

Quaker Action

Healing justice

The movement to end
mass incarceration



American Friends
Service Committee

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WHO WE ARE

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

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“Martin Luther King, Jr. called for us to be lovestruck with each other, not colorblind toward each other. To be lovestruck is to care, to have deep compassion, and to be concerned for each and every individual, including the poor and vulnerable. There is no doubt that if young white people were incarcerated at the same rates as young Black people, the issue would be a national emergency.”

— CORNEL WEST

Friends,

I first went into a prison in California in 2002 to facilitate Alternatives to Violence Project workshops on conflict resolution for young men. They were ages 18 to 25, and all had been convicted of felonies while still minors. The youth correctional system was supposed to rehabilitate these young people, but in reality, this notoriously violent facility was “locked down” more than 100 days a year, confining everyone to their cells 23 hours a day.

It was hard to get into the prison on our terms, ensuring every workshop served young men across gang, racial, and ethnic lines. Prison authorities resisted, sure that such a mix would lead to violence. But we insisted.

The warden phoned in frequently during our first workshop, expecting to hear that a fight had broken out. He finally came in person just in time to see 20 smiling faces—from different backgrounds—in a group hug. Over more than four years, we never had a single violent incident. And the young men clamored for additional workshops, recruited their friends, and made new friends across racial and gang lines that had been uncrossable barriers in their daily lives.

Volunteering in this prison shattered all my myths about “gang-bangers.” Far from being threatening or surly, these were bright, vulnerable young people, many of whom had been incarcerated since they were 12 or 13 years old. They welcomed the chance to be playful, to share from the heart, to learn new skills, and to be treated with respect. These young men became not just friends, but part of my extended family.

These men had committed violent crimes, including murders, while still children. They had grown up with violence in their lives. Many had watched a close friend or family member die. They all wanted something better for their younger relatives at home and for themselves. One young man shared tearfully during a guided meditation on forgiveness, “I realized the person I need to forgive is myself.”

As we left one workshop, a guard mentioned that he was retiring. “What will you

do now?” we asked. He said, “I want to do what you do—come back here and facilitate these workshops. I’ve been here for 25 years, and I’ve never seen anything that made as much difference as this. It gives me hope.”

My experience in prison showed me how inhumane, cruel, and arbitrary our criminal justice system is. My experience

Even a career prison guard can acknowledge the failure of our retributive justice system and recognize the power of a transformative alternative.

also showed me that even a career prison guard can acknowledge the failure of our retributive justice system and recognize the power of a transformative alternative that helps people heal themselves and address the harms done to others.

One of the reasons the U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world is because we choose to criminalize conditions—like drug addiction—that are not crimes. Since the “war on drugs” began in 1970, our imprisoned population increased 700 percent to over 2 million. More than 60 percent of those in prison are people of color, and the communities they come from bear the brunt of our discriminatory and inequitably applied laws.

The criminalization of people of color begins as young as 8 years old, with “zero-tolerance” policies in schools that send children not to the principal’s office, but to juvenile court for “willful defiance” or having a plastic butter knife in their backpack. One encounter with a juvenile court greatly increases a child’s chance of dropping out and ultimately being incarcerated.

The costs, futility, and inhumanity of

mass incarceration are clear. We would all be better off if money wasted on prisons was invested in education, economic development, and alternatives to incarceration.

After 40 years, the tide is turning. Recognizing that taxpayers spend \$62,300 a year to keep one person in prison, and just \$9,100 per year to keep a student in school, California is working to replace zero tolerance with a restorative justice approach to school discipline. Twenty years after enacting a mandatory life sentence for “three strikes,” California also voted to soften that law, reducing some penalties, and putting money into rehabilitation.

We’re seeing other signs of progress across the country, as well. More than a decade after AFSC documented the brutalizing impact of long-term solitary confinement on prisoners, the mainstream media is calling for an end to the practice. Several states like Michigan and New York have taken steps to curtail their use of solitary, and just weeks before this issue went to press, California announced that it would move thousands of inmates out of isolation as part of a landmark legal settlement. We’re also seeing more politicians join the call to change policies that fuel mass incarceration, including sentencing laws.

Please join AFSC so we can take on mass incarceration in every state. On page 10, you’ll read about the new Quaker Network to End Mass Incarceration and how congregations can support these efforts in your community.

It’s time to become lovestruck with the children who have been pushed into a pipeline to prison. It is time for transformative justice that truly cares for all those oppressed by this New Jim Crow. Together we can make a difference.



In peace,

Shan Cretin
General Secretary

Life goes on

In Michigan and New York, AFSC programs support people serving long prison sentences

There are 160,000 people serving life sentences in U.S. prisons, according to The Sentencing Project, a national advocacy organization. Tens of thousands more are serving at least 20 years.

Ron Simpson-Bey knows a lot about the people behind that statistic—the “lifers” and others who spend decades behind bars. Ron is what he calls a “returning citizen,” having spent 27 years in a Michigan prison before his release in 2012.

