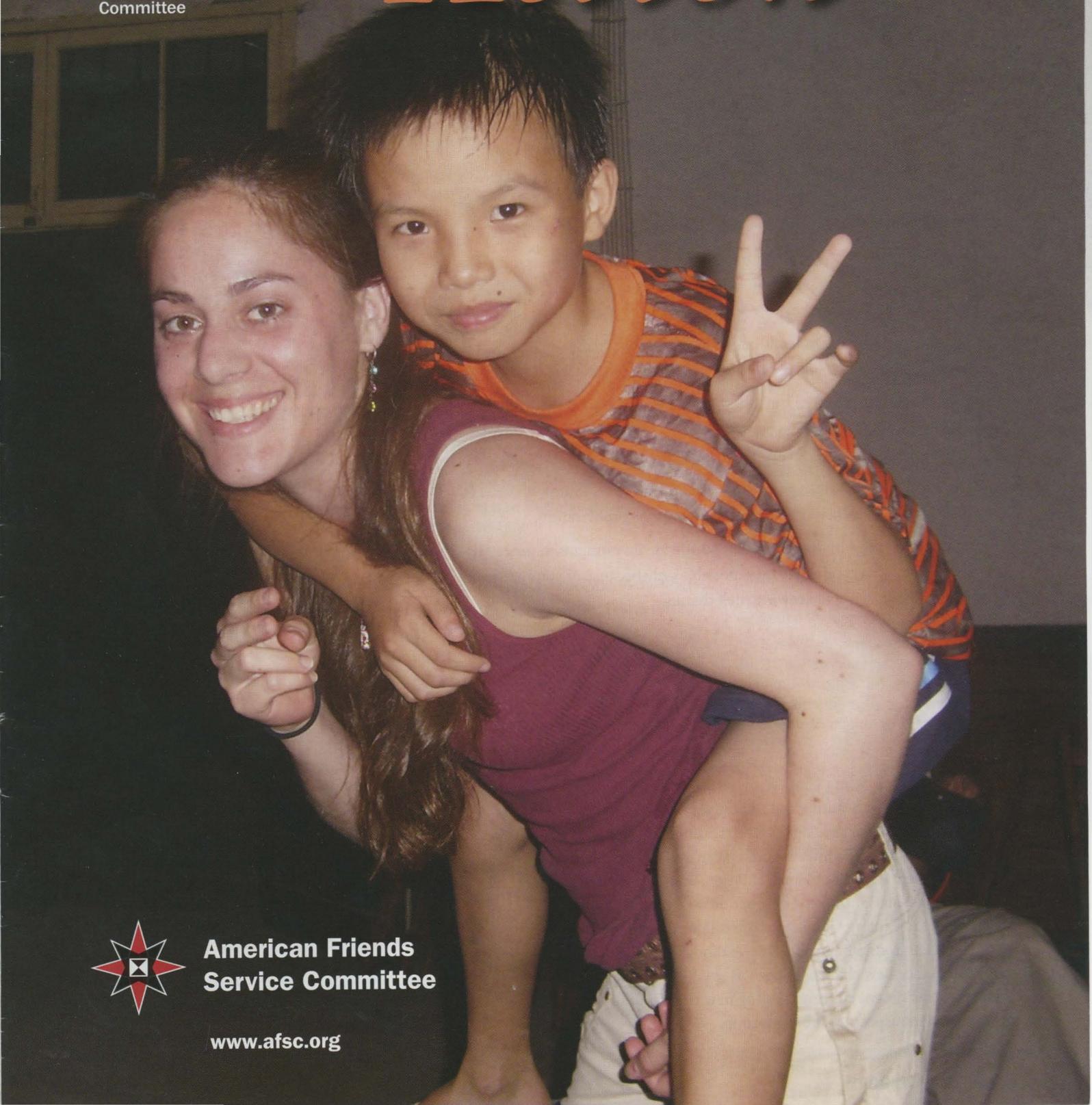


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**American Friends
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Letter from Mary Ellen

Where did half the magazine go?

