

## What Is ColorOfChange.org?

ColorOfChange.org exists to strengthen Black America's political voice. Our goal is to empower our members—Black Americans and our allies—to make government more responsive to the concerns of Black Americans and to bring about positive political and social **change** for everyone.

We were heart-broken and outraged by the catastrophe that followed Hurricane Katrina. And we were devastated to realize that no African-American organization or coalition had the capacity to respond on the necessary scale.

Hurricane Katrina made it clear that our lack of a political voice has life-and-death consequences. With no one to speak for them, hundreds of thousands of people—largely Black, poor, and elderly—were left behind to die. But it wasn't just Black folks. Poor, sick, and elderly people of every **color** were abandoned too. We are not alone, and when we work to protect Black lives and interests, we do the same for all who have been left behind in political silence.

ColorOfChange.org is comprised of Black folks from every economic class, as well as those of every **color** who seek to help our voices be heard. Our members are united behind a simple, powerful pledge: we will do all we can to make sure *all* Americans are represented, served, and protected—regardless of race or class.

## What We Do

Using the Internet, we will enable our members to speak in unison, with an amplified political voice. We will keep them informed about the most pressing issues for Black people in America and give them ways to act. We will lobby elected representatives using email, the telephone, and face-to-face meetings. We'll bring attention to the needs and concerns of Black folks by holding coordinated events in different parts of the country, running TV and print advertisements, and demanding that the news media cover our issues. We will also work with other groups—online efforts and other organizations that are doing related work—to magnify our impact.

When we come together and speak with one voice, we cannot be ignored.

## How It Started

**James Rucker** and Van Jones came together in the wake of Katrina to use the organizing power of the Internet to give Black Americans and our allies a renewed and strengthened political voice.

### James Rucker

**James Rucker** served as Director of Grassroots Mobilization for MoveOn.org Political Action and Moveon.org Civic Action from the fall of 2003 through the summer of 2005, and was instrumental in developing and executing on fundraising, technology, and campaign strategies. Prior to joining MoveOn, **James** worked in various roles in the software industry in Silicon Valley: co-founded and leading Imana, Inc., an enterprise software company, in San Francisco, as well as providing management coaching and technology consulting for other start-up ventures. **James** is also passionate about school reform and issues of equity, and serves on the boards of two area schools. **James** grew up in Seaside, California and has a BS in Symbolic Systems from Stanford University.

### Van Jones

Van Jones is the founder and executive director of the Ella Baker Center.

van Jones is the founder and executive director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights (EBC). Headquartered in Oakland, California, EBC is helping to lead the national fight for alternatives to the U.S. incarceration industry. Born in rural west Tennessee, Van completed his undergraduate degree in 1990 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. In 1993, he graduated from the Yale Law School. A pioneering human rights activist, Van is well-known as a steadfast opponent of police brutality and mass incarceration. He has worked with a variety of well-known organizations and initiatives in the social justice and environmental arenas. In recent years, Van has expanded his work to incorporate insights from ecology, spirituality and social entrepreneurship. He is now working to create environmentally-friendly, "green-collar" jobs for formerly-incarcerated persons. He believes the path to peaceful streets and healthy communities is through "green-collar jobs, not jails." In the meantime, Van has recently earned two important, new titles: happy husband and proud father (of a one-year-old son).