

## Fear, Anger, Pain, and Self-Determination

As national quarantine continues to rage through Summer in the Bay Area, many of us have fallen on scarce times and begun to question the arc of the Dr. King's moral universe. In this, our final Summer issue, The Village Voice is taking a look at sobering truths on Black health, revisiting the BAEC (Bay Area Empowerment Committee), and viewing the death of George Floyd through the eyes of a child.

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## Don't Call It a Comeback - The Rise of The BAEC & Cooperative Economics

National levels of unemployment are the highest they've been in just under 100 years, and the rate of joblessness among Black people is twice the national average. Public servants and health care workers—both disproportionately Black work forces experience greater job security but at the cost of higher exposure to contagion. Meanwhile the safest industries in tech and engineering are highly segregated. Amidst the unprecedented global health disaster, another Black man has been viciously murdered by police, spurring a national tidal wave of polarizing campaigns, misinformation, and dozens of thousands of young brothers and sisters voicing distrust of the state, and opposition to police terror. Fortune 500 companies





have modified their marketing campaigns and advertisements to leverage Black suffering into profit, and as the 2020 elections steadily approach, the Black community at large seem not to be oriented toward any particular tangible goals.

The BAEC (Bay Area Empowerment Committee) is kicking into high gear as this Summer comes to an end, and the stakes for the Black community appear higher than they've been for a long time. The locally operated coalition of Black-owned businesses and professionals was originally assembled as an ad-hoc informational aid to redress the adverse effects of COVID-19 on Black America, but since then, leadership has come to consensus that the BAEC needs to continue rendering essential services to the community in the form of a permanent body of professional service providers and public advocates.

The BAEC is best known for their Virtual African American Town Hall series wherein community members are given a platform to engage in conversation with trusted community professionals and experts. Beyond this however, the BAEC has high ambitions to broaden its base of support–and membership–to greater effect. Struggling parents in the Bay Area can find relief in Village-Connect's Parent & Caretaker support groups, those in need of stress relief can find their breath through healing sessions offered by Anchored In Spirit, and business owners can restructure with cooperative strategies learned through the Think Outside the Boss workshop series, facilitated in partnership with the Sustainable Economies Law Center. Training sessions, workshops and support groups are being held virtually until further notice to ensure broader community accessibility while advocating for public health. Brother Gaylon Logan, Jr. is at the head of the BAEC, which promises to develop platforms in the future that will lend toward the goal of Black empowerment, professional and otherwise. We spoke with the Executive Director of Village-Connect to come to clarity on how the BAEC is developing this coming year.

#### TVV: Is the BAEC a Village-Connect project?

**GL:** Yes, it's a project that VC spearheaded at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic when the statewide shelter-in-place was issued. We reached out to other CBO's (community based organizations) and folks within our network who we knew were active players in addressing the needs of African American families. There was a collective agreement that vital information was not getting to people regarding the crisis and that people were facing real financial struggles. We decided to form a short-term ad-hoc committee which was charged with the planning and implementation of four Virtual Town Hall sessions utilizing the Zoom platform. We held our first Town Hall within eight days and presented a panel of experts focusing on health, economics, education, and legal rights. The guest list included the director of Alameda County Public Health Department, who provided a comprehensive update on the virus and how it was impacting the African American community. All four town halls were extremely well attended averaging over 100 participants.

#### TVV: As the BAEC has changed into a permanent committee, where do you see it going?

**GL:** The overwhelming feedback from participant surveys was that the information provided was extremely useful and that they felt connected in this critical time of mandated isolation. We were strongly urged to continue. As a committee we deliberated and many, but not all chose to stay at the table to explore how we can continue to create a collective force for change. Economic self-sufficiency was a consistent theme amongst members causing many to reflect on the historic disenfranchisement of African Americans largely brought on by lack of resources to address the educational, medical, and socio-political needs of our families. The idea of developing a community cooperative enterprise was floated. We enlisted the support of Greg Jackson from Repaired Nations, who volunteered to provide us with a three-part training which we just completed. We have a long way to go but in addition to continuing with our TH series we have committed ourselves to moving in the direction of becoming a community cooperative that not only focuses on meeting the needs of the community, but aims to build a vehicle that will eventually fund our efforts.