LIKE MOST PEOPLE AND FAMILIES during this global recession, we're tightening our belts at AFSC. We're cutting costs where we can to ensure that we put everything we can into our work. This issue of *Quaker Action* has fewer pages than the last one, but it still shares stories of our courageous work building peace and hope in communities worldwide.

Throughout this issue — and on our website, www.afsc.org — we show how AFSC's work investing in people pays off.

Our programs demonstrate that building peace is much more effective, future-minded, and cost-efficient than violence and war. As you may have seen in our One Minute for Peace campaign (www.oneminuteforpeace.org), the U.S. military spends \$1.9 million every minute. It's a staggering waste. For less than it takes to fund the military for a minute, the AFSC has accomplished all the work illustrated in this magazine. Examples include the following:

- **In New Hampshire** and in communities across the country, our staff is leading community workshops to help people understand their economic circumstances and what they can do about them.
- **In Zimbabwe**, our work not only has built homes, but given displaced people career opportunities in one of the world's most turbulent economies.
- **In the Middle East and in the U.S.**, AFSC is supporting Iraqi refugees as they rebuild their lives in new homes.
- **Partnering with a Chinese peace organization**, AFSC is sowing the seeds of a bilateral U.S.-Chinese peace movement to address looming issues of environmental sustainability, energy, and weapons proliferation.

These are only a few highlights of our worldwide investments in peace, justice, and security. Everything we do is possible only because of your generous support, for which I give you my heartfelt thanks.

Mary Ellen McMillan
General Secretary, AFSC



U.S. - CHINA PEACE FORUM



ZIMBABWE



GAZ



NEW HAMPSHIRE

Photos: AFSC

On the cover

Each summer, U.S. and Chinese high school and college-age volunteers travel to a beautiful but remote section of Hunan Province, China, to take part in AFSC's China Summer Workcamp.

Over three weeks, the international participants teach English and environmental studies to local children, and help them prepare songs and presentations for the graduation ceremonies. It's an exciting time to explore China, to share different cultures, and to learn about environmental concerns. Although the international participants face new challenges such as spicy food, language barriers, and different cultures, forging new friendships is one of the most important aspects of the workcamp.

Correction

The subject of our cover photo for the winter 2009 issue of *Quaker Action* was incorrectly identified as Robert King Wilkerson. This is how he was formerly known. His name is Robert Hillary King. Mr. King, who was a featured speaker at AFSC's STOPMAX conference in the summer of 2008, spent 35 years in prison—29 of those in solitary confinement—for a crime he did not commit. In 2001, he was exonerated and set free. His autobiography, *Bottom of the Heap: The Autobiography of Black Panther Robert Hillary King*, details his persistent pursuit of justice and ultimate triumph. More information about Mr. King is online at www.kingsfreelines.com.

Iraqi refugees struggle to rebuild their lives

Step by step

Iraq has suffered through three wars in the past 20 years. The UN estimates that up to 4.8 million Iraqis have been displaced within the last five years alone, with some two million refugees in neighboring countries, primarily Syria and Jordan. The United States has admitted only 15,400 Iraqis in the last two years.

Iraqi refugees live in dire circumstances. AFSC and numerous partner groups are working to improve their situation both in the Middle East and the United States. Our work includes fitting refugees with artificial limbs, training women in skills that will help them earn livelihoods, and providing workshops and peer support to those suffering from the double trauma of war and displacement.

AFSC's work addresses only a fraction of the needs of Iraqi refugees, but the two stories on this page demonstrate the impact even modest efforts can have.

New beginnings

The two men shook hands and began sharing stories. They didn't know each other, but they each knew about the Iraq war.

Ammar has the round face of a guy from a neighborhood bowling league. Two years ago, following threats against himself and his family, he and his wife, Aesyraa, and their two young sons fled their native Baghdad for Syria, where they lived in limbo. In August 2008, they settled in the Kansas City, Missouri, area with little more than the clothes on their backs.

