

# *Quaker* Action



**AFSC responds  
to the affordable  
housing crisis**

**International  
exchanges sow  
the seeds of peace**

**Faith in action:  
Readings on faith  
and social justice**



**American Friends  
Service Committee**

[www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)



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Photo: Erin Butler

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Photo: Lida Sparrer

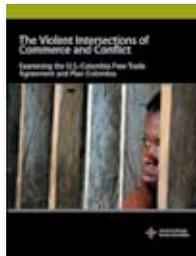
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### Iraqi refugee crisis

About 5 million Iraqis have been displaced from their homes over the past 20 years. As a result, the entire Middle East faces another refugee crisis. Learn more, including how you can help, at [www.afsc.org/iraq/refugees/](http://www.afsc.org/iraq/refugees/).

### Report on trade and war in Colombia

Our new report, *The Violent Intersections of Commerce and Conflict*, examines the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and Plan Colombia at a time when the connections between commercial interests and conflict in Colombia have clearly resulted in human rights violations. Available as a free download at [www.tradeandwar.org](http://www.tradeandwar.org).



### Military Recruiter Abuse Hotline

The U.S. military promised to set up a hotline to deal with recruiters who lie to or abuse recruits, but they didn't. So we did, and it's open now: 1-877-688-6881. Find out more online at [www.afsc.org/youthmil/](http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/).

### On the cover

AFSC's history of work in China dates back to 1925 and includes the Friends Service Unit after World War II. More recently, we've co-sponsored the annual China Summer Workcamp and exchange programs such as one that brought members of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to Africa this past January.

Please see related stories on p. 12 and 14. More information is available online at [www.afsc.org/asia/eastasia.htm](http://www.afsc.org/asia/eastasia.htm).

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**Who we are**  
The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice.

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# An immigrant family's ordeal ends in joy

BY JON KRIEG

Maybe Ann Naffier should make house calls more often, because after a recent visit to a client an incredible—even miraculous—thing happened.

For twelve years, Ann has served as a certified immigration consultant with AFSC's Immigrants Voice Program (IVP) in Des Moines. She and a team of volunteers help more than a thousand immigrants and refugees each year navigate the swirling waters of U.S. immigration law.

To prepare this story, Ann and I visited the home of Elizabeth and Michael Madit, Sudanese refugees who've been Ann's clients for two years.

Michael came to the states in 2001, and Elizabeth joined him in 2002. Michael works 75 to 80 hours each week at a tire factory, and Elizabeth is a full-time housekeeper at a local hospital. Their three happy children—Reech, Mayen, and Abuk—were all born here. But Michael's mother is still in Africa.

After living in the U.S. for five years, Michael applied for and earned his U.S. citizenship. That meant he could apply to have his mother join them.

■ **Sounds simple enough;** however, U.S. immigration law is anything but. U.S. law required Michael to produce his birth certificate, but he didn't have one. Could he track down people who were present at his birth to sign affidavits? He tried, but it wasn't enough.

Ann arranged for Michael and his mother, who's now in Uganda, to take DNA tests. They then waited for months for U.S. immigration officials



to ask the lab for the results.

That's where the miracle part comes in. When Ann and I returned from our visit with the Madit family, Ann had a message saying Michael's mom's case had been approved. Within five or six months, the family will be united.

Not all of Ann's clients have such happy outcomes, of course. Together with IVP director Sandra Sanchez, Ann's primary focus is working with undocumented immigrants to secure their legal rights. And while U.S. immigration law is cumbersome and complex for refugees, it's downright hostile for most immigrants.

As Ann says, "Our ancestors would

not have been allowed into this country if current law were in effect back then."

So AFSC does all it can to help immigrants now while advocating for a sane, comprehensive path to citizenship for the millions of people who lack legal status in the U.S.

For Ann's expert assistance, AFSC asks for, but doesn't require, donations at a rate roughly one-tenth of what attorneys charge.

■ **As a teen, Ann lived outside the U.S.**

"Ever since, I have been very sympathetic to people who are completely immersed in a culture that is not their own," she says. "If it was difficult for me to fit in another culture, how much more difficult is it for immigrants and refugees coming to this country—where they're not respected nor welcomed?"

And what does Ann think of making house calls? If they result in more miracles, then perhaps.

*Jon Krieg is a senior administrative associate with AFSC's Central Region in Des Moines.*

*Photos: (top): Michael Madit and his daughter Abuk; (bottom): Ann Naffier (left) with the Madit family.*



# *Spirited* ENGAGEMENT

## Inspired to serve

**AFSC's history and ideals motivate  
*Spirited Engagement* campaign volunteers**

**T**hanks to the generous support of many contributors, AFSC's *Spirited Engagement* fundraising campaign is off to a promising start. We've reached 80 percent of the comprehensive goal of raising \$200 million to support AFSC's work around the world. This includes \$15 million in special gifts to build AFSC's endowment (including the Stephen G. Cary Fund), and \$15 million to strengthen and expand special initiatives in peacebuilding and human rights.

