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Dear friends of Solid State,

Hope everyone is doing awesome, staying healthy and enjoying all the sunshine (!)

Thanks so much for having a look at this month's newsletter - we have two new sections we're launching:

1. A new Solidarity Economics section in each newsletter with resources, links, reading suggestions and highlighting cool projects around the world. This is a cousin of a new [Solidarity Economics section on our website](#) that our new Director of Research Dionne Co has brilliantly written and illustrated
2. As well, every month we'll interview and feature one of our awesome community members. Keep reading to the end to see this month's member!

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1. This year's Ramadan was (thankfully) a month full of visiting and public events at Solid State - we had four separate Iftaar events, and each was fantastic.



2. [Check out this interview](#) with [Kevin Kapenda](#) who is a Solid State Co-Director, one of our Co-op Developers and a coordinator of The Black Arts Centre - it is in the May 18th issue of The Breach.

3. Some cohort updates:



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City in Colour members at the grand opening event of the Clayton Community Centre in Surrey [L-R: Rahil, Ghazaleh, Dionne, Aman, Fiorella]

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year working with the City of Surrey on the Feminist Recovery Grant, a three-year project funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada.

[City in Colour](#) has been hard at work collaborating with the City of Surrey's HR department on the hiring, retention and upward mobility of racialized women working in the municipality. Read more about the project featuring an interview with Aman, Fiorella and Rahil:

<https://thelastsource.com/en/2022/01/24/envisioning-a-feminist-city-of-surrey/>

**GenConnect** is taking a large group of seniors and young people from the Punjabi/Sikh community in Surrey, BC to visit Paldi, BC, a historical settlement turned ghost town which was founded by a Punjabi/Sikh settler. Not only will this trip support [GenConnect](#)'s goal in strengthening intergenerational connections in their cultural community, but it will also develop their knowledge around Punjabi/Sikh heritage in so-called British Columbia. This trip is a huge starting point for this heritage exploration. Stay tuned for more!

**Let Her Talk** is launching their first 3-part workshop series on June 3, 4, and 5. They will bring together racialized women/girls who are interested in learning about gender, sexuality, and self-identity. By learning together, [Let Her Talk](#) are creating a community of women and girls who will support and empower one another to make healthy decisions and strive to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

**The South Asian Healing Network (SAH)** is launching a 4-part pilot series on all 4 Fridays of June! Their goal is to support South Asian youth between the ages of 15-25 by educating them about wellness tools, self awareness, cultural healing techniques, and more. Their aim is to co-design their programming alongside participants, so these 4 sessions will focus on collaborating with participants to develop a stronger, more meaningful trajectory for [SAH](#).

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**Rebecca Bair** is an interdisciplinary artist based in Vancouver - the traditional and ancestral territories of the Coast Salish peoples - and a 2020 graduate from the Masters of Fine Arts program at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. Since graduating, she has received the Governor General's gold medal for her academic achievements, her work has been featured in Canadian Art Magazine and she has been in group shows at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Where Do We Go From Here?) and the Surrey Art Gallery (Facing Time) amongst others. Her artistic, professional and educational goals revolve around common themes of celebrating Black plurality, Black possibility, as well as enabling interpersonal and intercultural care. Her work acts as a vehicle through which the complexities of history and identity can be uncovered, redefined and expressed.



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cohort and join us as a co-director, which is brilliant!

5. Some more awesome news: we have a new Staff person: **Monica Cheema!**



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**Monica** is a filmmaker and researcher based out of Surrey, BC. As a mentor to GenConnect, her work aims to help foster intergenerational connections within the Punjabi community through film, music, storytelling, research creation, and all kinds of other fun stuff. She comes to Solid State with a background in land-based learning as a seasonal farm worker, hands-on filmmaking through the film program at Simon Fraser University, and many years of facilitation work within the Punjabi community.

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**6.** And still, one more piece of awesome news - we have a new Director of Research: **Dionne Co.**



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**Dionne** is the Director of Research at Solid State and co-founder of City in



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read her latest piece on Solidarity Economics 101 on our website [here](#).

