

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZED TO BUILD COOPERATIVE BUSINESSES FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED ACQUIRES ONE ACRE OF LAND IN WEST OAKLAND**

#### **Oakland & the World Enterprises: *Prosperity Through Cooperation***

**Oakland, California**--On Monday, October 27, 2014, Oakland & the World Enterprises (“OAW”), co-founded by social activist and author Elaine Brown and Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, announces its acquisition of nearly one acre of land at 7<sup>th</sup> & Campbell Streets on which it will establish cooperative businesses to be owned and operated by those disproportionately denied access to economic opportunity, particularly formerly incarcerated people. OAW will launch its vision with an urban farm, toward long-range development of the property to provide space for its first slate of businesses, including a fitness center, tech hub, athletic shoe and clothing manufacturing businesses with retail outlets and a juice and fresh food bar. The property will also be developed to include more than 100 units of housing, 40% affordable to low and very-low income people, friendly to families, the disabled and the elderly.

In addition to Brown and Carson, OAW’s very diverse advisory board includes: **Judge Gordon Baranco, Dr. Mark Alexander**, formerly incarcerated activist **Jerry Elster**, prominent Bay Area attorney **Zack Wasserman** and Sacramento attorney **Fred Hiestand**, urban farm guru **David Roach**, contractor **Len Turner**, sustainable systems developer **James Nixon**, Grammy-award winner **D’Wayne Wiggins**, tech developer **Steve Wright**, bankers **Annette Darnes** and **Louis Barnett**, land developer **Jabari Herbert**, realtors **Deborah Matthews** and **Chris Perryman**, political advisor **Nell Barnett**, and former Oakland City Councilmember **Wilson Riles**.— With the support of such a powerful assemblage, OAW will capitalize its project through private investments, philanthropic contributions and government funding. Once operational, it will be financially self-sustaining.

This project is slated to address the dire socioeconomic problems plaguing Oakland of poverty, crime and recidivism toward creating economic development for the community and self-sufficiency for the most vulnerable men, women and youth, those reduced to surviving by any and all means. By creating these opportunities, OAW will also open the door to a positive business climate in Oakland, particularly downtown Oakland, where the City government and County seat are located. The failure of Oakland to attract significant hotels, shopping and businesses to downtown and elsewhere in the city is attributable solely to the high crime rate in Oakland, particularly West Oakland, where crime and poverty are highest in the city, the state and, indeed, the nation. By building this project on a property left blighted and undeveloped for decades, OAW addresses the nexus between crime and poverty, toward developing a keystone for uplifting the entire city.

CEO Elaine Brown said, “This project resurrects the dream we once held for a better life for everyone while concretely addressing the shame of mass incarceration. It is not a panacea, obviously, but, a means to an end that doesn’t involve further elimination of the least of these through gentrification and incarceration.”

OAW Board member and formerly incarcerated activist Jerry Elster added, “This is what we’ve been waiting for.”