We are thrilled with the debut of our film and activism series *Finding Your Place, More than a Film Series*. On Sunday afternoon, September 22 in celebration of International Day of Peace, we kicked-off a lively first of four events at Guilford College aimed at engaging young people in peace and justice issues.

The project, organized by volunteer Ellie Richard, confronts pressing social issues through interactive activities, documentary film, and by connecting with diverse community groups. It also provides a unique opportunity for young citizens to explore where and how they can become engaged in a wide variety of activism that can contribute to growing a culture of peace.

Sunday’s film, *The Day After Peace*, documented the trials and travels of one man seeking to establish an International Day of Peace.

To start off, Jasmine Hooks, an A&T Creative Writing student, performed original spoken word poetry. Jada Drew from Guilford College Multicultural Ed. Department and Jose’ Pablo Salas, a Non-Profit Management student from High Point University led an engaged pre- and post- film discussion.

An active audience discussion followed the film. The program closed with Amelya Black (UNCG, Conflict and Peace Studies), performing a poem written by her late father, Jimmy Evans, “Get on The Bus!” that challenged participants to engage in personal, meaningful activism.

Following the film, attendees socialized, visited with a number of social and political activist organization tables, enjoyed refreshments, and added original entries to “The People’s Calendar,” marking days and issues important to participants. After completion of the Series, The People’s Calendar will be available for viewing at AFSC’s website.

For additional information, visit: www.tinyurl.com/PeaceSeries, go to Facebook at www.tinyurl.com/PeaceSeriesFB, or contact the series coordinator, Ellie Richard at elliebhope@gmail.com.
On September 7th, 2013, leaders and students of the 1963 American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Citizenship Education Project came together to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the project. Judy Beil Vaughan, who was one of the student participants in 1963, organized the reunion and was able to locate nearly all of the original participants with the help of AFSC’s archivist, Don Davis. Fifteen of the original members of this project attended along with children of those who have passed away or could not make it due to age.

Initiated by Warrenton resident and former Congresswoman Eva Clayton and supported by AFSC, the project involved young people in their teens and early 30s conducting workshops on voter registration and voting procedures in rural areas to help the majority of African-Americans who were not registered to vote and to address illiteracy. The project in 1963 marked the first time in Warren County that any African Americans and whites ever lived together. In spite of the animosity and hostility they faced, AFSC youth working on this project visited homes to educate residents about voting, register voters and held workshops on “You and Your Vote,” “How to Register” and “Know Your Candidate,” which included mock elections.

The AFSC student group came into an environment of segregation in 1963 and had a positive impact in the lives of many African Americans and the community during a turbulent time in U.S. history. One of the results of this effort is noticeable today: African-Americans lead the county and its school system, and hold a number of locally elected offices.

Al Webster, son of Rev. Charles Webster, one of the original project leaders, clearly summarizes the impact of the project: “…The seed you planted has become a solid, unshakable vine that no wind can blow away. Today in the community that you poured your soul into 50 years ago, it is not an unusual site to see black and white folks interacting and working together for the good of the community.”

-Adamou Mohamed with contribution from Bryan Vana (AFSC Baltimore)

Guilford Senior Works to Awaken a Dormant Student Organization

I met Christina Somerville a few days after Labor Day. She is a senior at Guilford College and her major is Sports Management and Non-Profit Management. During a Guilford course, she began to explore her personal genealogy, and is still uncovering the roots of her ancestors in Iredell County, NC tribes and the upper New York region. This motivated Christina to revive and support Guilford’s American Indian Student Council.

Christina reports that the American Indian Student Circle’s (AISC) objective is to offer support and a social network for Native American students at Guilford College. The organization hopes to host events throughout the year, celebrate Native American heritage, educate the community, and offer leadership opportunities. Christina and Kimberly Hunt (a Guilford student with American Indian heritage) are working to hold the institution accountable for the diversification of services and programming targeting the Native American population.

-Toni Etheridge

Current topics >>>

Arms of Peace, Not Arms of War in Syria

On August 31st 2013, President Obama announced that he was seeking Congress’ approval for a military strike on Syria against the Assad regime’s use of chemical weapons. AFSC believes that the any military intervention would likely increase the bloodshed and further escalate a war that has already claimed the lives of more than 100,000 Syrians, displaced more than 2 million outside the country and 4 million internally. We are encouraged by recent news about the possibility of avoiding a military strike.

AFSC strongly condemns all forms of violence and believes that an urgent solution to end the crisis must be found. Our view, informed by decades of experience working in the Middle-East region and people affected by war and their aftermath, has shown that military actions, no matter how well intended they are, will destroy more lives and delay the much needed political negotiations for a lasting peace in the region. There is therefore no military solution to this conflict. Any supply of arms to either side of the conflict creates but an illusion of victory.

The international community must act immediately to protect civilians and end the bloodshed in Syria by urgently pursuing a political solution to the crisis. A political solution founded upon tenets of the Geneva communiqué is the only path to peace.

To achieve this objective, AFSC has, in the past weeks, encouraged its supporters to keep pressure on Congress about the need to support diplomatic measures. ASFC staff and supporters in Greensboro delivered letters to local offices of members of Congress advocating for support for a peaceful solution to the crisis.