He has seen what can happen to people locked up for that long. And he knows the challenges they face in rejoining the rest of the world when they complete their sentence.

Communities have a stake in ensuring that returning citizens are equipped to make that transition. “More than 90 percent of people living in prison will return to the community,” Ron says. “Do we want them to return angry, or do we want them to feel like they can contribute to the community?”

Natalie Holbrook, director of AFSC’s Michigan office, met Ron while he was still serving his sentence. “I’ve worked with thousands of people in prison,” she says. “If they’re able to become introspective and given the tools they need, they can become great community members, even amidst these insane obstacles.”

Here’s a look at two new AFSC projects that are working with people in prison to develop programs that fit their needs, so they’re better prepared to handle life both within and outside of the walls.

Being good neighbors in Michigan

In AFSC’s Criminal Justice Program in Michigan, Natalie and Pete Martel offer parole-readiness workshops to thousands in prisons throughout the state. In those workshops, they stress the importance of letters of support from loved ones at parole hearings. But many older inmates aren’t able to produce those letters—whether



because their family and friends have died or because they have fallen out of touch in the decades since their sentences began.

As in most states, it’s difficult to achieve legislative changes in Michigan that would benefit people serving long-term sentences for serious offenses. Last year, AFSC launched the Good Neighbor Project to provide support for these individuals and contribute to advocacy efforts to change policies that keep people locked up well beyond what their sentence requires.

Under Ron’s leadership, the Good Neighbor Project connects people serving 20 years or more in prison with people on the outside to create support in the general community. Participants start by exchanging letters in the mail, and, if they choose, talk by phone or make in-person visits.

These connections aren’t one-way relationships; they’re “co-mentorships,” Ron says. “People on the outside need to be educated, as well. They see who’s in prison—these aren’t just violent people. They’re human.”

Co-mentors are given a curriculum to guide their communications, designed to bring about difficult conversations that require self-reflection. They talk about empathy, responsibility, and what makes a good neighbor. They also discuss the actions that led to the inmate’s long-term sentence—something few people have an opportunity to do in prison.

“A lot of people in prison don’t ever talk about the crime committed, but it’s something you have to do in parole hearings, and you have to be able to show remorse,” Ron says. “The curriculum can bring that out of them.”

Since January, nearly 50 co-mentorships have been established. One of them connected Jim Dankovich, a retired chiropractor, and Jennifer, a nearly 40-year-old woman serving life after being sentenced as a teenager.

“I think we have a great deal to learn from each other,” Jim says. “She seems like an awesome woman who has turned her life around and is helping many others.”

Jim encourages community members to look beyond stereotypes of people serving long sentences in prison. “Nobody should be defined by their worst moments,” he says. “Many people have transformed, both in and out of prisons.”

In time, Ron hopes the Good Neighbor Project will produce

more ambassadors like Jim, who can share the stories of people like Jennifer as they advocate for a more compassionate justice system.

“Right now, politicians use fear-mongering to pass measures that focus on punishment,” Ron says. “We need more people saying, ‘These are our brothers, our sisters. They’re returning to our community. What kind of neighbors do we want them to be?’”

Hope for lifers in New York

Larry White is the founder of Hope Lives for Lifers, a project of AFSC in New York. But his work really began during the 32 years he spent at Green Haven Correctional Facility.

Now 80 years old, Larry remembers growing up in Brooklyn in the 1930s and ’40s. He knew early on that his family didn’t have much. As a young child, he would wake up at 4 a.m. to steal food from the early-morning deliveries made to the grocery store down the street.

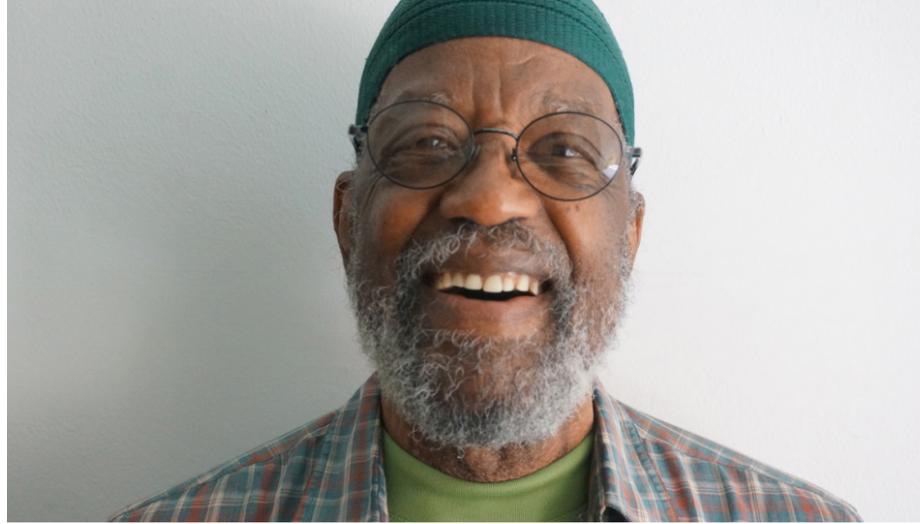
“I made up my mind early—all the things that other people had, I was gonna get on my own,” he says.