#### TVV: Why do you think cooperative development is an important organ of the BAEC?

**GL:** For far too long, as a people we have remained in a dependent state, not liking the quality of education, the equity when it comes to jobs and hiring practices, the types of commerce that exist to historically take our dollars and give nothing back. We are all committed to meeting the vital needs of our families, but we are tired of begging others to meet this responsibility.

## TVV: What can people on the street do to stay abreast of BAEC development and potentially get involved? What do you need from the community?

**GL:** Continue attending the Town Hall sessions where you will be provided with regular updates. We are busy building necessary systems that will allow us to sustain our growth and development. What we need from the community is to raise your awareness and be prepared to act. More than ever, it's time to start having those tough conversations with your family and friends about what history has taught or not taught us. It's time to mend severed relationships and increase allies.

Despite a huge dedication to advocacy for the development of cooperative enterprise, the BAEC hasn't yet made the move to incorporate cooperatively. BAEC leadership is currently considering a cooperative model for potential expansion of the network, but consensus among the founding network has yet to be reached. The decision to incorporate cooperatively would make the BAEC the largest Black-owned and operated cooperative network in the greater Bay Area.

\*The Village Voice, on behalf of VC invites you and your family to join us at the next Virtual African American Town Hall on August the 13th, 2020. For registration info, head over to the VC Zoom registration page. Also, join the Virtual African American Town Hall Facebook page.



Trenelle Jones, CEO of LionPack Fitness says he doesn't believe in perfection, but quarantine is a time for self improvement and what he calls "bettering your best"

# Keeping the Temple Clean -Health & Discipline in the Age of Coronavirus

The world is nearly a half a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effects are taking significant toll on communities everywhere, with Black descendants of the African diaspora bearing the brunt of health adversity. Despite availability of advanced medical treatments and well-funded facilities the country over, the United States has seen the highest number of COVID-19 related deaths of any nation in the world. At 145,546 deaths as of July 25, 2020, the US is host to more deaths than neighboring countries Canada, Mexico, and all of the Caribbean islands combined.

Blacks in America constitute the largest proportion of these deaths with nearly 8 percent of COVID patients perishing due to the novel disease. Blacks dying at a rate four times (that's 400%) the rate of the country at large to disease isn't uncommon. Poor diet and nutrition, lack of exercise, a poverty rate of 1 in 5, and unequal access to qualified medical care have made disproportionate Black suffering the standard for several generations now.

Shelter in-place and closures of social venues have resulted in explosions of Black people socially gathering to eat, drink, build community, and-more recently-protest, all to the peril of the community. As quarantine marches on, popular Bay Area public venues such as Alameda Beach and Lake Merritt in Oakland are seeing more barbecues, parties, sideshows, and socio-commerical outreach. Blacks however, remain underrepresented among health food patrons and socially distanced virtual workout groups, as well as in mental health and other activities of benefit to immune health.

Trenelle Jones (or Tré) is a health expert with 6 years of experience giving health consultations, nutrition planning and fitness coaching at his company, LionPack Fitness. Brother Tré is concerned about the way public health has been shaped by the quarantine and saw fit to offer virtual training classes through his online platform well before shelter inplace was mandated. Tré says that he saw "quarantine pounds" and decreased health due to gym closures and lack of sunlight coming from a mile away. "I started something called the LionPack Fitness Challenge. It would be for example, eat one whole grapefruit today before dinner, something basic like that, right? And the next day, 250 jumping jacks–not all at one time–but just before the end of that day, it has to be 250."

Tré was disappointed when misinformation started spreading in the Black community, such as the myth that the virus was allergic to *melanin*, the brown pigment that constitutes dark skin, "It was a great ignorance. I feel like in Black America, it's a shame but we're consistently celebrating ignorance, naysay, hearsay, and all that stuff. We need some real substance, but unfortunately in 2020 that's where we are as a people." Tré emphasizes messages surrounding personal accountability and the power of the mind through his platform on Instagram, @ lionpackfitness\_militia. "There's a synergistic effect to everything we do; it all works together. **Everybody's** always picking and choosing, looking for the shortcuts to success, especially with health. Like 'Okay I'll just do this and that.' I don't understand that."

The most important habit to master in order to avoid being immunologically compromised, Tré says, is proper timing. "Either you're on time or you're not. I'm not a believer in perfection, but I am a strong believer in bettering your best, and that has a lot to do with your timing; effectively working to implement everything in a timely manner. You can't go out on a binge drinking mission from Thursday to Saturday and then think on Sunday 'Oh, I'm gonna be good, cause I'ma go get solid', you know, this is how some people think for some reason."