The increased support is already having a significant impact. Last year, it helped fund a number of vital AFSC projects, including a delegation to meet with religious and government leaders in Tehran, helping students think through alternatives to the military with resources such as the new *It's My Life! A Guide to Alternatives After High School*, and working with immigrant communities nationwide to respond constructively to raids, workplace abuses, and family separation.

The campaign would not be possible without the extraordinary support of people such as our campaign leaders: Don and Gail Gann, Cynthia Lovelace Sears, Bill and Sally Hambrecht, and Norval Reece. Read on to find out what inspired some of these volunteers to help launch this undertaking.

## Don and Gail Gann ■ Recalling the past, looking to the future

Don Gann's history with the Service Committee goes back to his student days at Dartmouth when he was asked to organize a "peace cell" at the college. He did so, with some success, and that experience created a life-long connection to AFSC.

Don went on to medical school, and he and Gail started a family. While in Cleveland, Don spearheaded an AFSC program to develop conversations among police, residents of a blue collar community, and an adjacent black community. The program started in response to the death of a minister who lay down in front of a bulldozer to protest the demolition of homes in the black neighborhood without any provision for relocating residents.

In 1971, Don became clerk of AFSC's Middle Atlantic Region, eventually serving as AFSC's Board clerk from 1994 to 2001. He has always been interested in the history of AFSC, drawing inspiration from those who have served in our name since 1917—especially those who brought humanitarian relief to Europe after the two World Wars, and the early civil rights activists who helped mine workers in the 1930s.

Reflecting on AFSC's history, Don says, "When people ask me what AFSC does, I say that we work to address the problem of violence and its roots— injustice and poverty. Whether in our peacebuilding work, in defending the rights of immigrants, or alleviating suffering in conflict zones, all of AFSC's

programs work toward this end."

Don says that even after 90 years of service, AFSC is called at this time to carry out programs that are as courageous and vital as in our first years. "As we recall our past this weekend, we also look to the future," he said at the campaign launch in Philadelphia. "Some of you in this room shared in AFSC's strategic planning, and helped us discern what God is calling us to do and how best to use the resources we have been given."

Don believes that the goals of *Spirited Engagement* speak directly to AFSC's historic mission. He notes, "We hold up love as the alternative to violence. In the spirit of William Penn, we endeavor to 'try what Love will do'."

## Cynthia Lovelace Sears ■ Back on duty

*At the November launch of the Spirited Engagement campaign in Philadelphia, the co-chairs, including Cynthia Lovelace Sears, a long-time AFSC contributor from Bainbridge Island, Washington, addressed the gathering. Here, in part, is what she said about her decision to "come out of retirement" to help lead the campaign.*

About a year and a half ago, my AFSC fundraiser in Seattle, Jonis Davis, approached me [about] becoming more involved in their work, specifically on... taking the position of co-chair for this campaign. I was perfectly clear about the matter: I am an extremely private person. I will do almost anything to avoid speaking in public.

In addition, I told Jonis I had just made a promise to my family and

friends that I would leave all boards and committees and organizations I was involved with. I was finally going to be just a person: a mother, a grandmother, a friend. I was going to stay put on our peaceful island in the Puget Sound. I was going off duty. Jonis said, "Well, think about it."

So I did. Part of me wanted to keep my promise and do nothing but be a private person at home. But the part that had loved everything the Friends stood for — ever since reading at age 8, *Thee Hannah*, the story of a child in the 1860s who helps a runaway slave find the Underground Railroad — had become increasingly appalled, angry, and despairing about what our country had been doing in and to the world over the past decade. And the Friends had

continued to give me hope.

I wrote an e-mail to Jonis saying, "What would this involvement entail? How many meetings, events, trips, letters, etc. would it mean? What are your expectations? In short, what would your ideal co-chair be like?"

The response from Development director Betsy Deisroth was heartening. In effect, she said, "Cynthia, we're Quakers. We don't rest on 'ideals.' We deal with real people. What we want you to do is whatever you're comfortable doing." How could anyone say no to that? Why would anyone *want* to say no?

So I'm here to tell you—get more involved. I can guarantee you, you won't be asked to do or be or give more than you comfortably are able to.

# A place to call home

Stories by AFSC Middle Atlantic Region staff

## West Virginia The House that Love Built

Out of a horrific event, residents in Logan County, West Virginia, are laying the foundation for better race relations and greater awareness of the growing affordable housing crisis.

In the summer of 2007, Megan Williams, an African-American woman, was held against her will, raped, and tortured by six white people, according to law enforcement officials. That October, AFSC's New Empowerment for Women (NEW) Plus and its partners, the Logan County Improvement League and AFSC's West Virginia Economic Justice Project, brought county residents together to pray, light candles, and call for healing and justice for Ms. Williams. Residents also discussed the history of racial trouble in the county and what they could do to actively and publicly promote better race relations.

