

## Mazzoni Campaign

CEO Nurite Shein of the Mazzoni Center, one of the largest LGBTQ organizations in the country, was interviewed shortly after the hearings on racism. Her response to the testimonies of hundreds of Black and Brown LGBTQ members was to call these testimonies “anecdotal” and dismiss the seriousness of the community’s outcry. As a result, the BBWC decided to turn our energy towards the Mazzoni Center and to support the workers there who were now looking to us for direction. We met with the workers to start organizing. One of the demands the workers decided they wanted, was the resignation of CEO Nurite Shein.

We strategized with them and took action demanding the resignation of Shein. Another demand was that a doctor at the Mazzoni Center, Dr. Robert Winn, resign as he had been accused by a line of patients of sexual assault and enforcing quid pro quo policies around treatment and medicine dissemination. The staff knew that Nurite Shein had known this for some time, yet she chose to protect the doctor instead of the vulnerable patients. It was time to take action. The irony of Mazzoni Center leadership hosting a “justice in action” conference was too good to pass up. We disrupted this event and read out loud the demands of the front line workers. The Mazzoni Center shortly thereafter fired Dr. Robert Winn. They believed this would silence the workers and the BBWC. However, we decided we would not stop until every demand was met. This initial action would be one of a series of direct actions targeting the Mazzoni Center. The final direct action that pushed the campaign to a winning conclusion for workers and the community at large was an action where we led 70 Mazzoni staff out of the building during a staff meeting for a walk out. The workers demanded that Shein resign before they would return.

To ensure that this demand would be met, BBWC co founder and collective member Abdul-Aliy Muhammad went on a med strike. Their med strike meant that for each day Nurite stayed in power they would forgo their hiv medication. Just 3 days later we received news of not only Nurit Shein’s resignation, but also the resignation of Jimmy Ruiz, another corrupt person in power. We are now currently working with the new Philadelphia LGBTQ liaison to ensure that the community decides who fills these positions next. Our work is not just to dismantle systems of oppression, but to also ensure that what fills these spaces is truly liberatory and community led.