Throughout much of his youth, Larry was in and out of trouble. He was 14 years old the first time he landed in a juvenile detention facility. Mostly theft. Burglaries. The last sentence he would serve started in 1975, when he received 25 years to life for an armored truck robbery in which two people were killed.

“The prospect was both frightening and overwhelming for me,” Larry says. “When you get that kind of sentence, nobody sits you down and tells you how to go about serving it.”

His survival had a lot to do with the strategy he developed to live out those years. “I established two principles of confinement—to earn my release from prison as quickly as possible and to leave prison in better condition than when I came in,” he says.

To reach that goal, he mapped out the next 25 years, dividing his time into five-year increments. For each increment, he set shorter-term goals—educational, family-related, spiritual, and so



(Left) In Michigan, Ron Simpson-Bey talks to community members about the Good Neighbor Project. (Right) After 32 years in prison, Larry White founded Hope Lives for Lifers in New York.

Credits: AFSC/Michigan, AFSC/New York

on—and worked to accomplish them.

Larry followed prison rules. He ran the prison newspaper. He became a mentor for younger inmates, sharing his approach to serving his sentence. In time, he helped found the Think Tank, a support group for people serving long-term sentences, under the guidance of prison chaplain the Rev. Ed Muller. The Think Tank was in turn instrumental in launching the Alternatives to Violence Project, which got its start in the 1970s when the prison group invited Quakers to Green Haven to discuss ways to teach younger inmates about resolving conflicts without violence.

“No one is going to tell you how to do this—you have to evolve yourself,” Larry says. “I studied literature on confinement and talked to others about developing a road map to survive long-term prison sentences.”

The manual that Larry began formulating in prison, “Beyond the Yard: Constructing a Prison Life,” will soon become a resource for people throughout the New York state prison system, as the Department of Corrections has agreed to distribute the publication to inmates serving long sentences. Several groups contributed to the manual’s development: Exodus Program, led by the Rev. Mullah; the Association of Black Psychologists; Be

the Evidence, based out of Fordham University; Community Service Society of New York; and Aging Resources Consultation and Help, run by the New York Yearly Meeting.

Over the past year, AFSC and Exodus have piloted the Hope Lives for Lifers program in Eastern Correctional Facility, coordinating prison group discussions using the manual as a guide. They plan to expand the program to other prisons by the end of this year.

“People serving long sentences have a great deal of potential,” Larry says, “but that potential needs to develop while they’re inside. This program helps get people in touch with their potential.” ■

—RONNA BOLANTE



From slavery to mass incarceration

Why addressing America's prison problem means confronting our racist past and present

On any given day in the United States, one in 10 Black men in their thirties is in prison or jail.¹ In fact, one out of three Black men of all ages can expect to serve time at some point in his life. That figure is one in six for Latino men and one in 17 for white men.²

This racial disparity is hardly a function of crime. Over the past quarter-century, U.S. incarceration rates have nearly doubled, while crime rates have been cut in half.³

Our criminal justice system isn't broken. This glaring racial inequity is actually a result of how the justice system was designed to work—a system with an undeniable historic connection to slavery that was outlawed a century and a half ago. Any meaningful conversation about ending mass incarceration in the U.S. must include discussing racism in our prisons, our legislation, our courts, our police departments, our schools, our neighborhoods, and in our everyday lives.

How did we get to this place? Although slavery ended in 1865, America came up with plenty of reasons to lock up large numbers of Black people in the years that followed. The legal justification was

established in the Black Codes—loitering and vagrancy laws passed after the Civil War to restrict freedom. The moral justification developed as white society promoted racialized stereotypes that related Black bodies to animalistic brutes to be feared, especially by white women.

The not-so-hidden financial justification was the desire to bring Black people back to tobacco and cotton fields. After the end of slavery, prisons became a new path to provide free or cheap labor for plantations. Within a century, that labor was used also for governmental contracts and private industry. Along with the new sharecropping system after the Civil War, the Southern plantation system kept churning out product—all at the expense of Black humanity.

The “war on drugs” and era of mass incarceration

The disproportionality of Blacks in prison grew over the following decades, becoming further entrenched in the 1970s and '80s. As a backlash to communities struggling for civil and human rights—for themselves and for others—new laws took hold that made it easier to keep Black people in shackles and chains.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon declared a “war on drugs” to quell social unrest across the country—feeding a new racially tinged narrative about “inner city” crime for the constituency he called his “silent majority.” The war on drugs fueled a surge in prison populations, which continued to soar with the passage of state-level legislation like the Rockefeller drug laws in New York, and, in the 1980s, tough-on-crime measures, such as “three-strikes” laws and other draconian punishments for drug offenders.