From that beginning, county residents have continued to meet and share stories, and are working across the racial divide to build a house for a local family, the Colemans. It's a project organizers are calling, "The House that Love Built."

■ For many years Verzetta "Zett" Coleman worked as an elevator operator at the downtown Logan building where the NEW Plus office was located. Now disabled and dependent on a walker, Zett lives in a dangerously substandard house on the side of a steep hill with her sister, Linda Cowan, who is confined to her bed, and her 14-year-old grandson, Marcus.

### You can help

If you want to take a volunteer work group to Logan County or if you have questions, please contact Jo Ann Farmer, the NEW Plus Housing Repair Coordinator, by phone at (304) 752-3422 or e-mail at [jfarmer@afsc.org](mailto:jfarmer@afsc.org).

Thirty-nine crumbling concrete steps lead up to the residence. On both sides of the house, abandoned structures sit in ruin. Even though



the interior of the Coleman residence is deteriorating, access poses the greatest risk. The women's physical limitations make it impossible for them to navigate the broken steps, and the slope of the hillside prohibits building ramps. The sisters are only able to leave the house by ambulance.

NEW Plus' goal is to construct a handicapped-accessible house on a level piece of property. The idea of this project, complete with a front porch, "brings tears to my eyes," Zett says.

■ Some pieces of the project are already in place. The Logan County Improvement League holds the title to a lot just outside Logan. The executive director of the Pittsburgh-based Equitable Resources Foundation authorized that a \$10,000 grant awarded to NEW Plus be used for the project. Lowe's, a home improvement store, will help with materials and volunteer labor. NEW Plus also is seeking support from local churches, organizations, businesses, and individuals.

"We sincerely hope this will be the first of many projects in which people cross racial lines to help and receive help with housing," says Judy Overko, NEW Plus interim director. "As we create a stable living environment for one family, we will have the opportunity to educate the public about the housing needs of this community and showcase what can be achieved when people work together."

Photos: Only broken steps lead to the Coleman home (white house, center).

# AFSC responds to the affordable housing crisis

## New York Nowhere to go

This past October, residents of the Kennedy Square apartment complex in downtown Syracuse had their lives turned upside-down when they opened their mailboxes: They had received eviction notices giving them 90 days to move.

The 80 families still living in the deteriorating complex received the notices, which informed them that Kennedy Square would be closed and demolished. Several Kennedy Square residents had graduated from AFSC's leadership development classes for women and called staff members of AFSC's Upper New York State Area (UNYSA) office for help.

In April came the news that a \$30 million biotechnical research center would be constructed on the site. While city and county officials envision the research center as the first step in an economic transformation, UNYSA's Twiggy Billue calls it part of the "gentrification of downtown Syracuse" that is leaving low-income families with nowhere to go to find affordable housing.

■ **Billue and co-worker Linda Williams** stepped into the crisis when they learned that the families were not receiving promised assistance from the Syracuse Housing Authority



Photo: Twiggy Billue (left) helps a resident fill out a needs assessment form at the Kennedy Square Resource Fair, sponsored by AFSC, in December.

and Empire State Development Corporation, the owners of the complex.

Billue and Williams conducted a needs assessment, helped tenants fill out paperwork, brought other agencies and businesses together to address needs, and spoke with elected officials to try to get help for the families. The residents faced overwhelming problems:

- paperwork nightmares at social service agencies;
- potentially available apartments mysteriously coming "off the market" when they arrived in person to look at it;
- trying to pay security deposits and movers with money that would not be turned over to them until they turned in the keys to their old apartments.

A family in the last occupied apartment in its row spent a night of terror as phone lines were cut, windows and doors were smashed, and arson fires were set in the complex's empty areas. All the families have since been relocated.

"Unfortunately these 80 families are just the tip of the iceberg that is the affordable housing crisis," says UNYSA director Chrissie Rizzo.

For example, the National Low Income Housing Coalition's report, "Out of Reach" (available online at [www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2006/introduction.pdf](http://www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2006/introduction.pdf)), estimates that 42 million U.S. households are unable to afford fair market rent on a two-bedroom apartment. Meanwhile, President Bush's proposed 2009 budget would cut an additional 100,000 families from HUD's Section 8 program. It also would cut housing assistance for low-income seniors by 24 percent and for people with disabilities by 34 percent, according to the Coalition for Human Needs.

Rizzo notes that the Kennedy Square evictions are ominous harbingers of things to come in Syracuse and elsewhere. "Ninety more apartments will be removed from the market on Syracuse's North Side in a few months," she says. "And this scenario is repeating itself across the country."

To learn more about affordable housing and work with AFSC to address issues that affect low-income and working families, please visit [www.afsc.org/economic-justice](http://www.afsc.org/economic-justice).