These are the LionPack Fitness' top five habits for enhanced immunity:

## 1. Eating "Clean"

It's not vegan propaganda, but diets consisting of fresh fruits and vegetables have a strong correlation with healthy immune function and decreased stress. Take time to eat about three handfuls of dried cranberries or blueberries a day as a snack, with your choice of mixed nuts, and get plenty of cruciferous (that means crunchy) vegetables like carrots and broccoli. You may have heard that vitamin C helps immunity, but zinc is more effective against COVID-19. Grass-fed beef,



Measures to enforce social distancing in public spaces like Lake Merritt have been eased since May, leading to increased crowding. Recent protests & Juneteenth festivities have contributed to Black vulnerability.

lentils, grapefruit and avocados are a good start. A tablespoon of apple cider vinegar a day will help metabolic function and conversion of the foods you already eat to effectively fight sickness, fatigue, and those "quarantine pounds".

## 2. Getting Proper Sleep

This means no Netflix binging until 2:00am, and no staying in bed until noon. A properly metered sleep-wake cycle is essential to a well-functioning immune system. Most adults thrive on seven or eight hours of continued sleep per night, and scheduling a regular time to get in bed daily is just as important as the time you spend counting sheep. (Remember, *timing* is key)

#### **3. Routine Exercise**

Daily exercise is the optimum frequency to strengthen immune response, but Tré suggests for beginners to start small. "Instead of saying 'I'ma do seven days a week', let's just do three. Or start with just Tuesday, Thursday this week, and then next week split it to Monday Wednesday Friday, to where it's not such a big clump". Workouts that get your body sweating, such as short jogs or jumping jacks are better for immunity than lifting weights, and 10 minutes a day is enough to make an impact.

#### 4. Social Distancing When Possible

Although it's true that outdoor gatherings are better than indoor gatherings, keep your head about you in a crowded outdoor venues such as food courts or on a picnic beach. It's not uncommon for others not to wear masks in public and you don't want to find yourself on the receiving end of viral shedding. Wear your mask and avoid dense crowds of people you don't know.

## **5. Practicing Sanitary Habits**

This is the one everybody seems to have forgotten. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) and WHO (World Health Organization) still advocate hand washing as the most effective and crucial habit in controlling the spread of COVID-19. Wash your hands as soon as you enter your home from going out, and keep hand sanitizer on hand. Avoid touching your face if you can, and be mindful of the things you reach for while in public. (Doorknobs, gas station pumps, elevator buttons, etc.) Give your friends a fist bump when possible.

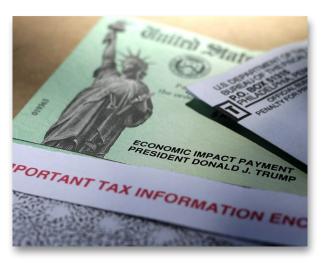
Tré advises newcomers to health as well as those out of the habit to "Start with the imagination, and then make your action plan. Something you can do twice a week, and then maybe bump it up." The small, minute-by-minute transactions are the ones that our days are made of. For your health, your family's health, and the health of your community, do your part to stay strong and defended through the Summer and the upcoming Fall season.

For more information on Health and Wellness, head to LionPackFitness.com or join the LionPack Instagram here.

## **Quick Takes on California COVID-19 News**

## **Government Stimulus Checks**

Donald Trump's May/June stimulus checks have come and gone, and while members of the US Congress move to approve a second legislative package, America has slipped into higher unemployment rates than during the Great Depression of the 1920's. The second stimulus will likely be for a greater amount than the first, and both sides of the political spectrum have agreed that the measure should primarily target lower income taxpayers.



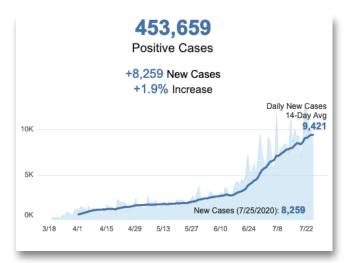


#### The 2020/2021 School Year

This Fall semester, Alameda County is rolling out a platform based on what the County Public Health Office calls "distance learning" for a minimum of four weeks. Alameda County has been placed under strict scrutiny by the Governor's office on the State Monitoring List, which places sanctions on counties with higher rates of infection than 100/100,000 per day. As Alameda County attempts to slow the spread, students will learn outdoors, as well as in virtual classroom settings, which seem to be preferred by school administration. This is set to continue until viral spread is lower than 100/100,000 per day.

