

Reclaiming Our History, Proclaiming Our Stories: By East Palo Altoans, for East Palo Alto.

East Palo Alto Community Archive (EPACA)

Collecting, sharing, promoting, celebrating and preserving the unique history of the East Palo Alto community for future generations.

Our Vision

The EPA Community Archive is an internationally recognized organization with visionary leadership, a professional management team, diverse multicultural collections and programs, an engaged community and a sustainable financial future.

Our Purpose

For many years, East Palo Alto residents have expressed concern about “losing our history,” given the gentrification and changing demographics of the community. We created the archive to preserve the history of EPA and create accessible ways for community members to learn about and share our story for generations to come.



Patricia Foster,
East Palo Alto resident.



**East Palo Alto
Community
Archive**



Our Community Team

The EPA Community Archive is co-led by former East Palo Alto Mayor Sharifa Wilson and former (and founding) City Councilmember Dr. Omowale Satterwhite, who are joined by a community advisory group with deep family and cultural ties to EPA:



Sisilia Afungia



Ruben Avelar



Jonathan Bryant



Kalamu Chache



Tiffany Hautau



Sydney Jackson



Juan Mendez



Barbara Noparstak



Meda Okelo



Dianne Otterby



Omowale Satterwhite



Sharifa Wilson



The Archive

The EPA Community Archive will have two distinct types of collections—digital and physical archives.

The digital archive will consist of oral histories (video and audio recordings), digitized materials and exhibitions that are accessible on our website and social media.

The physical archive will consist of tangible materials and artifacts located at sites throughout the community, exhibitions highlighting important stories and events, and historical markers to officially recognize places of Importance to EPA residents.

Digital Archive



#ThePeopleOfEastPaloAlto

“When I think of a community that makes something out of nothing, I think about East Palo Alto and all the ways that we leverage our wealth...maybe not cash wealth the way that Silicon Valley has it but we’re rich in many other ways. We’re rich in people, we’re rich in culture, and we’re rich in spirit.”

—Ofelia Bello, East Palo Alto resident.

Excerpted from one of [72+ oral histories](#) from individuals who lived or worked in EPA.

Physical Archive



The Nairobi Schools/Nairobi College

The Nairobi Schools, founded by Gertrude Wilks, was comprised of Nairobi Day School and Nairobi High School. Nairobi College, founded by Bob Hoover, was a private community college. Thus, during the Nairobi Movement (1960 - 1985), independent schools from preschool through community college were created for Black youth in East Palo Alto.

One of the [1,645 artifacts](#) in our growing collection



Process, Progress and Programs

EPACA is being built by and for the community over three phases:

Phase 1 October 2020 - January 2021	Gathered broad community input on how to develop and structure the archive through an online survey, focus groups and individual interviews.
Phase 2 February 2021 - June 2022	Designed the physical archive, collected virtual + physical archival materials, conducted oral histories and developed a marketing strategy, governance structure and five-year business plan.
Phase 3 July 2022 December 2025	Begin functioning as an independent nonprofit, hire staff, expand collections and programming, acquire headquarters/museum site and implement a growth strategy to raise funds that will sustain the archive.

We're now in our third phase, establishing and offering a dynamic mix of programming for people of all ages and backgrounds, including:

Celebrations and Festivals: Annual programming to honor and celebrate the heritage months and cultural festivals of our diverse racial/ethnic communities.

Field Building: Regional activities to promote community archive field building in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Community Education: Community forums, guided tours, historical sites and landmark designations that feature key people, organizations, places and events in EPA's history.

Intergenerational School Programs: Collaborative programming to develop curriculum for in-school and after school activities in public, charter and private schools.

Living Arts: Visual, performing and street art events featuring local artists.

Self-Archiving: Training and technical support to help community members document their stories and contribute to the virtual and physical archives.



Our Early-stage Supporters

Community Sponsor



Emerson Collective provided catalytic financial resources and technical assistance to the EPA Community Archive to launch a successful 2-year pilot program through 2022.

Fiscal Sponsor



One East Palo Alto is the fiscal sponsor for the EPA Community Archive.