# News from around AFSC



SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA | Noah Berger

## PEACE

### Commemorating the lives of Iraqis and U.S. soldiers

This past March, the pro-peace majority in the U.S. observed two sad milestones: the fifth anniversary of the Iraq war, and the 4,000th U.S. military casualty.

AFSC staff and supporters organized, co-sponsored, and participated in numerous events nationwide, all with the message that it's time to end the war in Iraq.



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA | Terry Foss



EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN | Frank Dennis



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE | Debbie Boen



VISALIA, CALIFORNIA | Jerry Jasper



## IMMIGRATION

### Tulare County, California, residents celebrate new pesticide spraying restrictions

Aerial spraying of pesticides has been a decades-long problem in the fertile agricultural fields of Tulare County, California—a problem with health-related consequences such as skin rashes, eye infections, asthma, and other respiratory illnesses. After years of organizing, AFSC's Proyecto Campesino, along with local residents and allies, convinced the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner to create a buffer zone that will prevent aerial spraying of pesticides within ¼ mile of schools and farm labor camps in the county.

Residents and allies marched, sang, and shared lunch during a celebration to mark the victory in February. "People were excited and motivated that their work had brought even this small victory," says Graciela Martinez, coordinator of Proyecto Campesino, which is based in Visalia, California. "Mothers and fathers feel much better knowing their children aren't being sprayed on."

Looking ahead, organizers will continue working against ground spraying of pesticides and push for the county to stop building schools in agricultural areas.

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

### AFSC responds to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza

Violence in Israel and Palestine has escalated in the form of air attacks, assassinations, and rocket fire, killing and injuring many. Gaza itself is sealed off from commerce, energy, medicine, and food. Following a community assessment by Quaker Palestine Youth Program (QPYP), the AFSC's ongoing program in Palestine, AFSC developed and implemented an emergency response program.

The program included food supplies to the most disadvantaged people with basic necessities such as flour, sugar, rice, beans, and cooking oil. Furthermore, AFSC hired a humanitarian affairs officer in Gaza to monitor and report on humanitarian conditions, make recommendations, and coordinate future AFSC humanitarian assistance efforts.

Read more online at [www.afsc.org/gaza](http://www.afsc.org/gaza).

## YOUTH

### A counter-recruitment victory in Chicago

In Chicago's highly militarized public school system, one out of every ten students wears a military uniform to class. This past January, after more than six months of organizing efforts, AFSC's Truth in Recruitment program and other counter-recruitment advocates achieved a measure of success when the Chicago Board of Education passed a new policy that limits military recruiters in the city's public high schools. Recruiters must now request permission from the principal to enter a high school and give 48-hours notice. "In the past, military recruiters have had unsupervised and unlimited access to the high schools," says Darlene Gramigna, director of the

## TAKE ACTION

### Three ways to take a stand for peace

Join the call for an end to the Iraq war with one (or more) of three options offered by AFSC that can suit your schedule and desired level of involvement.

#### Level 1:

##### Sign the Defund-Refund petition

Our online petition calls on Congress to shift war funding to support human needs here and real solutions in Iraq. To sign the petition, go to [www.afsc.org/defund-refund](http://www.afsc.org/defund-refund).

#### Level 2:

##### Spread the Cost of War message

Use our organizing kit—including a large banner, handouts, and petitions—to educate your community about the economic cost of the Iraq war. Please contact Mary Zerkel via e-mail at [praxisafsc@igc.org](mailto:praxisafsc@igc.org) or phone at (312) 427-2533, ext.15, for more information.

#### Level 3:

##### Volunteer for Eyes Wide Open

Eyes Wide Open state exhibits feature boots honoring each U.S. military casualty from her/his home state in addition to a memorial to the Iraqi civilian casualties. Find out how you can help at [www.afsc.org/eyes/states.php](http://www.afsc.org/eyes/states.php).



Truth in Recruitment program.

The policy also stipulates that the definition of a recruiter includes "... entities that offer information on alternatives to military careers."

As Darlene notes, "This gives counter-recruitment advocates an opportunity to approach some of the most highly recruited schools in the area that have previously been difficult to approach."

Photos: (top) Celebration in Tulare County, California; (bottom) Testifying at the Chicago school board.



## Bread and peace

### Reflections of AFSC at 90

As AFSC celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary this past year, donors shared their reflections and experiences with the organization. Some of those reflections appeared in the fall 2007 issue of *Quaker Action*. However, we received so many wonderful examples that we'd like to share a few more here.



■ I deeply appreciate the continued work for peace and justice that AFSC is doing. Through Project Voice\* you are addressing a serious situation where many have forgotten the wonderful poem of Emma Lazarus on the Statue of Liberty. Thank you!