#### **Medical Health**

Between the protests of the killing of George Floyd in cities like Sacramento, Oakland and Los Angeles, and statewide easing of sanctions on non-essential and commercial businesses, California virologists predicted a shift in COVID-19 cases to hit this month. The medical industry is gradually seeing that shift as Coronavirus hospitalizations are on a sharp incline this month, with the peak of this miniature outbreak not yet estimated.





## The Future We Leave Behind - Armello Joseph on George Floyd, Young Black Malehood, and Police Violence

Armello Joseph is 13 years old. The Bay Area native is raised by his mother in their East Oakland home. 'Mello is the eldest sibling in his house, with two little sisters and one brother. Without his father living, he's the closest to a trusted elder male role model his siblings can look too, a responsibility which he sometimes shirks as you'd expect a child to do, but overwhelmingly he does his job as an older brother lovingly and compassionately.

In the final week of May, 2020 he would learn that one of his middle school teachers was adamantly involved in protests over the death of a man in Minneapolis. 'Mello was aware of protests downtown, but hadn't yet come to discern for himself the gravity of the circumstances. Later in the first week of June, as he lay in bed playing on his phone, he would open a link to an Instagram video posted in his story earlier that day. This was the cell phone footage of Minnesota police officer Derek Chauvin crushing the neck of George Floyd with his knee, a week and a half prior. Floyd would beg for his life for several minutes with his head pinned to the ground, pitching in and out of consciousness. As the video came to an end, Chauvin cooly looked into the camera with a black gloved hand in his pocket. At that moment, a tragic and restless burning agitation, the same deep guttural pain felt by several generations of his ancestors was birthed in a 13 year old boy. This was the first time Armello had seen a man die.

### TVV: Does the death of George Floyd make a difference in your life?

**AJ:** Yes. It makes a difference in my life because it really shines a light on what can happen if you're in the wrong place at the wrong time. What I was told is that all he was trying to do was cash a check. The guy claimed it was a false check, and he ended up dying because of a misunderstanding, that could have easily been avoided.

## VV: Has your mom talked to you about the police?

AJ: No. I don't think my mama has ever had a real in-depth talk with me about the police. I don't think she has.

## TVV: How do you feel when you see or have to interact with police?

**AJ:** I haven't had any interactions with the police, stemmed from my actions. I feel neutral. I don't let it... I don't let all the police brutality get to me. I try to keep it out my mind, but it's just something in the back of my head that just bothers me when it happens because I know that if I make the wrong move, I might be detained or something bad might happen to me.

## TVV:Do you think the protests were effective, especially considering COVID?

**AJ:** I completely agree with the protests, and the riots and stuff, but basically a friend of mine made a clear and understandable point about how a lot of the protests and the riots are not really effective, because there have been many cases where there have been a lot of protests, a lot of riots, and nothing has changed. Police brutality has yet to be solved. They continuously let people in who have a grudge against Black people and it's just something that—if I'm being real with you—I don't think it'll ever stop, and that's a really sad thing to say especially for me because I'm a young Black male growing up. There are a lot of things in America that have changed, but it's that one thing—racism—that has been going on for centuries. Us as humans, I feel we don't really understand, or we are obsessed with power, and so putting someone below you just feels good in a way for those that actually like doing that. Because of us as humans, it seems like we'll continuously do it and it doesn't seem like it'll ever stop. That's how I see it.

The protest itself is a good idea. Being out during the protest is not. It's weird because again, I'm gonna reiterate, the protests were really well, but it's not really effective. I feel like it becomes even less effective because everybody is in quarantine and people will have to stay inside, or people choose to. So even with these protests happening, I feel like it's just getting less and less effective because of the Coronavirus, assuming it has any effect at all. It's happened a lot of times before. And it feels like it's happening all over again.