Drug-related crimes represent the single biggest increase in incarceration rates over the past several decades. Statistical analysis show rates of drug use (and selling) to be similar across racial lines, however, Blacks are arrested on drug charges at rates that are three to five times as high as those of white adults.⁴

Structural racism intensifies for people of color at every stage in the criminal justice system. These communities experience an over-policing that white communities—whether poor or not—never encounter. Young Black men are shot dead by police at 21 times the rate of young white men, according to the investigative journalists at ProPublica. And a recent Gallup

poll shows that one in four young Black men recalled unfair treatment by police within the past 30 days.

For people of color, arrests often turn into imprisonment, whereas whites may face probation or shorter sentences for committing similar acts. To make matters more tragically comedic, the recent shift to legalize marijuana in several states has created a new class of mostly white entrepreneurs while thousands of young Black men and women remain imprisoned or with criminal records for using or selling the same substance.

This is business as usual in our criminal justice system—an accepted paradigm that encourages mass incarceration of people of color to continue. Though less crude than during and after Reconstruction, American politicians, media, and law enforcement continue to draw on the well-practiced art of stereotyping the “other” to justify discriminatory treatment.

Today, the United States has both the largest number of human beings behind bars (more than 2.4 million in federal, state, county, and other facilities) and also the highest percentage of its population (nearly one out of 100) locked away. Although Black men make up six percent of the population, they now account for nearly half of all prisoners.

After people are released from prison, their punishment continues. They face discrimination in applying for jobs, housing, and public assistance. Many are barred from voting for the rest of their lives.

Opportunity for change

Racial inequity pervades the U.S. criminal justice system, the political arena that governs that system, and the society that allows this injustice to continue. Interrupting that cycle to end mass incarceration requires change in every one of those spaces. And there are a few, but important, opportunities to push for that needed transformation.

Over the past eight years, we've seen an ebb in the total number of people incarcerated in the United States. The slight but significant declining trend began not because enlightened political leaders finally

understood the devastation that these policies have caused, but because of the great recession of 2007. Economic woes meant that many states could no longer afford the cost of building and maintaining prisons.

This opening has allowed advocates and organizers to seize the part of the public narrative that has now forced and encouraged some mainstream political leaders to publicly wrestle with this issue. On the 2016 presidential campaign trail, we've seen politicians on both sides of the aisle calling for an end to the era of mass incarceration—not simply for economic reasons but because of the destruction it has caused, disproportionately for the poor and people of color.

In local communities, organizations like the American Friends Services Committee are providing support to formerly incarcerated people and their families. In the South, AFSC is blessed to work with other organizations, faith-based groups, and individuals committed to improving opportunities for people in and out of prison.

In Baltimore, our Friend of a Friend program works in several prisons in Maryland, providing training to inmates on non-violent conflict resolution while supporting an environment where they can study the causes and effects of mass incarceration and how they can participate to dismantle this system. After they're released from prison, Friend of a Friend accompanies them as they transition back into the larger community, connecting them to ongoing community organizing work.

In Atlanta, we have started a restorative justice program that helps young people who've been charged with crimes get involved with real community work, such as designing programs to prevent their peers from walking down the same path, as an alternative to having a criminal offense on their record.

Programs like these help, one person at a time. But working toward policy changes that affect thousands remains critical. Advocates across the country continue to chip away at the problem of mass incarceration from different angles, whether calling for decreasing sentences, decriminalizing certain drugs offenses, and alternatives to

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incarceration programs, to name just a few.

As individuals, communities, and organizations come together to challenge the imprisonment of our brothers, sisters, and neighbors, we can't ignore the central role that racism plays in our justice system.

In this effort, we must continue to respect the humanity of every person caught up in this modern-day outgrowth of slavery. And we must ensure that the narrative is not one that treats the incarcerated as simply perpetrators, but as survivors of a system designed to control people based on the color of their skin and the need of those with power to withhold it from those without. In this way, we can do more to ensure that we move toward a conclusion in this painful chapter in our nation's history. ■

—KAMAU FRANKLIN

Kamau Franklin is AFSC's regional director in the U.S. South and an activist attorney who has been involved in community organizing for over 20 years.

1 The Sentencing Project
2 U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics
3 Brennan Center for Justice
4 Human Rights Watch

Ojore Lutalo was 37 years old when he entered Trenton State Prison, a maximum security facility in New Jersey. He spent most of the next three decades of his life there, including 22 years in solitary confinement.

His cell measured 9 feet by 14 feet—about the size of a parking stall—and consisted of four concrete walls, a stainless steel sink and toilet, and a bedframe and mattress.

“I was locked down in my cell 24 hours one day, 22 hours the following day,” Ojore says. “This continued day in and day out, year in and year out. I didn’t know how long I was going to be there.”

That prison cell became Ojore’s entire world.

Meals were delivered through a slot in the steel door. On days that Ojore was allowed out for recreation or a shower, a guard shackled his wrists through that same slot before opening the door. His recreation space was another concrete-enclosed pen, surrounded by high walls, with a view of the sky through steel bars.