~ Dennis Bade

*\*Together with immigrant-led organizations in the U.S., Project Voice works to influence and help shape the national agenda for immigration policy and immigrant rights.*

■ I have always felt that the AFSC was unique in its efforts to promote nonviolence, a commitment I have never been quite able to sustain in my own heart, yet one I deeply respect. Your courageous efforts through the years are a constant reminder to me that there is more I should do.

~ John Freund

■ In 1940, my wife Marian and I met at an AFSC work camp at Cloverdale, Michigan. We stayed in touch for a few years but then went our own ways. However, we both kept in touch with AFSC. I went to Mexico in the summer of 1941 to do earthquake relief work. Marian went to Finland in 1947. My first wife and I went to Japan in 1949 for three years with the AFSC to do relief and reconciliation work in a Tokyo Neighborhood Center. After she

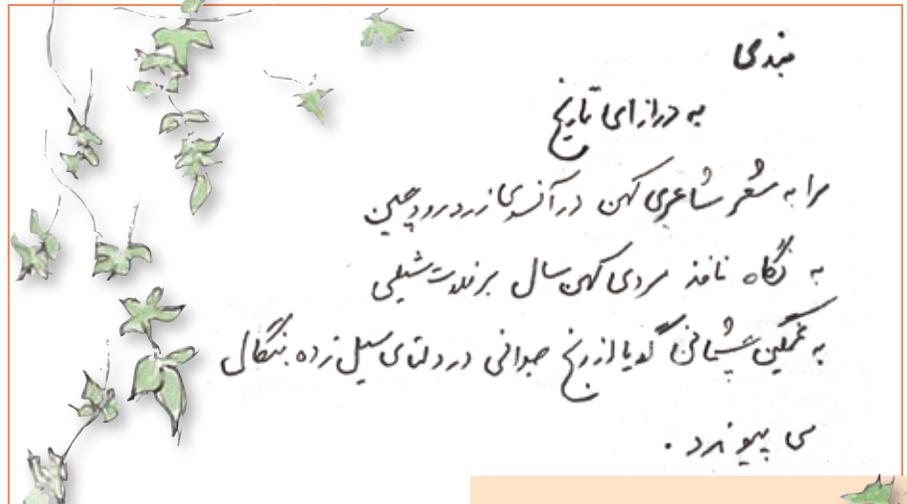
died, Marian and I got together again and were married in 1978—38 years after we met in that Michigan work camp! Thank you, AFSC, for introducing us!

■ In the dark days of Pearl Harbor and the immediate incarceration of all Japanese regardless of citizenship, the Quakers were like a bright beacon of light offering us hope... The Student Relocation Program\* was a savior for many of us Niseis. Thank you!

■ I am forever indebted to the AFSC for their support of conscientious objectors (of which I was one) during World War II... It allowed this group to perform alternate service to the military at a time when such men were quite unpopular in a nation at war. I consider the AFSC a truly wonderful organization composed of loving, caring, giving, dedicated, noble human beings!

~ Neil Hartman

~ Walter M. Lorenz



مندی  
به درازای تاریخ  
براه شعر شاعری کن در آرزوی زرد در دریا  
به نگاه نافه سردی کن سال بر ناله شیبی  
به تمکین چشمانی گویا از رخ جودانی در دنیای سبیل زده بنطالی  
سی پیو زرد .

A cord

Long as history

Connects me

Connects me to an ancient Chinese poet

On the banks of the Yellow River.

Connects me to the kind, wise eyes

Of an old man on the Altiplano

Chilena.

Connects me to the sorrowful eyes

Of a young child on the flooded

Bengal plains.

A cord connects me.

*A rough translation from a Persian poem, submitted by Faribouz Rezakhanlou.*

■ The Service Committee has been part of my life since before I was born... My training and choice of profession as a social worker were strongly influenced by Quaker values and I am forever grateful to AFSC for enriching my life with the vision of humanity in service to others and the notion that our greatest enemy may be indifference toward those in need... I can't imagine my life without AFSC as the backdrop. I would not want to try.

~ Diana Bailey



## Breaking down stereotypes

### Workshops help dispel myths about the Arab world

BY EISHA MASON

If you saw a map of the Middle East and were asked to fill in the names of the countries, could you do it? Do you know the difference between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims?

For several hundred teachers in Los Angeles, the answer now is most likely an enthusiastic, "Yes!"

Since 2005, AFSC's Middle East Teacher Resource Project (METRP) has offered a series of three-day workshops, "Teaching About the Arab World," for K-12 teachers in the Los Angeles school district. To date, more than 200 teachers have attended.

The workshops are a lively mix of speakers, role playing skits, videos, and other educational aids that address many aspects of life in the Arab world, including ethnic and religious diversity, regional history, and cultural stereotypes. Teachers are given classroom resources, teaching strategies, and guidelines on how to meet California academic content standards, all of

which help them integrate education about the Arab world in their lesson plans.