Missourian Bob Gibson sports a pleasing combination of white hair and a ready smile. He helped train Iraqi soldiers in Baghdad, leaving there in 2004. Bob used to tell U.S. soldiers that they could win



The scent of new beginnings was in the air in Kansas City.

more hearts—and protect themselves better—with chocolates rather than bullets.

On a warm March night in Kansas City, these two men joined 230 others at a community meal featuring Iraqi refugees and Iraq war veterans. The dinner was sponsored by AFSC-Kansas City and the Kansas City Iraq Task Force and held at Community Christian Church. Proceeds benefitted Iraqi education and emergency needs.

Ammar said he was grateful for the beauty of breaking bread together and having the chance to meet and talk with so many Americans. Bob's sentiments were similar. "When I was over there in Iraq," he said, "I prayed for this day."

Along with the spicy aromas of Iraqi food, the scent of new beginnings was in the air.

Leaving behind the wounds of war

The Telfah family left the Iraq war, but it didn't leave them.

Despite their efforts to build a new life in a Syrian refugee camp, the three Telfah children—Isra'a, 13; Ziad, 12; and Dania, 8—suffered from nightmares, sleeplessness, and fits of anger. They missed their friends and relatives back in Baghdad. Feras, the head of the family, left behind two grocery stores and a house in Baghdad when the family fled.

In Syria, though the entire family sold food in the streets to make ends meet, they were unable to afford clothes, medicines, and even food.

Social workers and specialists from AFSC's Psychosocial Support project worked with the Telfahs, referring two family members to a psychiatrist and providing them with the necessary medicines.

The team organized a summer school with recreational activities that the Telfah children joined. Project staff members also went with the family to schools and parent-teacher meetings to make sure the children got the help they needed.

The result: The children made new friends, and the entire family feels better because of the support.

Get more information online at www.afsc.org/Iraq/wagepeace.



Iraqi youth at the Kansas City dinner.

Photos: Jon Krieger

BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY



Getting to work in Logan, West Virginia.

"There is more a sense of community here than anywhere I have ever been."

That's how one tenth grader from Sandy Spring Friends School summed up the school's annual visit to Logan, West Virginia.

Students and faculty members from the Maryland school spent the week of March 15-21 in community service with AFSC's Appalachian Center for Equality in Logan County. It marked their ninth year of work with the program.

The work group replaced the roof of one house and laid flooring in the House that Love Built, which was featured in the summer 2008 issue of *Quaker Action*.

"When I go home," the same tenth grader said, "I'm going to try to find something to do to help like you guys have shown me how to do. If a lot of people do a little, it can make things better for people."

Read the full story online at www.afsc.org/logan/community.

Peace forum cultivates U.S.-China relations

The United States and China need each other, and the future needs them both.

That was the underlying message of the second U.S.-China Peace Forum sponsored by AFSC early in March and held in Washington, D.C. The forum was a follow-up to an AFSC-led delegation of U.S. peace activists to China late last year. It was initiated by Joseph Gerson, director of regional programs for AFSC's New England office.

"In the 21st century, there is no more important bilateral relationship than that between the U.S. and China," says Jason

Tower, AFSC's Northeast Asia Quaker International Affairs Representative. "Yet there is a severe disconnect between the importance of this relationship and the low level of understanding among both society and government actors on both sides."

The Chinese delegates met with principals in the U.S. government, think tanks, grassroots groups, and advocates for human rights.

Participants are now assessing the visit and suggesting follow-up activities.

Find out more online at www.afsc.org/china/peaceforum.

Eyes—and hearts—wide open

Becoming a full-fledged Friends Meeting is a process, sort of like moving from high school to college to a master's degree. Recently, nine Friends in Norman, Oklahoma, who were part of a worship group, started the next "degree" step after they sponsored an AFSC Eyes Wide Open exhibit at Oklahoma University this past winter.