During the few visits Ojore was permitted from visitors, he was separated from them by a Plexiglass window and had to communicate by phone. The only physical contact he experienced in those 22 years came from the prison guards who routinely strip searched him.

To maintain his sanity, Ojore created a schedule for himself: Wake up. Read for an hour. Exercise for an hour. Write letters. Eventually, he started creating collages to document his experience using magazines, newspapers, and glue.

Tear, fold. Tear, fold. Tear, fold, glue. Sometimes he’d spend the whole day working on a collage.

By the time Ojore was finally released from solitary confinement into the general prison population, he was nearly 65 years old. “Surviving isolation is 90 percent psychological,” he says. “A lot of the prisoners couldn’t cope with the constant lockdown. They deteriorate mentally. But I didn’t want them to break me.”

The prison within a prison

The UN has said that long-term solitary confinement amounts to torture, but U.S. prisons continue to hold tens of thousands of people in isolation for months, even years.

women, and children are held in solitary confinement in prisons across the United States, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, although that figure is a decade old and doesn’t include people in jails, juvenile facilities, and immigrant detention centers. Nearly every state uses some form of solitary confinement, but there’s no federal reporting system that tracks how many people are isolated at any given time.

Solitary goes by a number of names—administrative segregation, special housing units, communications management units, permanent lockdown, management control units—but the basic idea is the same: Inmates are removed from the general prison population, placed in small rooms (often smaller than the cell that Ojore occupied in Trenton), and deprived of human contact for about 23 hours per day. Inmates eat, sleep, and defecate in this space.

The isolation can be temporary, but since the 1980s, solitary confinement lasting months, years, even decades has

become common in correctional facilities across the country. There are now dozens of so-called “supermax”—or super maximum-security—prisons, made up almost entirely of units built for long-term isolation.

“There might be a good reason to place a person in isolation for 10 hours, even a day, but 22 years? There’s no reason for it,” says Bonnie Kerness, director of AFSC’s Prison Watch Project in Newark, New Jersey, which monitors human rights abuses in federal and state prisons.

Since the 1990s, the United Nations Committee Against Torture has repeatedly condemned the use of solitary confinement in the U.S. In 2011, the U.N. special rapporteur on torture warned that solitary confinement “can amount to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment when used as a punishment, during pre-trial detention, indefinitely or for a prolonged period, for persons with mental disabilities, or juveniles.”

In 2014, AFSC submitted a “shadow

VIDEO DISCUSSION: “BURIED ALIVE: SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN U.S. PRISONS”

Visit afsc.org/recap-solitary to watch AFSC staffers Laura Magnani, Peter Martel, and Lewis Webb discuss the need to end solitary confinement.

report” to the U.N. Committee Against Torture, featuring testimonies from people subjected to long-term isolation. Many of those testimonies came from the letters AFSC’s Newark office receives from thousands of prisoners every year—letters that go back to 1986, when Ojore first contacted AFSC from solitary confinement in Trenton.

It’s difficult to imagine what isolation can do to a person, Bonnie says. “I tell our interns to spend just four hours in their bathroom to get a taste of what it’s like—most of them don’t last the whole time.”

Multiple studies have documented the harmful psychological effects of long-term isolation. The conditions that inmates face amount to sensory deprivation, which can produce debilitating symptoms—hallucinations, panic attacks, hypersensitivity to noise and touch, paranoia, uncontrollable feelings of rage and fear, and difficulty with thinking, concentration, and memory.

These effects are magnified for two particularly vulnerable populations: juveniles, whose brains are still developing, and people with mental health issues, who are estimated to make up one-third of all prisoners in isolation.

“Prisoners who are prone to depression ... will become very depressed in isolated confinement,” wrote psychiatrist Terry Kupers of the Wright Institute in 2006. “People who are prone to suicide ideation and attempts will become more suicidal in that setting. People who are prone to disorders of mood, either bipolar ... or depressive will become that and will have a breakdown in that direction.”

Study after study in correctional facilities across the country confirm that solitary confinement makes prisoners more of a danger to themselves and others.

“One of the arguments for solitary confinement is to isolate people who are considered dangerous to reduce violence in

prisons, but what we’ve found is that solitary actually increases violence,” says Caroline Isaacs, program director at AFSC’s Arizona office, which has published several reports on solitary confinement. “People in solitary start to act out more, and it exposes staff to a tremendous amount of risk.”

The profound impact of isolation on inmates can threaten public safety outside of the prison walls, too. Because prisons often hold people in solitary confinement until they complete their sentences, thousands of inmates are annually released directly from isolation into the community. More often than not, they haven’t received counseling, anger management classes, or other rehabilitative services provided to others in prison. Not surprisingly, they’re more likely to recidivate.

In 2012, AFSC’s Arizona office published a report based on the research of University of Arizona anthropologist Brackette Williams, who had interviewed dozens of former inmates who had spent

long stretches in solitary.

