ANNUAL REPORT 2022

FirstRepair
Informing Local Reparations, Nationally
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As we celebrate our second year, we are excited to report to you - our partners, stakeholders and allies - on the continued progress we are making to inform local reparations, nationally.

Our logo incorporates the Ghanaian symbol, Adinkrehene, which stands for leadership. It also reminds us that we work in concentric circles, starting at the center with local reparations as the core of our work, then moving to state and, ultimately, a federal reparations initiative. Therefore, our central responsibility is to continue to inform local reparations initiatives, like the first-in-the-nation tax-funded reparations program in Evanston that, as alderman, I helped to lead and is currently disbursing direct benefits to its Black community.

Utilizing Evanston’s model as an example for other communities, local reparations are quickly becoming a thriving and promising arm of the centuries-old reparations movement. We are seeing unprecedented momentum in gaining government, institutional and ally support for local reparations and we are reaching new milestones daily. In 2022, we expanded our programs in response to the needs of the local reparations movement, including Reparations Strategy Sessions, Local Reparations Toolkit and Youth Reparations Toolkit. We also onboarded additional staff and have taken big leaps in professionalizing our organization for sustainability and increased movement impact.

Our work attracted new partners and invitations to speak to university and college audiences including the University of Cambridge and the Harvard Kennedy School and several HBCUs throughout the country. We have also facilitating workshops at various national philanthropy conferences hosted by Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, the Association of Black Foundation Executives, and Prosperity Now. We are encouraged by the outcomes we have inspired in the interfaith community, including the Evanston Interfaith Initiative, that has created a reparations toolkit and raised over $1 million to expand reparations beyond municipal government.

Our efforts continue to draw substantial local, national and international media attention.

A major highlight is our featured role in The Big Payback, a ninety-minute documentary film directed by Erika Alexander and Whitney Dow, that follows the process of reparation in Evanston and the work being done at the federal level through HR-40. The documentary debuted at the Tribeca Festival in June 2022 and was aired on PBS on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January 2023. An accompanying study guide was created and has been used with countless elementary, middle, high school and college students throughout the country.

Robin Rue Simmons
Founder & Executive Director
US LOCALITIES

West
Denver, CO
Los Angeles, CA
Sacramento, CA
San Francisco, CA

Midwest
Chicago, IL
Evanston, IL
Waukegan, IL
Detroit, MI
Kalamazoo, MI
Lansing, MI
Kansas City, MO
Omaha, NE
Tulsa, OK

South
Naples, FL
Stuart, FL
Atlanta, GA
Decatur, GA
South Fulton, GA
New Orleans, LA
Asheville, NC
Richmond, VA
Vienna, VA

East
Washington, DC
Baltimore, MD
Bowie, MD
Amherst, MA
Boston, MA
Cambridge, MA
Jamaica Plain, MA
Martha’s Vineyard, MA
Dix Hills, NY
New York, NY
Philadelphia, PA
Providence, RI

INTERNATIONAL LOCALITIES

Accra, Ghana
Cambridge, England
Geneva, Switzerland
Vatican City
2022 KEY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Black Massacre Project, Race, Riots, & Reparations: Remediation for America’s Historical Black Massacres - Speaker
January 2022

Progressive Democrats of America - Central IL Chapter Meeting - Speaker
February 2022

HUM C55 - Perspective Course, Oakton Community College Course - Lecturer
February 2022

Reparations and Black Homeownership, Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics - Speaker
March 2022

DC Reparations Conference - Speaker
March 2022

The Association of Black Foundation Executives Annual Conference - Speaker
April 2022

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations 2022 National Conference - Speaker
May 2022

Tribeca Film Festival, 'The Big Payback' Premiere - Featured
June 2022

King Boston Embrace Ideas Festival - Speaker
June 2022

Vatican, Global Circle for Reparations & Healing Action - Strategist
June 2022

African Transitional Justice Legacy Fund, Reparations & Racial Healing Summit - Speaker
July 2022

Atlas Strategy Group, Kairos Convening for the Culture - Speaker
August 2022

Prosperity Now Summit - Speaker
September 2022

University of Cambridge, Envisioning Reparations: Historical and Comparative Approaches Conference - Lecturer
September 2022

Can Reparations Close the Racial Health Gap? Symposium, FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University - Speaker
November 2022

FirstRepair & NAARC, Annual Local Reparations Symposium - Convener
December 2022

United Nations, Permanent Forum on People of African Descent 1st Session - Speaker
December 2022
PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

FirstRepair In Communities - Kansas City, MO

“As we work on our local reparations initiative in Kansas City, there is so much value in meeting and conversing with reparations activists from around the country. We have learned quite a bit with regard to strategies and tactics used by others that have proven beneficial to us. FirstRepair provides a great program.”

MICKEY DEAN
KANSAS CITY REPARATIONS COALITION

FirstRepair In Communities - Palm Springs, CA

“I found the conference to be incredibly informative and substantive, so many local reparations initiatives taking place all over the country. I thought the sessions were very helpful and provided practical information that can be implemented in different settings.”

AREVA MARTIN
CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY - CNN LEGAL ANALYST
“This symposium was an eye opening movement for me. Being the daughter of a Black History educator in the late 60’s early 70’s I was constantly aware of the treatment of Black Americans. I wanted to always figure out a way to make our people as whole as possible.

I am in awe of the many dynamic forces that came to share and gain wisdom around REPARATIONS. I am excited that there are movements happening and I look forward to the day that it all falls into place and the recognition, repair and repayment is started nationally.

This is not a one stop deal this is a movement that must continue.”

“Churches and faith leaders are not called to just be cheerleaders to the movement but active players, helping our institutions contribute materially with funds and resources to advance equity and justice. There are faith communities in every city, that with the right education and good leadership can get behind the movement and add moral force to the argument for reconciliation and repair. Go find them and put them in motion for the movement!”
MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you to the dozens of local, national, and international Media Outlets for amplifying our efforts and the local reparations movement.

Click on logo for full list of stories
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*Inspired over 100 local reparations initiatives
*Launched monthly Reparations Strategy Sessions
*Participated in the AARN and ICTJ Conferences in Washington, DC
*Spoke at the Tribeca Film Festival premier of “The Big Payback”
*Co-hosted the Second Annual Local Reparations Symposium
*Presented at United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Decent 1st Session in Geneva, Switzerland
*Expanded internation reach

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S HONORS & AWARDS

*Community Service Award – NAACP Evanston/North Shore
*Community Service Award - Chessmen Club of the North Shore
*Rosa Parks Award – American Association for Access Equity and Diversity
*City of Evanston, IL Proclamation – Robin Rue Simmons Day
Our Generous Donors
Our work is made possible by our philanthropic partners!

$250,000+

Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation

$100,000 - $249,999

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

$50,001 - $99,999

NAARC National African-American Reparations Commission

$25,000 - $50,000

Borealis Philanthropy

Liberation Ventures

MacArthur Foundation

Thank you to all that contributed $5 - $500 on our website and for every contribution
OUR TEAM

STAFF

Robin Rue Simmons  Founder & Executive Director
Kierra Abrams  Executive Assistant
Lisa Laude  Special Projects Director
Shawn J. Mayberry  Digital Director
Vanessa Johnson McCoy  Events Manager
Elisa Walker  Special Assistant
FirstRepair
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