The small group set up the traveling display on the human cost of the Iraq war, manned it all day, and dismantled it after an evening candlelight ceremony. It proved to be a turning point for them. "We felt we had started something," says John Warram, a member of the group. "Now we had to follow through, and continuing indefinitely as a worship group did not seem adequate."

The group received Preparative Meeting status in 2008 from the Oklahoma City Friends Meeting and is in the process of deciding on a date for moving to Monthly Meeting status.

Read more online at www.afsc.org/eyes.



Delegates at the second annual U.S.-China Peace Forum.

Gaza: Restoring normalcy in difficult times

When Israeli tanks rolled into Beit Hanoun in Gaza this past winter, shrapnel from a tank bomb left 42-year-old Feryal Suliman Ashour bleeding and unconscious.

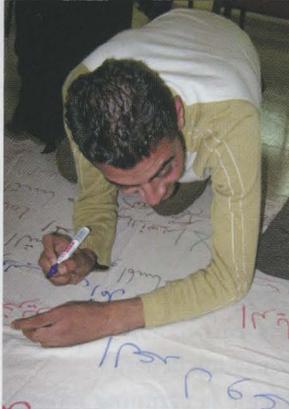
After first aid treatment at the main government hospital, Feryal was taken to Al Ahli Arab Hospital, which serves 250,000 residents of Gaza City. There, three of the fingers of her right hand were amputated and a cast was put on her fractured left leg.

The doors of Al Ahli Hospital might have been closed to Feryal if not for the funds for fuel and medical supplies it has received from AFSC and several partner organizations. Like so many vital services in Gaza, the hospital is under severe stress following the Dec. 27-Jan. 19 Israeli assault, as well as the eighteen-month old embargo that has restricted the importation of food, medicine, fuel, and other essential goods.

"The cumulative effect of the assault and the embargo will likely have a lasting impact on children—some of whose growth has been stunted—and pregnant women who have been unable to obtain food and neo-natal care," says Bill Pierre, AFSC's Interim Middle East Regional Director, after visiting Gaza in mid-March.

AFSC focused its initial relief efforts on the three largest needs in Gaza: fuel for power generation, food supplements, and replenishment of medical supplies.

In addition, to address the high level of trauma experienced by Gaza residents, AFSC is providing long-term psychological support. The college-age coaches who lead the youth groups of AFSC's Palestine Youth Program (PYP), our youth and civic



Psychosocial workshops and hospital relief in Gaza.

engagement program, have been trained to help PYP participants deal with the issues in their lives. More training for former coaches and other youth workers is planned for this spring and summer.

As one of the coaches recently noted, "The psychosocial support is also building youth confidence to help them deal with the future."

More updates on the situation in Gaza and AFSC's response are online at www.afsc.org/israel-palestine/gazaupdate.

New video resource

Israel-Palestine: A Land in Fragments

A new two-minute video from AFSC, *Israel-Palestine: A Land in Fragments*, lays bare one of the major stumbling blocks to creating a just peace in the Middle East—the fragmentation of the West Bank by Israeli settlements, roads, and off-limit areas. To help AFSC promote Middle East peace:

- Watch the video on our website: www.afsc.org/mideast.
- Use the link to send a letter to your congressional representatives. Ask them to stop using our tax dollars to create barriers to peace in the Middle East.
- Send the video to your personal and professional networks.

Photos: AFSC



Women from Hatcliffe Extension with finished products.

Fabric of hope

The residents of Hatcliffe Extension in Harare, Zimbabwe, create tie-dyed and batiked clothing in rich jewel tones, and craft shoes and other leather goods. As they do, they're restoring their livelihoods and moving away from dependence on international aid organizations.

In 2008, AFSC began to work with Silveira House, the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau, and other nongovernmental organizations to improve the living standard of 1,200 vulnerable households in the Hatcliffe Extension area, which lacks running water and electricity.