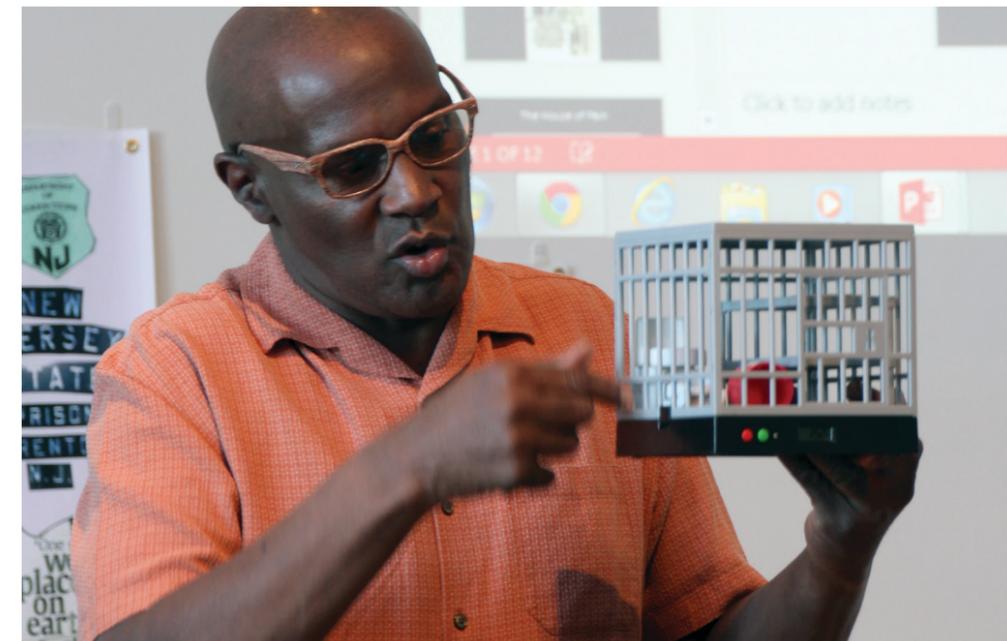
“Many of them were living in the desert because they couldn’t hold down jobs, and they couldn’t stand to be in homeless shelters, either,” Caroline says. “What you hear from them is, ‘I can’t be around people.’ One person even told us, ‘I’m afraid of myself.’”

Defenders of solitary confinement claim that it is reserved for only the most violent offenders, but in practice, that often isn’t the case.

Prison officials have broad discretion in deciding who gets placed in lockdown and for how long, says Laura Magnani, director of AFSC’s Healing Justice Program in San Francisco. Some prisoners are placed in solitary for minor infractions, such as talking back to a guard or getting caught with a pack of cigarettes. And a large number are placed in solitary without violating any rules at all.

That’s what happened to Ojore at Trenton State Prison. He was incarcerated after an armed robbery conviction, but he was placed in solitary confinement because of his affiliation with the Black Liberation Army.

In California and other states, prison officials have used solitary confinement as a tool to manage rival gangs, but even the



After spending 22 years in solitary confinement, Ojore Lutalo now volunteers his time working to end the practice. Photo: Michael Wipperfurth

smallest “infractions” have landed prisoners in isolation—from talking with another suspected gang member to possessing images of ancient Aztec drawings, which have been associated with Latino gangs.

“It’s a very sophisticated kind of racial profiling,” says Laura. “About 90 percent of those in solitary in California are people of color.”

Signs of progress

In 2013, California made international headlines when 30,000 prisoners across the state went on a 60-day hunger strike in protest of solitary confinement. Two earlier hunger strikes had taken place in 2011 at Pelican Bay State Prison, a supermax facility near the Oregon border. Members of four prison gangs representing different racial groups initiated each of the strikes, and support was provided by California Families Against Solitary Confinement and dozens of organizations, including AFSC.

Laura is part of the mediation team chosen by inmates to represent them in discussions with the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Since the hunger strikes, the state has made

permanent a pilot “step-down” program to release inmates from solitary. Of the more than 1,000 inmates whose cases have been reviewed, over 70 percent have returned to the general prison population.

On Sept. 1, California announced that it would overhaul its use of solitary confinement, as part of a landmark legal settlement against the state. The settlement includes prohibiting placing people in indefinite solitary confinement based solely on presumed gang involvement.

“The robust work of prisoners in solitary confinement, their family members, and lawyers and other activists on the outside have brought about a significant victory in our attempts to end long term isolation in California,” Laura says. “The movement has really been led by the individuals inside prison.”

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, AFSC has worked closely with the Michigan Department of Corrections to cut the number of solitary beds in the state from 1,400 to 1,100 over the past four years, partly by moving people with mental health issues out of isolation and increasing access to mental health services.

Director Natalie Holbrook and program associate Peter Martel work with a team of interns to support individual inmates and look for patterns in their experiences. The data they collect from the more than 1,200 prisoners who contact them annually helps them push for systemic changes.