## TVV: For you, as it relates to George Floyd, how do you feel emotionally?

**AJ:** It makes me feel scared and angry, but at the same time as those feelings are deep within me, I don't let it bother me. It is there. I feel angry because this all could have been easily avoided. I feel sad because it's a brother, and he didn't do anything, and he had to die because of some stupid stuff that some stupid police officer decided to do. I feel scared because I'm Black. Not only that, I live in Oakland. I live where police officers are driving down every street. I get caught doing the wrong thing, he pulls a gun on me, I can't do anything. If he decides to make a move, I'm dead. It's really sad, and I hate that this happens.

# TVV: There were two autopsies on George Floyd. The first said that fentanyl intoxication was part of the cause of his death, while the second said it was asphyxiation (choking) If George Floyd *was* high on drugs, would that change how you felt about the situation and his death?

**AJ:** No, because of the circumstances that were to occur. Based on what I know–and I'm not gonna say it is, and I'm not gonna say it isn't true–he wasn't doing anything wrong. If he did have an outburst of aggression, maybe. But it still wouldn't change anything that would stop him from just cashing a check. That's what I know. It wouldn't stop him from just cashing a check and just leaving. So it wouldn't change anything from my perspective. I don't really care. None of that would have stopped him from just cashing a check and just leaving.

# TVV: What if George Floyd had multiple offenses on a criminal record and was sentenced to jail more than five times before?

**AJ:** If he's known as a criminal, and people know about him and know that he is a criminal there is a possibility that the person that called the cops was potentially scared, especially 'cause he's Black. I feel like that's really intimidating. That happens a lot. I feel like there are people who just see a Black person and get intimidated when in a very close setting, and I feel like this *could* have been one of the cases there, but honestly I don't think it is. I'm just not denying it being a possibility. I feel like that has a huge play in what happened, just him being Black and intimidating, it goes for a lot of people–a lot of African Americans–in this world with a decently-sized body.

# TVV: Is there something that you would like to see come out of the national discussion on police and the George Floyd case?

**AJ:** This is a hard question because there's so many things I would do. Racism is one thing, but that doesn't stop anything else from happening. I would try to end racism, but that doesn't stop like, somebody from just being a criminal, and having to be detained, and having to be shot or killed. I would end racism. I feel, you do need the police, sadly. There should be some change in government. That is just blatantly wrong, and it shouldn't have happened at all. There is no excuse for just killing a Black man that was trying to cash a check. So I feel if I were to make a change, it would be a change in government, and if that police brutality was a racist action, then I feel like he should be fi red, because I'm assuming it's not gonna stop there, he's gonna do it again and he's gonna get away with it again. I don't know him personally, but assuming because he had all this power, he thought it was justifiable to kill this Black man, and he thinks it's okay.

Despite the recurring fears he expresses around his placement in the United States, Armello is confident in his future, and thinks no less of his ability to change the world. If his demeanor, observations and pragmatic vulnerability are any indication of things to come, The Village Voice staff have no doubts about what Armello will offer his generation and those that come after him.

## Work Smart to Learn: Tips for Retaining New Information the First Time

The year is 2020, and the future of education seems to have approached us at light-speed, catching many parents off-guard. Technological advancements have seen faster developments in this generation than in the last four combined, and overstimulation is now a reality: Little blue screens have replaced books, and minute-long TikTok clips may be quickly replacing YouTube videos, which have already begun to replace feature films.

While sheltering in place, it can be difficult to adapt to the "new normal" of distance learning without being burned out or distracted. If you're a parent, a college student, or a child in this modern age, here are a few powerful ways to maximize your brain function and memory so you can focus and take in information accurately and efficiently:

## **Diversify your Memory Through Sensory Stimulation:**

You might remember loose talk in school about different learning "styles" and wondering "what does that mean?" It just so happens that human beings have different modes, or *styles* of cognition and memorization. Research yields that stimulation through all five senses (sound, taste, smell, sight, and touch) is more effective in informational retention–that's the neurologists term for learning–than one or two alone. Students and parents can experiment with sensory learning to find new ways to lock in what they learn. Quick note: although these tips are for everybody, data shows them to be *especially* useful for young male students.

Example: Okay, say you need to memorize the names of your student's new teachers this year, their departments, and specialties. Meeting them personally isn't an option. Hearing and seeing them give you this information virtually is the first way to learn, but if you're like most people, it may not stick immediately.

