

Miriam Smith Bio

Miriam Smith has been laboring for her community for over 30 years, tirelessly materializing an organizing power that is a force to be reckoned with. An enduring pillar of love and wisdom in Seaside, Miriam is a fierce anti-racism activist who does the daily work of many people to maintain momentum and build progress toward Black liberation. Miriam has had to abide countless obstacles while fighting for disadvantaged, under-served, endangered children and their families. A Black mother of nine and grandmother of sixteen, Miriam has both the lived experience of being a poor and disabled student of intersectional marginalization as well as an intimate familiarity with caring for poor and disabled students with their own overlapping vulnerabilities as they encounter a system that overlooks them. Despite these struggles, Miriam continues to organize in her community, working daily to build opportunities for Black liberation and bring repair to the racial inequities that exist across all of our systems.

Miriam started her fight for racial equity after graduating from Seaside High School as a disabled student without having been taught to read or write or understand written language. This formative, institutional betrayal inspired her future efforts to ensure that her children, grandchildren and all children will inherit a world that honors their lives and respects their humanity. As the primary caregiver for multiple children with special needs, she sees firsthand how important it is that no child be left behind.

Miriam's organizing work has provided endless educational opportunities for children. They include after-school programs such as Operation Care and the long-running NoLack Book Club. NoLack Book Club provides assistance for communities of undocumented people at risk of violence and exploitation, builds structures of much-needed support and advocacy for parents at risk of having their families separated by the police state, produces learning materials and video content towards building awareness and human coalitions and offers tutoring, social education and field trips for all of the community's youth in need. She has also aided countless others in her community through legal advocacy, social and civic support and local political involvement.

Miriam's most recent work centers around the Black Lives Matter movement, and has been focused on public safety and community care work carried out through NoLack Inc and her co-founded initiative, Pause the Calls. Pause the Calls is a public safety initiative supported by 831 Action Teams, Miriam's organic, Black-led, grassroots organization. The Pause The Calls initiative is a more excellent way to reduce harm

among Black people and people of color in our community. It advocates for reduced police presence in our communities in an effort to save the lives of our Black children and community members who face this threat every day. Pause the Calls holds the idea that non-violent disputes and issues do not require police involvement, and that we can do away with unhealthy dependency on the police department in our cities in order to extinguish the violence and harm that our Black community faces. Pause the Calls asks for the City Council to reduce the budget of the police department and instead direct those funds towards community programs, such as those Miriam has created herself. Instead of our Black children being targets of the police, they can be free to pursue their studies and goals just like their classmates. Reducing police presence will help our community be stronger together, and Pause the Calls is an effective and fiscally responsible solution to the crisis of inequitable policing and institutional violence.

As the front woman of this initiative within the greater Black Lives Matter movement, Miriam once again focuses her depth of knowledge and extreme dedication to bettering the lives of the Black community, which in turn betters the lives of our entire community. She has persevered past an educational system that failed her, to become educated herself, and uses that tenacity to uplift and enhance the opportunities of her community. She embodies strength in the countless battles she has overcome throughout her work in the community and the racism and violence she and her family have had to endure.

Pause the Calls is yet another example of her strength as a leader as she pushes for new positions to be created within the city, and therefore new employment, and asks for these jobs to be filled by people who understand and well represent the real community they are a part of. Miriam has worked tirelessly to help the city put funding in place for community service workers to take over the work that is unnecessarily handled by armed police officers and to disable the violence and harm that is seen far too often, even here within our own city, by police officers. Community representatives can negotiate situations currently handled by police to ensure that no Black or Brown lives are harmed within our community. Thanks to this work, a great work that takes a village, our community will see racial justice and equality.

Miriam is running for the position of MPUSD Governing Board Trustee, Area 2. When elected, she will have the power to enable great change within the MPUSD. She stands for the children that are traditionally left out of success within the classroom and outside. The current manner in which the system operates perpetually excludes children that require extra help or resources. They are overlooked and allowed to graduate without the proper tools to operate well in this modern world, and Miriam is passionately dedicated to changing that. With Miriam in this position, no child will be left behind.

Currently, over 80% of Seaside students qualify for free or reduced lunch and Seaside has the highest rates in the district of poverty as well as the highest population of Black children and children of color. Miriam sees that these children have been targeted by multiple systems and will not allow poor students to be invisible. She takes her years of hard work and dedication and funnels it towards a cause, and actually creates change. The system cannot carry on in its current way, and with Miriam in this position, no child will fall behind due to the racial, socio-economic, and ableist inequities that plague the system currently. Miriam's work is enduring and impassioned, and will carry forward a new generation of extremely equipped, prepared, and caring students.