“Hearing from people allows us to keep our finger on the pulse to figure out what’s going on with administrative segregation in the state,” Natalie says. “We do a lot of individual advocacy to help get people out of long-term administrative segregation while raising awareness about the use or overuse of it.”

And these days, Ojore is free, after winning litigation in 2009 with support from AFSC.

He now volunteers in AFSC’s Newark office and gives presentations around the country about his 22 years in solitary confinement, using the collages he made while in prison to illustrate the torture he endured.

“It’s hard to believe that this could happen in America,” Ojore says. “But what could happen to me could happen to anyone.” ■

—RONNA BOLANTE

DONOR PROFILE

Jack Malinowski

A tireless advocate for prisoner rights—and AFSC

“I’ve always felt that AFSC is a resource for those who work for social change; it provides a core of support as an often quiet but powerful segment of a larger movement.”

—JACK MALINOWSKI



Photo: AFSC/Tony Heriza

Quaker Network to End Mass Incarceration

“What does it mean, individually and collectively, to create a strategic nonviolent revolution against injustice—not only against the prison system, but against America’s recurring forms of racialized social control?”

That question has been posed by Michelle Alexander, author of “The New Jim Crow,” a book that demonstrates how the era of mass incarceration has created a new caste system with devastating consequences for people of color.

As individuals, it can be hard to see how we can turn the tide on this issue. But Michelle’s question is a powerful call to action to anyone who recognizes the God in all of us. And many individuals are answering this call with passion and

commitment as part of the new Quaker Network to End Mass Incarceration.

The idea for the Network began at the Gathering of Friends General Conference in 2014. More than 100 people across the country have already pledged to take part in the Network, which seeks to facilitate an exchange of resources among individuals and organizations; connect people with advocacy efforts in their area; and organize joint campaigns in our communities and states.

“The racist exploitation of blacks over the years in the U.S. has taken many forms: slavery, segregation and Jim Crow laws, and now, mass incarceration,” says Philip Stone, a member of the Worcester Meeting in Massachusetts. “There are

people across the country working on the various aspects of mass incarceration, but they are isolated and fragmented. The Network meets a critical need to weave people together and increase our effectiveness.”

The Quaker Network to End Mass Incarceration is open to all people. To learn more, contact Lucy Duncan, AFSC director of Friends Relations: lduncan@afsc.org, 215-627-2667. ■

—JOHN MEYER AND LEWIS WEBB

John Meyer is the education coordinator at Pendle Hill. Lewis Webb, Jr. is the Healing Justice Program coordinator of AFSC’s New York office.

 **MORE: qnemi.org**

In 2009, Jack Malinowski retired from AFSC after 35 years of service. But even in retirement Jack has maintained close ties to the Service Committee—both as a donor and diligent community activist—because he is passionate about upholding the rights of all people.

“I’ve always felt that AFSC is a resource for those who work for social change; it provides a core of support as an often quiet but powerful segment of a larger movement,” Jack says, “In my retirement I’m doing work that’s very much connected to the values and commitments from my AFSC days.”

Jack first encountered AFSC through his involvement with the antiwar movement of the 1960s and ’70s. AFSC and other Quaker contacts helped train him as a draft counselor, and when he lost his teaching job because of his stance as a war tax resister, he began working for AFSC.

As a program staff member, he

advocated against U.S. intervention in Central America, and worked for prison and immigration reform. Years later, he put his deep knowledge of and belief in AFSC’s mission and work to use as a fundraiser for the organization.

These days, Jack is as busy as ever, volunteering with prison visitation and books-behind-bars programs in Philadelphia. He also works to educate the public about systemic problems and abuses in the criminal justice system, such as the devastating impact of mass incarceration and immigrant detention on people of color.

“When I worked for AFSC, I saw how prisons were used as a form of repression to silence and intimidate advocates for justice,” he says. “I also learned how prisons are used as instruments of control against not just those who had committed a crime, but also against activist immigrants. In my prison visitation work, I’m constantly running into immigrants, and it’s alarming.”

He regularly encounters AFSC staff and supporters working on the same issues, which is one way he stays connected to the organization he cares so much about. He also stays connected as a loyal donor. The gift annuity that he and his wife, Deborah Frazer, established more than five years ago is a socially responsible investment that benefits both AFSC and the couple’s own financial future, he says.

“We like the way it works,” Jack says. “We’re guaranteed an income, but it also keeps us in close partnership with AFSC, which is able to use that gift for its work and helps keep the organization strong and stable.”

That sense of partnership with AFSC is key for Jack. “I just want to be part of the ongoing movement for social justice and human rights that AFSC has supported so faithfully for so long,” he says. ■

—WILLIE COLÓN

AMERICA BEHIND BARS

NO OTHER COUNTRY imprisons more people than the United States. Mass incarceration exacts tremendous costs on our society, with destructive effects on individuals, families, and communities.