"The only exposure many youth and teachers have to people from the Arab world is what they see in the media," explains Wafa Shami, coordinator of AFSC's Middle East Peace Education Program in Los Angeles, which organizes the workshops. "This means that most people's ideas about their Arab neighbors tend to be stereotypical and sensational, reinforcing a view of the Arab world as 'the enemy.'"

"Our course gives teachers the information they need to help their students learn about Arab people as diverse, creative, rich in culture and history, and who have made valuable contributions to civilization."

■ **The idea for the METRP** workshops was born out of the heightened tensions of the September 11, 2001, attacks.

"More than ever, Arab people and Muslims became the targets of prejudice and misunderstanding," Wafa recalls. "We recognized that there was a lack of understanding about Arab people and the Middle East in our communities and classrooms."

The workshops have clearly tapped into a need, and the response has been extremely positive.

"Teachers are excited to learn about

the diversity of the Arab world, to break down stereotypes about Arab people—and about women in particular," Wafa says.

Teachers also learn more about current issues, such as the Iraqi refugee crisis, U.S. influence in the Middle East, and the efforts of peacemakers on all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Seth Kastenbaum, who teaches sixth grade English and history at Marina del Rey Middle School, says he'd happily recommend the workshops to other teachers.

"The speakers were fantastic," he says. "Each speaker had expertise on subjects that created a greater understanding of the Arab world for those of us who were listening—really listening. I actually think some ears were cleared and brains fed with greater understanding for the Arab world."

The hope is that the workshops will influence not just what's taught, but how it's taught.

"By helping them understand Middle Eastern people and cultures," Wafa says, "we want to inspire our teachers to teach with empathy, sensitivity, and tolerance."

More information about the AFSC-Los Angeles Middle East Peace Education Program can be found online at [www.mepeacela.org](http://www.mepeacela.org).

*Eisha Mason is the associate director of AFSC's Pacific Southwest Region based in Los Angeles.*

*Photo: Participants in the Middle East Teacher Resource Project.*



## 'Making friends with a thousand persons is too few'

### International exchanges sow the seeds of peace

BY LINDA LOTZ

It's a deceptively simple concept with the potential to inspire fundamental change: Bring together people from different communities so they can exchange ideas and best practices on reducing conflict and healing the wounds of war. Recently, two such AFSC-sponsored exchanges helped sow the seeds for resolving deep-rooted problems.

#### ■ The China-Africa connection

In January, five members of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)—a think tank with close links to the government—visited South Africa and Zambia to better understand growing concerns about China's economic and political impact in Africa. They met with company officials, workers, union leaders, academics, and members of civil society to learn more about domestic politics in these countries. They also learned how these different groups interact nationally and internationally in ways that affect Chinese-African relations.

The people of China are proud of the part they've played in Africa's economic growth. Diplomats also have achieved numerous successes in Africa, such as access to oil supplies and negotiating trade agreements with most countries on the continent. But there has been a downside.

While visiting a copper mine in Zambia, the CASS group saw some of the resulting environmental problems such as polluted water and areas stripped of vegetation. Some meetings explored the practices of some businesses that exclude African companies



Dwi Supriono, a community leader from Aceh, Indonesia

and discriminate against African workers, while others revealed practices that conflict with the local culture. The delegation also learned how China's economic assistance—given discreetly to governments—provides economic benefits, but can also contribute to the lack of good governance in some countries.

Now that they're back in China, delegation members are focusing on:

- building stronger relationships between Chinese businesses and their African neighbors,
- adjusting how China offers economic assistance,
- addressing practices that undermine Chinese solidarity and friendship with Africa, and
- strengthening understanding about Africa among people in China.

#### ■ Overcoming a legacy of violence

Several weeks later, NGO leaders from Aceh, Indonesia, visited Cambodia to explore the culture of violence and long-term effects of trauma. They also looked at how religion and local wisdom can help communities rebuild trust.

While their histories and current conditions are different, both countries have experienced violent conflict and now face

external influences that complicate peacebuilding efforts. (Following the 2004 tsunami, a negotiated settlement ended thirty years of conflict between the people of Aceh and the Indonesian government.)

Delegation members heard about efforts to document human rights abuses, and learned how such abuses can be publicized by visiting the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum and attending the start of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal.

And a visit to a Muslim village demonstrated that religion does not have to be a dividing factor. While religious differences became a focal point for the conflict in Aceh, Cambodian Muslims did not want to dwell on past conflicts with their Buddhist neighbors. Instead, villagers shared how they work and make decisions together.

Delegation members are now reaching out to local groups and the media so that lessons from Cambodia can help others engage with the need for trauma healing and other approaches to community rebuilding.

