Bios for Panelists

Karen Gladden became a member of Springfield No One Leaves in August of 2013. Karen has been fighting Webster Bank since 2008 for a loan modification to be able to stay in her home, but the bank has refused to work with her in any capacity. Karen is one of many members who has volunteered to do peaceful civil disobedience during SNOL's eviction blockades. She most recently risked arrest in two Eviction Blockades in May and April of this year and played a key role in making those actions successful by keeping the family from being forcibly evicted from their home after foreclosure.

Rose Webster-Smith began her activism in 2011 with Springfield No One Leaves when her home was foreclosed on by Freddie Mac. Fired up by her own experience of eviction, Rose began training and practicing civil disobedience to keep Big Banks from actively evicting families from their homes after foreclosure. She's sat-in and peacefully blocked two evictions, has helped to organize national mobilizations against mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and the Federal Housing Finance Agency, is spearheading a statewide campaign to pass critical legislation to protect families and regulate banks, and supports other families in using civil disobedience.

Vanessa Gonzalez is an Afro-Carribean, first generation, queer activist, artist and social worker born in the Dominican Republic. Vanessa has been involved in a number of local activist groups, including Justice for Ayyub, Prison Birth Project, and The Western Mass Coalition for Palestine, and she has participated in BLM413 actions and other, national Black Lives Matter actions. She is interested in intersectionality and how the role of women in the movement has or has not evolved since the civil rights movement. Vanessa believes direct action should not just represent but also be led by the community. Vanessa recently moved from Springfield, MA, to New York City.

Randy Kehler began his 50+ years of activism and social change organizing with the 1963 March on Washington, which changed his life. A practitioner of “active nonviolence” in the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Mahatma Gandhi, Randy has helped initiate and lead major national campaigns (e.g., for nuclear disarmament and democratically financed elections) and has been imprisoned for acts of nonviolent civil disobedience (e.g., for noncooperation with the Vietnam draft and, with his wife Betsy Corner, refusal to pay federal taxes for war). He and Betsy live in Colrain, MA.

Paki Wieland's roots as a social worker find flowering in the myriad situations in which she finds herself in "retirement," as she confronts war and injustice through direct actions in places as close as Brattleboro and Syracuse, and as distant as Bahrain, El Salvador, Gaza, and Pakistan. At age 72, Paki Wieland sees her work as that of mystical activism/active mysticism and is moved by the Native American Proverb, "When the Grandmothers speak, the land will heal." She understands "speaking" to refer to both words and actions, and attempts through creative practice to make present justice. Paki lives in Northampton, MA.