Training for the residents includes the technical skills involved in making the products, followed by a business management course. The goods are sold within Hatcliffe and in neighboring suburbs and farms. Efforts are underway to create other markets.

More information is available online at www.afsc.org/africa/rebuild.

Economic justice for all

AFSC helps workers navigate troubled economic waters

TERRY A. OF GREENSBORO, North Carolina, a divorced mother of three, was laid off in 2007. After six months of unsuccessful job hunting, she supplemented her unemployment benefits by patching together three jobs: driving a limousine at night, conducting anti-racism training, and editing manuals and papers for students.

But the work dried up during the December holidays and her unemployment ran out, too.

By January 2008, she had to apply for partial Social Security, because at just over age 60, she was ineligible for full benefits. She tapped her 401(k) to pay her mortgage and part of her daughter's student loan. She made do by eating poorly and not going to a physician for 18 months because she could not afford the federal COBRA health insurance option.

Terry, who's a member of the oversight committee for AFSC's North Carolina Peace and Economic Justice Program, also experienced intense emotional distress and self-described "flashbacks" of her childhood poverty.

Now, people like Terry who live in

New Hampshire and who are trying to weather the economic crisis can turn to the Worker Center, a project of the New Hampshire Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health. The AFSC-New Hampshire office is one of six groups that have created the center.

The center teaches laid-off workers, low-wage workers, and new immigrants about their rights under state and federal laws. This includes the ins and outs of workers' compensation, health and safety laws, and obtaining unemployment benefits.

"The lowest paid folks are often the least informed about their rights, so we start there," says Margaret "Maggie" Fogarty, coordinator of the AFSC-New Hampshire Economic Justice Project.

The Worker Center hosted its first community events in March 2009 in Manchester. At one, about 60 people attended, including Bhutanese refugees, who were seeking work and tips on finding financial assistance during unemployment. At another session, injured workers learned how to file for workers' compensation benefits.

Maggie is planning monthly work-

shops piggybacking on previously scheduled church and school events.

"It's not like everything was working well (before the current crisis)," Maggie says. "We deal with people who've been in crisis for decades, failed by the social safety net, failed by the economy. But now it makes our work more urgent because more and more people need food stamps, rental vouchers, and so on. Now groups are more willing to have us come educate people on how the economy failed, and what we as citizens, as taxpayers, as workers, can do about it."

To that end, the New Hampshire Program co-sponsored two forums on the crisis this past winter and supported the AFSC's new economic justice curriculum. Components of the curriculum, which is being piloted throughout AFSC's U.S. regional offices, include understanding why and how the crisis came about, and how we gather power to make changes in our economic systems.

As for Terry, she got a job this past March and is "playing catch-up" with bills. She hopes AFSC will continue advocating for the unemployed, "and health care for all."



Rally for healthcare rights in North Carolina.

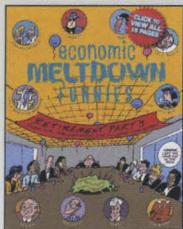
National economic campaign underway

The AFSC's economic justice curriculum (see story above) is part of a vigorous, new national education and advocacy campaign, Invest in Peace and Justice. The campaign is aimed at reordering the federal budget so it meets human needs, creates jobs, and cuts military spending. Check online at www.afsc.org for updates.

Understanding the economic crisis

The crisis in the U.S. economy is affecting people around the world. AFSC's Economic Justice staff compiled this resource list to help people respond.

Causes of the crisis



Economic Meltdown Funnies by Jobs with Justice and the Institute for Policy Studies. A comic book on the roots of the crisis. Available online at economicmeltdownfunnies.org.

The Layman's Finance Crisis Glossary by BBC News. Understand a "credit default swap" and more. tinyurl.com/4j3k29

Another Frightening Show about the Economy by NPR's "This American Life" radio team. Listen to an hour-long show or download the transcript. tinyurl.com/49psnx

Wall Street Meltdown Primer by Walden Bello. A global perspective from Foreign Policy in Focus. www.fpiif.org/fpiftxt/5560

Blogs and daily updates

baselinescenario.com includes "The Financial Crisis for Beginners."

www.dollarsandsense.org. Daily updates.