AFSC has partnered with Responding to Conflict to support Syrians from all corners—supporters and opponents of the regime, who “believe in nonviolence as a means of achieving freedom, equality, dignity, and mutual coexistence to be one community of citizens in all its sects and identities. For more on AFSC on Syria, visit tinyurl.com/afscsyria.

-Adamou Mohamed
The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Area Office of the Carolinas, along with partners from the Immigrant Rights Working Group (IRWG) successfully organized an interfaith vigil for humane immigration reform at First Friends Meeting on in Greensboro on Sunday, August 25th, 2013. We also organized a similar vigil in Charlotte.

The timing of the events coincided with Congress’ recess to draw Representatives’ attention to the impact of a lack of humane immigration policy for hardworking immigrants and their families.

At the Greensboro vigil, Lori Khamala, AFSC staff, and Adamou Mohamed, AFSC intern, reminded attendees about the cultural, social and economic contribution of hard working immigrants to our cities and state.

Latino and African families shared stories about the impact of a lack of humane immigration reform. Yubi Aranda, a beneficiary of Deferred Action, spoke about her family’s struggle going back and forth between the US to Mexico, and Seydou Maikassoua, from the West African nation of Niger, shared about his inability to obtain a kidney transplant because of his immigration status.

Faith organizations leaders also took the stage to talk about the religious value of welcoming the stranger. Eesaa Wood from the Islamic Center drew from a verse in the Qur’an to emphasize his point and also referred to similar verse from the Bible as well. Reverend Willie Costa, from the Friendly Ave. Church of Christ, prayed to work the hearts of our elected leaders to change the immigration law that has been unfavorable to many in this nation. He also led the closing prayer.

Reflective music from Felipe Bravo, a Guatemala immigrant from Charlotte, who himself is facing deportation, followed a candlelight reflection on all the moving stories heard from immigrant families.

Lori ended the meeting by calling attendees to action by signing two posters and sending postcards that AFSC intends to deliver to Greensboro area representatives Howard Coble and Mel Watt, and making phone calls to their offices to urge them to support a path to citizenship, family unity and the protection of labor and human rights for all.

—Adamou Mohamed

Meet Our New Interns >>>

Dwight Price

Dwight Price is a 2013 graduate from Guilford College with a BA in Peace and Conflict Studies and in Political Science, with a Minor in Non Profit Management. He recently became an AmeriCorps member serving at the Center for New North Carolinians assisting with citizenship classes at Glen Haven. He is working on immigration issues and helping with AFSC’s social media.

His dreams include becoming a lawyer specializing in immigration law, international humanitarian & criminal law; starting a non-profit organization; and running for political office one day. Dwight loves to work in the garden whenever he can find the time. His immediate hope is that a just immigration reform passes into law this year.

Onita Outlaw

Onita D. Outlaw is a first year undergraduate student at Guilford College. She majors in Criminal Justice with the hope of becoming a CSI Agent. Her second interest in the criminal justice field would be to work at a forensic lab.

Although she claims she is not very involved in activities outside of school because of her coursework, Onita is actually quite engaged. She is currently volunteering with AFSC helping with communication and office work. She will be maintaining AFSC database, contributing to and writing AFSC’s newsletter.

She also volunteers at Elimu Empowerment Services where she will be tutoring youth and doing community outreach work. She is determined to rise above her fears and reached her goal to graduate from Guilford College in 2017.

Updates On Immigration Reform

The August recess was a major time of action with several Representatives declaring their support for immigration reform as a result of pressure from town hall style-meetings, vigils, rallies and marches. AFSC supporters met with many representatives lifting up our principles for humane immigration policies found online at afsc.org/newpath.

With Syria healthcare and the budget occupying Congress’ time at the moment, the future of immigration reform is uncertain. It is more important than ever to contact our Representatives to support humane immigration policies. Millions of families depend on it. —Lori Khamala
On August 28, 2013, a small group of friends, professors, faculty and students gathered in front of Guilford College to join me in support for a better mankind, a gentler humanity, and still believe in the arduous work of social good. We were commemorating the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, and to continue the un-finished work initiated by Dr. Martin Luther King Junior.

Our strong group pulled together and held our signs high - sharing words of fairness and equality. One of Dr. King’s statements came to mind from his speech in 1963, “1963 is not the end, it’s the beginning, the time is now for justice to be a reality for all God’s children.” Even then, King realized that people of color would travel a long thorny road in order to gain small steps to receive fair and equal justice in education and quality of living. These are a few essential things that help all people to prosper mentally and feel socially connected.

As I stood on Guilford’s soil exchanging short conversations with others, I recalled another significant day in history, one that also captured the eyes of the world as Dr. Martin Luther King did in 1963. It was Feb. 11, 1990. On this day Nelson Mandela was freed from prison. His release for many people around the world sparked good change. Nelson Mandela walked away from the jail that stole his youth, but not his vision for the change that would soon come to South Africa—him as President.

I feel this is another pivotal and historic moment that captivated many – as did King’s March in Washington…changing history – forever.

-Toni Etheridge

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### October 2013

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*In Greensboro, join the One City One Book festivities! Read Into the Beautiful North by Luis Urrea, a novel that deals with immigration issues frankly and humorously, and check out all the related events in October and November at www.greensborolibrary.org.*