*Linda Lotz is a communications specialist for AFSC's International Programs.*



## Faith in action

### Readings on faith and social justice

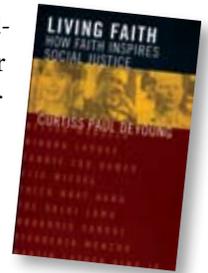
Early last year, Curtiss Paul DeYoung's *Living Faith: How Faith Inspires Social Justice* came across the book review desk. Through stories of "faith-inspired revolutionaries," including Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Malcolm X, and Aung San Suu Kyi among others, the book explores how different faith traditions can lead to a compassionate view of humanity and inform a radical commitment to challenge injustice.

The book provoked a number of conversations about God, belief and non-belief, and the role of faith in the lives of many (but not all) at AFSC. Moved by these discussions, I asked

several staff members to recommend readings that would provide a window into their faith tradition and how it influences their social action. Here's what they had to say.

#### Tony Heriza

*Office of Educational Outreach*



(Please note that the works recommended here are widely available, but are not sold through the AFSC store.)

#### Allison Budschalow

*Peacebuilding Unit*

For centuries, my people, Mongolians, have practiced Lamaist Buddhism of the Mahayana school. However, my religion is linked to practice more than to text or words. Then I found Aung San Suu Kyi's *Letters from Burma*, which combines a respect for Buddhism with a passion for working for social justice.



Aung San Suu Kyi, the democratically elected leader of the Burmese people, has been under house arrest by the Burmese government since 1989. She speaks of how, through working to change her government and society from the inside, she is living her Buddhist faith. Reading her book I felt exhilarating comfort because what she writes about is what I aspire to do through my work toward compassion and justice.

#### Christina Repoley

*Southeastern Regional Office*

Growing up as a Quaker, I always understood that faith was not separate from action in the world. One of the pieces of Quaker writing that most inspired me was the *Journal of John Woolman*. (A good introduction is Michael Birkel's *Mysticism and Activism: Learning from John Woolman*.) Woolman, who lived in the mid-1700s, was an abolitionist and war-tax resister committed to the integration of spiritual prin-



ciples and social action.

For a contemporary example of a similar, radical commitment to spiritual principles, I recommend Shane Claiborne's *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. With echoes of Woolman, Claiborne calls Christians out of our comfort zones and into the difficult but ultimately life-giving work of solidarity with the poor, which is our true heritage.

#### Roberta Spivek

*Community Relations Unit*

A book that taught me about social action as a child and still does is the *Haggadah*, a book that Jews around the world read every spring to celebrate our ancestors' exodus and liberation from slavery in Egypt in the 13th century B.C. People read the *Haggadah* ("the telling," in Hebrew) aloud at home during a Passover Seder, a ritual meal. The book contains rituals that are thousands of years old, and it also inspires new readings and prayers. While scholars aren't sure if the Exodus story is historically accurate or mythic, its themes of slavery, freedom, and justice are eternal.



Over the years I've read from versions dedicated to women's liberation and animal liberation, and I've created my own. Recently, I've returned to the version my parents used, *The New Haggadah*, published in 1941 by the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism. While that's out of print, you can find many beautiful versions of the *Haggadah* in bookstores or online.

*Continued on page 15*



## Invest in people, not war

### A message from AFSC General Secretary Mary Ellen McNish

In the U.S., we begin this summer with anxiety-inducing economic news. Gas prices are high. Food and other necessities cost more than last year. The mortgage crisis has caused many to be evicted and left them with little money.

At the same time, our government spends millions every day on war in Iraq, money that could have been invested in our schools, the healthcare system, environmental protection, or food and housing for poor families. The staggering figure of \$720 million a day shows our shockingly misplaced priorities in government funding.

I recently spoke with my friend Lee Thomas, a successful entrepreneur and passionate advocate for peace and a humane economy. Lee makes a great point that when we talk of stimulating the economy, ideas of a \$600 rebate, interest rate cuts, or gas-tax holiday enter the public discussion, but the biggest waste of federal money is off the table. As he wrote in his hometown paper, the *Louisville Courier-*

*Journal*, “These penny-ante stimulants are not likely to accomplish much as long as we continue to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on the war in Iraq.”

He couldn’t be more right. Budgets and economics should not be seen as something cold and mathematical. This is about people. For example: An affordable house costs approximately \$111,061; \$720 million could buy 6,482 homes.

Our nation’s funding priorities are a moral choice. Continuing to fund this war, which was a mistake to begin with, is the wrong one.



*Mary Ellen McNish*

## REFLECTIONS

### To serve in China Quakers provide medical relief during WWII

Established in England during World War I as a form of alternative service for pacifists, the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) began again in response to the Second World War. When British Friends decided to operate in China, they turned to AFSC for help with personnel and funding. The work fell into three categories: (1) transportation of drugs and medical supplies from depots to hospitals; (2) mobile surgical teams; and (3) personnel services that involved a variety of tasks.