**If you're an Auditory Learner** (sound), you might make a little tune to yourself to memorize the important information. Other auditory tricks would be to repeat out loud the information back to the person saying it, or rhyming relevant bits of data with one another. (These kids are going in on a multiplication song)

A Kinesthetic Learner (touch and movement) might prefer to associate certain objects or physical spaces with colleagues and their departments to retain the data. Another classic kinesthetic aid would be writing the info down, but even spelling it out invisibly with your finger can increase retention. (<u>This ESL teacher in Gambia developed movements to teach anatomy</u> <u>language</u>)

**If you're a Visual Learner**, you would benefit from strong eye contact while introducing yourself to others, to associate faces with names. Other tricks could be reading business cards or name tags, or drawing pictures to represent the different instructors and their subjects of specialty. (<u>Check out the Healthy Plate method for nutrition info presented visually</u>)

Whatever your style of learning is, be sure to mix up the ways you listen and learn, to develop skills and reinforce the information you want to keep. Using a strong mix of kinesthetic, auditory and visual learning helps brain function and even lessens chances of neurodegenerative disorders and syndromes like Dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's.

August 2020

## **CBTC - Foundation**

As we all experience this global shifting brought on by COVID-19, systemic racism and one of its many byproducts; police brutality, a clear opportunity exists for each of us, our family, community, and nation. A reckoning of truth! As a washing machine cannot do its job of cleaning without the agitator, truth can only be avoided for so long before it causes unavoidable discomfort and must be faced.

**Culture Based Transformative Coaching**<sup>®</sup> CBTC carries a purpose: To create and facilitate a space & process for human beings to grow, evolve, and reconnect with *essence*. Employing 5 distinct but interconnected modules (foundation, discovery, critical assessment, envisioning goals & roles) the Culture-Based Transformative Coaching model provides a comprehensive pathway to truth and reconciliation.

**Foundation** serves as an inquiry and conversation rather than a lesson to be taught. "What is your life purpose?" "What are your 3 guiding principles?" "What is your winning process?" Take a moment and ponder your answers to these questions, then go ask 3 other people and see what shows up. Notice where your answer comes from: your head or your heart?

Amidst the unknowing and subsequent fear that often shows up as a result of insecurity, there is a clear distinction when we are on a pathway of knowing and being in purpose, we gain access to a peace-of-mind that allows us to stay grounded and not succumb to overreaction. Similar to life, connecting and being in purpose is a process that requires our deliberate intention.

**Help from the Head** Our subconscious mind leads from behind and follows our focus. Principles are similar to music playing in the background, we are aware of its playing but don't realize its impact on our decision making. Mindfulness allows us to garner a greater control over our mind, guiding principles that are in alignment with our purpose puts us on a pathway to fulfillment.

**Manifestation** Over the centuries countless writers have made reference to human beings as God-like in our ability to create. Purpose that is reinforced with appropriate guiding principles moves closer to becoming reality with a process that takes into account all the ingredients and self-discipline needed.

If you know what your life purpose is, you are ahead of the game. If you are curious but are uncertain, you are in the game. If you don't know, and are not interested in knowing, keep sleeping for many dreams await you.

## **Upcoming VC Projects & Events**

Project / Event	Date	Time	Location	Cost
Virtual Parent / Caregiver Support Group	Tuesday, Aug. 11 Tuesday, Aug. 18 Tuesday, Aug. 25	8:00pm - 9:30pm	Zoom Video Conference <u>CLICK TO REGISTER</u>	Free
Virtual African American Town Hall	Thursday, Aug. 13 Thursday, Aug. 20	11:00am - 1:00pm	Zoom Video Conference <u>CLICK TO REGISTER (13th)</u> <u>CLICK TO REGISTER (20th)</u>	Free
The Brothas! Virtual Workshop for Men <u>CLICK FOR DESCRIPTION</u>	Thursday Aug. 20 Thursday, Sept. 17 Thursday, Oct. 15	7:30pm - 9:30pm	Zoom Video Conference <u>CLICK TO REGISTER</u>	Free (Paid Attendance)
BAEC Virtual Youth Debate	Thursday, Sept. 17	11:00am - 1:00pm	For more info call 510-564-4240 or email vcreferral@village-connect.org	Free
BAEC Virtual Intro to Community Cooperative Enterprises	Saturday, Sept. 26 Saturday, Oct. 24	10:00am - 3:00pm	Zoom Video Conference <u>CLICK TO REGISTER</u>	Free

# **Support the Village!**

