent Canvass” program. This program allows candidates and elected officials the opportunity to experience what the community experiences daily. During the 2-3 hour canvass, candidates and elected officials are asked to remain silent and are not introduced by name or candidate status allowing the candidate or elected official the opportunity to listen and absorb all they can from the community during their time engaging with the guidance of a trained BLOC Ambassador.

For more information on BLOC, go to www.blocbybloc.org. To view the presentation, go to <https://media.cityofmadison.com/Mediasite/>

“What would it take for our community to THRIVE?”

Angela Lang



Welcome Aboard

Holly Chen, Citywide Interpreter/Translator



I was born in Shanghai, China, and moved to Madison, where my dad was a research scientist at UW-Madison, when I was 8. I graduated from Madison Memorial, and went to college at UW-Whitewater. After working for several years, and never truly finding fulfillment in the jobs I had, my mom suggested that I should become an interpreter. I have been an interpreter for almost 7 years now. Before the pandemic, I was working mainly at hospitals and clinics throughout the Madison area, as well as different courts around the state. I absolutely love being an interpreter. Not being able to communicate with the people around you is something I have first hand knowledge of, and it can be incredibly terrifying. I love that I am able to help the people in my community during what is often stressful, and/or unfamiliar situations.

In my free time, I usually spend summers playing lots of Ultimate Frisbee. I am a lover of all things food. Retail therapy usually comes in the form of high heel shoes. However, these days, most of my time goes to snuggling with my doggo. 🇺🇸



www.hispanicheritagemoth.gov/

Brain Teaser

Equitable Definitions

Fill in the blanks after each definition. Then write each letter within a circle in the spaces at the end of the definitions. Last, unscramble that word.

A socially constructed concept that categorizes individuals based on appearances that are ascribed with cultural characteristics.

___ _ _ _ ___ _

An exaggerated, oversimplified belief about an entire group of people without regard for individual differences

___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ___ _ _ _ _

Judgement that is not based on reason and/or actual experience

___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ___ _ _ _

A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group

___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ___ _ _ _ _

Social groups that have a common national or cultural tradition

___ _ _ _ _ ___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ___ _

Everyday verbal, nonverbal, slights or insults which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target non-privileged persons based upon their group membership

___ _

Preferences that we are unaware of

___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ or ___ ___ ___ _ _ _ _ _

Being actively conscious about race and racism and taking actions to end racial inequities in our daily lives

___ ___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]

___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Unscramble the letters that appear in circles in the definitions above:

___ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Welcome Aboard

Jesus Sanchez-Cruz, Investigator



I am originally from Guadalajara, Mexico. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Business, and a Master's in Recreation Management.

I enjoy different cultures, learning new things and the outdoors. I love living in Madison!! I am an avid cyclist, love soccer and a Packer fan!

My family includes my wife, our child, and two dogs. ■■

Brenda Yang, Citywide Interpreter/Translator



I have lived in Madison for the past 20 years and am originally from Northern California. I am a graduate student studying

cultural relevancy and its significance in public schools with an emphasis on the Hmong culture, the Hmong people, and the Hmong diaspora. I work full time advocating for High School students that are low-income and first generation college bound. I also work with community leaders on issues affecting the Hmong Community regarding public education, serve on a committee for MMSD's Superintendent's Human Relations Advisory Council, am part of the Hmong Education Council, and am passionate about advocating for students of color and students that come from significant barriers. I'm also passionate about: social justice, economic justice, educational justice, policy-reform, and finding sustainable solutions. I enjoy meeting new people, going to social events (pre-COVID), singing, playing the piano and guitar, writing, finding new hiking spots in Madison, and running to keep active. ■■

Equitable Development in Madison

*Rebecca Below, Department
of Civil Rights*

The May 2020 RESJI Speaker Series featured Dan McAuliffe and Urvashi Martin of the City of Madison Planning Division. The presentation was held via Zoom due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Dan and Urvashi spoke about equitable development in Madison. They researched and created the Equitable Development Report, a white paper addressing concerns about the Oscar Mayer site development. There were concerns about whether the development would cause housing costs to rise in the area, effectively pushing existing residents out of those neighborhoods. Madison's rapid growth and unique geography have only helped to exacerbate its affordable housing need.

