I joined OCDC my junior year at Oberlin, upon completing the Social Justice Meditation Training in winter 2004. During this training, I was asked to do a role-play where I mediated for a student dealing with a specific ailment. When evaluating my performance as mediator, I suggested that I might have been better prepared had I been previously informed of the student’s condition and had had the opportunity to ‘research’ it. The response I received then, from Leah, was one that has guided my everyday ever since—the work of social justice is to always be preparing. You don’t ‘learn’ about issues as they confront you, but, rather, learning the complexities of power and subjugation, and the myriad particularities that emerge thereof—that is the everyday work.

This is the power and beauty of OCDC. For all our critiques and complaints about the Oberlin bubble, OCDC is anything but. What you learn here, formally and informally, sticks with you even after you burst through the supposed bubble. As do the relationships that are nurtured here. This, I think, is what makes the 10th anniversary celebration of OCDC so unique and inspiring—because it signifies the power of small spaces, and small groups of people, to sustain productive bonds across time and space.

Needless to state, most of this work of sustaining (and too, of sustenance) is YB’s. My love for OCDC and my conviction in its mission stems so much from my experiences with YB’s unflinching resolve in ensuring the wellbeing of students. A long time ago a friend told me that getting to know YB was one of the most important things I would do at Oberlin. This friend (also an OCDCer) turned out to be more than right. That we all continue to flock to her, that our Obie circles keep expanding years later through her, is testament to the indelible mark that YB’s work, and her very presence, leaves on Obies.

I am so glad that OCDC is taking this opportunity to celebrate itself and I only hope that more Obie will seek to join the fold!

Love and respect, always.