When the war ended in 1945, “it was estimated that 90 percent of the drugs and other medical supplies which arrived in West China for civilian use were transported by the FAU...”, according to a report by Clarence Pickett, then executive secretary of AFSC. The focus of the work shifted to sending medical teams on special missions to combat cholera,

malaria, leprosy, and kala-azar (a chronic and potentially fatal parasitic disease). In 1946, AFSC became responsible for the work in China, which continued until 1949 under the name Friends Service Unit. The work was similar to that of the FAU, and served both the Nationalists and the Communists.

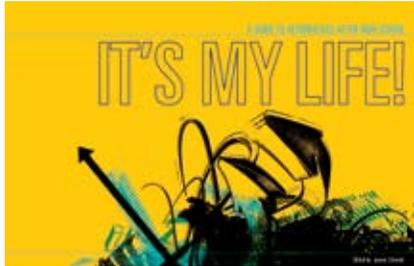
*Photos: Jo-Marie and Dick Ruddell (top) and another volunteer (bottom, left) with the Friends Ambulance Unit.*

**See a short video about this work at [www.afsc.org/china](http://www.afsc.org/china).**



### It's My Life! A Guide to Alternatives After High School

The latest publication from AFSC's National Youth & Militarism Program is full of ideas for young people leaving



high school who aren't sure they are ready for college and who want an alternative to the military. **\$9.95; \$79.60 for 10**

### Before You Say Yes and After You Say No

This counter-recruitment training manual uses group exercises that emphasize participants' empowerment and taps their wisdom. **\$15**

**Also available:** Counter-recruitment starter kit—includes the *Before You Enlist* DVD, *Before You Say Yes* training manual, and other material you need to get started with counter-recruitment work. **\$25**

### Teach Us to Live: Stories from Hiroshima and Nagasaki

AFSC committee member and former staff Diana Wickes Roose presents the wisdom of 11 survivors of the August 1945 atomic bombings. Includes full-color illustrations, photographs, artwork, a comprehensive resource guide, and a CD of live interviews with bomb survivors. **\$15.95**

### Empire and The Bomb

In his newest book, leading nuclear specialist, peace campaigner, and AFSC staff member Joseph Gerson explains how the U.S. has used atomic weapons to preserve its global empire. **\$20**

### Something Within

Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell, civil rights activist and a former AFSC workcamp participant, has put together this collection of his writings on faith, the civil rights movement, and human rights issues. **\$22**

### Commemorative gifts

Help AFSC celebrate 90 years of Quaker service with *Spirited Engagement* mugs and pens, now available at discounted prices. Mugs: **\$7.50** Pens: **\$5** (plus shipping and handling for each item ordered)



Unless otherwise noted, order all resource items through AFSC's Literature Resources Unit, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102-1403; (215) 241-7048 (or toll-free 1-888-588-2372, ext. 2); Fax: (215) 241-7275 or order online at [store.afsc.org](http://store.afsc.org).

## Faith in action *Continued from page 13*

### Tahija Vikalo

#### *International Programs*

Like many Muslims, the main source of my values and life practices is the *Qur'an*. My dedication to justice, equality, and love for others has deep roots in the basics of the Islamic teaching on oneness of the whole existence, the divine command to stand up for justice, to treat each other with respect and love, and that the only difference between human beings lies in the degree of effort they put in realizing these values. The



*Qur'an* puts emphasis on charity as the state of generosity in relation to anything that one possesses—knowledge, love, compassion, and understanding and, according to the prophet Muhammad, even a smile.

In addition to the *Qur'an* (I would recommend the translation by Muhammad Asad), I find intellectual and spiritual nourishment in the writing of Sayyed Hossain Nasr. He very skillfully intertwines the *Qur'anic* teachings, including their deep spiritual meanings, with the realities and needs of the modern world. I would invite everyone to read his book, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*.

For additional resources (and alternate views), see our online "Faith in Action" resource guide at [afsc.org/faith](http://afsc.org/faith).

For more than 52 years, Asia Alderson Bennett and Lee Bennett have been devoted to each other, to their Quaker roots and values, and to the American Friends Service Committee. The Bennetts have made a bequest to the organization in their will.

Every year bequests from supporters like the Bennetts and you enable AFSC to continue its witness to the dignity and worth of each person. By naming the organization in your will or trust or as a beneficiary of your retirement account, you continue your commitment to Quaker service in the future.

To learn more about including AFSC in your estate plan, call our Gift Planning office toll-free at 1-888-588-2372, ext. 3, or visit our website at [www.afsc.org/give/planning.htm](http://www.afsc.org/give/planning.htm).

## Build a Future for Peace, Justice & Human Dignity



## In this issue

The volunteer leaders of AFSC's *Spirited Engagement* campaign cite the organization's history and values as inspirations for their work on this ambitious undertaking, which has a goal of raising \$200 million to support AFSC's work around the world.

See related stories on p. 4-5.

Other news:

- 3** An immigrant family's ordeal ends in joy
- 10** Reflections of AFSC at 90
- 11** Workshops help dispel myths about the Arab world



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