Dionne loves reading, drawing, writing, and walking with dogs Horace and Lila. She holds a Master's degree in Urban Studies. You can find out more about her and her work at [dionneco.net](http://dionneco.net).

**Note from Dionne: Find me on twitter [@dionnetology](https://twitter.com/dionnetology), or drop me a line at [dionne@solidstate.coop](mailto:dionne@solidstate.coop) – Love to hear from you.**

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## MEET A SOLID STATER!

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## **ARSHIA UPPAL: CLIMATE RECENTRED**

### **1. Tell us a little about yourself.**



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Science.

I'm pretty involved in the climate movement. I started organizing when I was in Grade 10. At that time there were no climate actions in Surrey. I got involved in Vancouver but it was inaccessible - the movement was predominantly white, my parents were immigrants and their parents weren't. I felt outcasted, never felt a sense of community. I stopped organizing in Vancouver because it wasn't for me. I also felt burnt-out because the climate movement wasn't sustainable in terms of organizing.

I decided to be more Surrey-focused because there's not enough attention in Surrey. In Climate Recentered, we bonded over the fact that we faced tokenism or micro-aggressions, that we weren't having fun when we were organizing.

**The purpose of Climate Recentered was to get organized and also find joy.**

## **2. How did you get connected to Solid State?**

Naisha [Climate Recentered member] and I were running for Surrey City Council. When it came to disseminating information to the public, there was a lack of that. We were planning on running and we were trying to connect to everyone in Surrey. Somehow we got Matt's contact. We talked to Matt how that was going. We also talked about how the climate movement was so white, and we didn't feel comfortable there. He said, "Why don't you guys just make your own movement here in Surrey?"

We decided to form Climate Recentered, which reshapes what the climate movement looks like. To a lot of people it's just an environmentalist thing, but it's also about creating community and mutual aid, and addressing things that the municipal government doesn't address. The whole purpose of Climate Recentered is to make climate organizing different.

## **3. One thing you enjoy about working at Climate Recentered/Solid State?**

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as well. We all just get along and have a good time. I'm not scared to say things because we have open communication. We can be vulnerable in front of each other and we can support each other. We communicate when we're not in the right headspace. It's really nice because when somebody is not feeling well, somebody will take their task on.

The best is the sense of belonging. Every Saturday we come here and we have space to work. Now we have an organizing home (versus in the past when we would meet in coffee shops). It's also great not to have Solid State because we don't have to worry about financial burdens unlike when we were organizing by ourselves.

#### 4. What do you like to do for fun?

I like to figure skate in my free time. I like to read books about politics and nature. I just got back into reading. If you're like me and just trying to get back into reading, I recommend Normal People by Sally Rooney. I love listening to music and dancing. My dog and I go on runs sometimes and it's really fun.

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## SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS CORNER

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Book recommendation

***Solidarity Economics: Why Mutuality and Movements Matter (2021) by Chris Benner and Manuel Pastor***

Obtain a free e-version [here](#).



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reject the assumption that human beings are greedy, selfish and profit-maximizing creatures. Instead they offer an alternative vision of an economy where humans are considered for our proclivity towards connection, cooperation and autonomy. In fact, in a world wracked by mass suffering and unending crises, the transformations proposed within the Solidarity Economy become imperative to our collective survival. Plus, it was praiseworthy seeing how the authors mapped out crucial connections between Solidarity Economics to contemporary struggles for racial justice, especially among the Black and Brown communities who were hit hardest by COVID-19.

While generally accessible, the book retains an academic tone in its structure and method of explanation, which is why it was delightful to find out that the authors collaborated with comic artist Solnoush Pak to publish a graphically accessible version. You can read the comic [here](#).