The Goat Rope by Rick Wilson of AFSC's West Virginia Economic Justice Project. Devoted to economic and social justice in West Virginia, the U.S., and the world. goatropo.blogspot.com



 **Create Real Democracy** by Greg Coleridge of AFSC's N.E. Ohio Economic Justice and Empowerment Program. Dedicated to creating a system where every person counts. createrealdemocracy.blogspot.com/

The human impact of the crisis

Values Should Guide Response to Financial Crisis. Op-ed by AFSC General Secretary Mary Ellen McNish. tinyurl.com/cxj7mf

We can't afford to fail by Joseph Stiglitz in *The Guardian* online. The chair of a UN commission explains that failure to reform the international monetary and financial system will strike most cruelly in the world's poorest countries. tinyurl.com/cftbwb

Philadelphia Unemployment Project. Personal stories from an AFSC partner. tinyurl.com/pnrmv2

Bailouts and recovery

www.bailoutwatch.net. A clearinghouse for information and analysis by trusted partners.

www.recovery.gov tracks how states and federal agencies are spending economic stimulus funds.

Help with immediate needs

AFL-CIO's Unemployment Lifeline. Discussion forums and links to local resources.

www.unemploymentlifeline.com

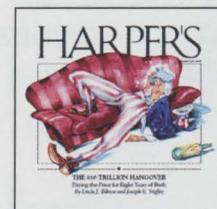
Online applications for state safety-net programs from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. tinyurl.com/c7spq9

Looking forward

2009 Summer Institute, July 12-17. World Fellowship Center, Conway, N.H. Special track: "After the Economic Meltdown: Building a Solidarity Economy." Organized by the Center for Popular Economics and AFSC's New Hampshire program. www.afsc.org/newhampshire

The \$10 Trillion Hangover: Paying the Price for Eight Years of Bush.

This Harper's Magazine article by Linda J. Bilmes and Joseph E. Stiglitz relates the costs of war to the crisis. tinyurl.com/cuue32



Repossessing Virtue. Krista Tippet's public radio series explores the moral, spiritual and practical aspects of the downturn. tinyurl.com/9emx6d

Putting Dignity and Rights at the Heart of the Global Economy. AFSC report on the structural changes needed to build a just global economy. Order from the Economic Justice Program at (215) 241-7037 or visit tinyurl.com/daljby to download a copy.

Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy

by Peter G. Brown, Geoffrey Garver, et al. This book draws on the Quaker principle of "right relationship" as a way to bring our economy, ethics, and environment into alignment. Order from www.moraleconomy.org.

Visit AFSC's website at www.afsc.org/EconomicCrisis for these resources and more. Download our guide for economic crisis workshops, and sign up for our listserv to learn what else you can do.

Yes, count on me.

As part of our Spirited Engagement Campaign, we are building a brighter future by encouraging friends like you to include AFSC in their wills. Just as yesterday's supporters make so much of today's work possible, we turn to you to help secure our work for future generations. We value all the bequests that ensure the stability of our ongoing witness for peace, justice, and human dignity. By naming AFSC as a beneficiary, you can reduce your family's taxes and continue your commitment to Quaker service.



To learn more about Spirited Engagement or 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/giftplanning/.

Ambon youth, Indonesia, 2008
Photo: AFSC.

About our new look

The economic downturn is forcing AFSC, like just about everyone, to tighten its fiscal belt. You're holding part of that effort: this issue of *Quaker Action* is half its usual size. The savings are substantial and will allow us to continue publishing the magazine. With a bit of luck and your ongoing support, we hope to return to "full strength" soon. In the meantime, read highlights of AFSC's work in these pages, then go online at www.afsc.org for more detailed information.

As always, thank you.



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American Friends Service Committee

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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