Using the same methodology as has been used in Portland, Oregon the Planning Division was able to use certain census tract data to map and track areas that are in the process of or may be at risk for gentrification and displacement. Using census tract data such as income/poverty level, education, rental/ownership rates, race and ethnicity, housing values and rents, and watching how those factors change over time can suggest areas of economic vulnerability that may be more susceptible to displacement or gentrification.

The report also included strategies to address displacement and gentrification and try to help maintain existing affordable housing stock. Those strategies included creating new affordable housing, developing financial strategies to support affordable housing, developing strategies to preserve subsidized and naturally occurring affordable housing, neighborhood stabilization, and planning for inclusive and equitable growth. Strategies currently being used by the City of Madison include the Affordable Housing Fund, TIF policies, land banking, property tax assistance, and others. There are also strategies not currently being used that could be implemented as well, such as a housing levy, adjusting zoning standards, retaining expiring subsidy units, and developer exactions to name only a few. Strategies that are currently prohibited by Wisconsin law include density bonuses, inclusionary zoning and rent control.

For more information on Dan and Urvashi's presentation and the neighborhoods studied, [see the report.](#) ■■



EOD Paralegal Intern: Karyna Prakapenka



I am a Paralegal intern who had a pleasure to meet the EOD employees, Byron Bishop and Rebecca Below, at the mock job interview in fall of 2019. In August 2020, I will graduate from the Paralegal Program at Madison Area Technical College.

In my late thirties, I enrolled in MATC's Paralegal Post-Baccalaureate program. I had been torn between obtaining an associate degree in the medical field or adding an ESL teaching license to a foreign degree in linguistics. Also, as an adoring mother of two amazing children, I wanted my educational program to be fast and affordable. After my research on potential career paths, I realized that this profession might be an excellent fit with my degree and work experience in Eastern Europe. With graduation getting closer, I feel confident in my career choice because the market demand for paralegals is rapidly growing.

After graduation, I would love to work at DCR (Number #1 Choice), or in a private law setting specializing in U.S. immigration law. As a first-generation immigrant, I have experienced the challenges of integrating into a new culture as well as the benefits of living here. I am interested in aspects of contract and employment law and would consider those practice areas as desirable for future employment. My hobbies include listening to music, watching Russian comedy shows, reading, gardening, cooking, biking, and hanging out with awesome people who want to grow, explore, and make amazing memories. ■■

NEWS & VIEWS

Thanks for reading! We hope you enjoyed these stories and we want to hear your feedback for future issues. The newsletter will be published quarterly.

We'd like to hear from you regarding racial equity and social justice in your work.

Contact newsletter editor Donna Collingwood at dcollingwood@cityofmadison.com



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& Social Justice Initiative

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“They tried to bury us, but they did not know we were seeds.”

—Mexican Proverb

RESJI Summer Intern: Sophia De Oliveria



I just graduated from Middleton High School, and I will be attending Yale University in the fall. I hope to pursue a double major in sociology and ethnicity, race, and migration, where I hope to gain an understanding of the role race plays in social constructs and how to better create equitable practices in society. I'm also really interested in global health and education, so I hope to take classes in those departments as well!

Here are a few fun facts about me: I have three citizenships (Brazil, U.S and Canada). My parents were born in Brazil, and I was born in Canada. We later moved to Middleton, WI when I was three years old. I live at home with my parents, my older brother, our three dogs, our two chameleons and our goldfish. There are more animals than humans in my house! In my free time, I love to attempt to recreate recipes by following shows on the Food Network! ■■