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# ECONOMICS

## Why Mutuality and Movements Matter

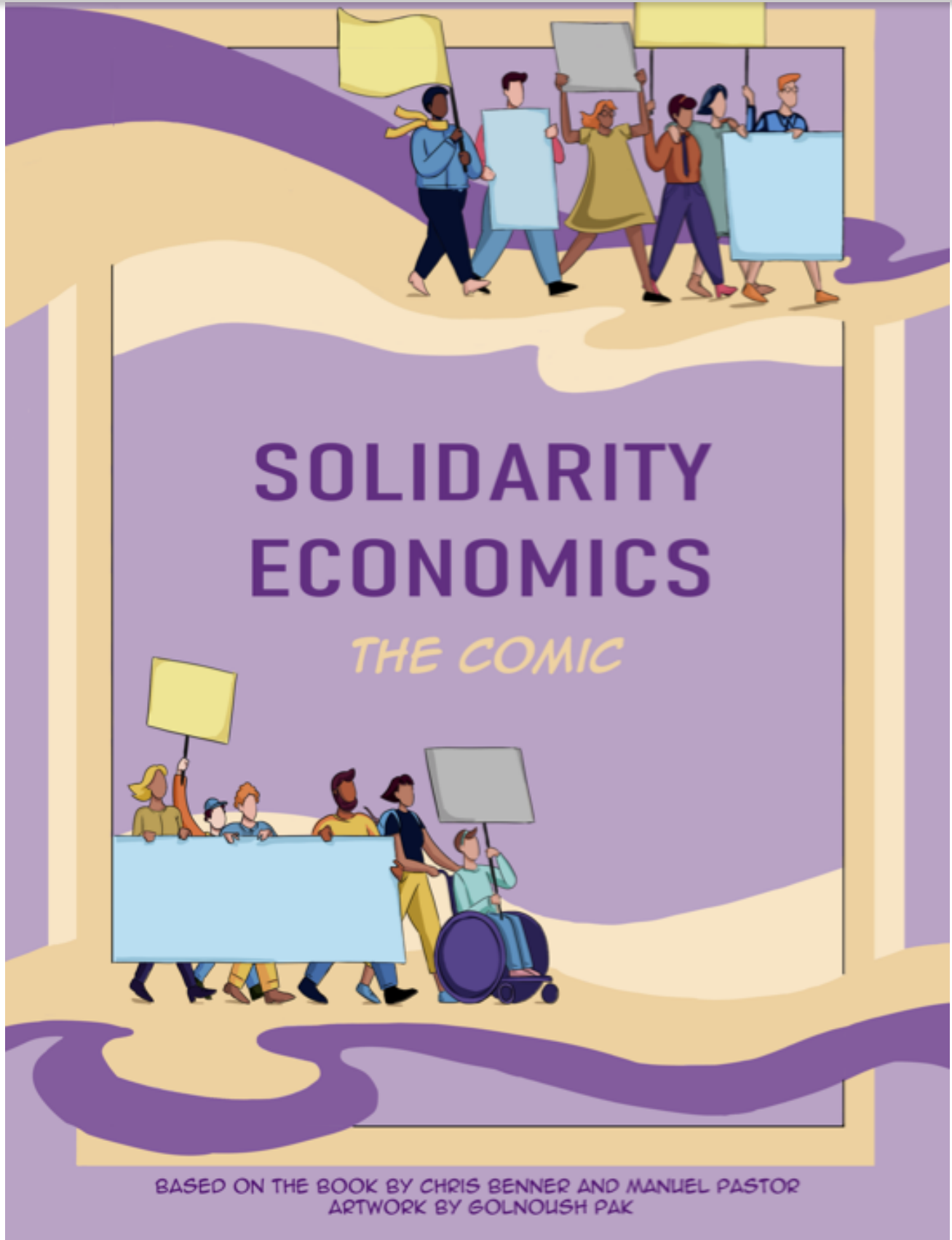
### CHRIS BENNER & MANUEL PASTOR





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# SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS

*THE COMIC*

BASED ON THE BOOK BY CHRIS BENNER AND MANUEL PASTOR  
ARTWORK BY GOLNOUSH PAK

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