U.S.: The world's largest jailer

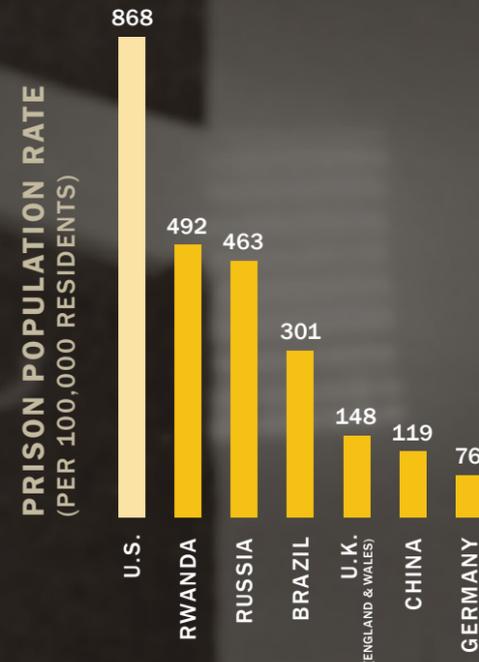


2.4 million

People incarcerated in the United States (larger than the population of New Mexico)

4.8 million

People on probation or parole



The lasting legacy of "tough on crime" laws

Prison populations surged in the 1970s and '80s with the "war on drugs" and "tough on crime" measures.

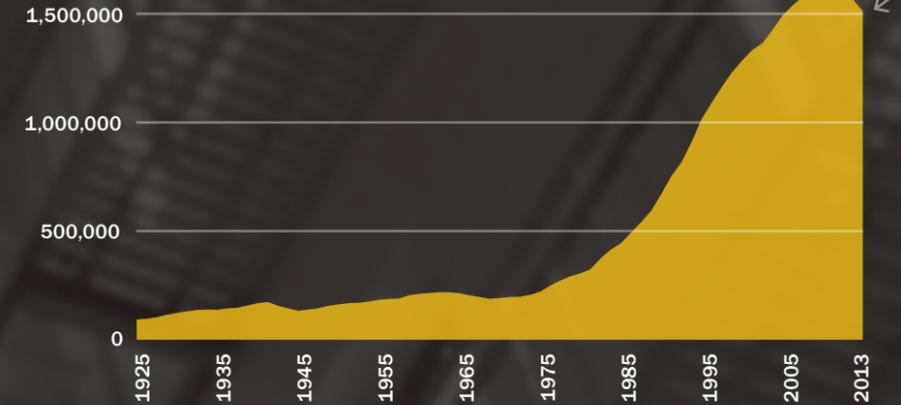
PUNISHMENT IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM:

159,520 people serving life sentences

81,622 people in solitary confinement

3,095 people on death row

U.S. PRISON POPULATION (1925-2013)



PRISON POPULATION, BY CONVICTION



The people behind the numbers

IN 2013, THE U.S. PRISON POPULATION INCLUDED:

- 3% of all Black men** in the U.S.
- 1% of all Latino men** in the U.S.
- 0.5% of all white men** in the U.S.

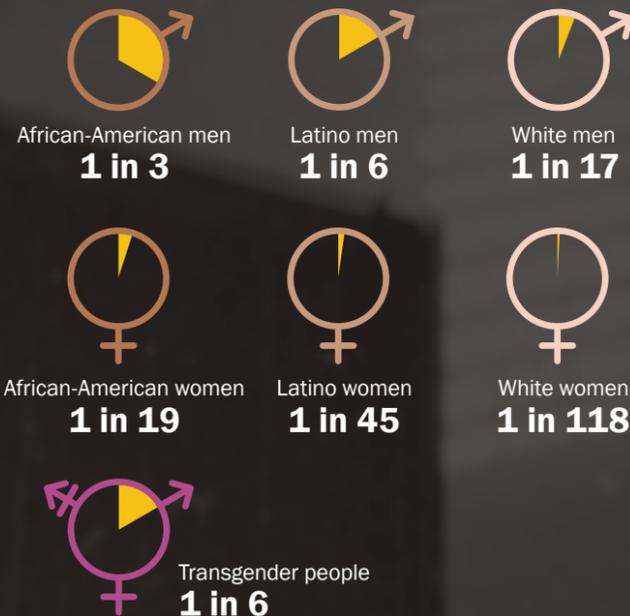
THE FASTEST-GROWING SEGMENT OF THE PRISON POPULATION:

213,700 women in federal and state prisons and local jails in 2013, a 25 percent increase since 2000.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND SENIORS:

54,148 juveniles in detention facilities
69,776 people age 60 and over in state and federal prisons

LIFETIME LIKELIHOOD OF IMPRISONMENT FOR:



The social and economic costs

Every year, millions of families feel the impact of mass incarceration.

- 1.7 million children** in the U.S. with a parent in prison (1 in 28 kids)
- 1 in 9** Black children with a father or mother in prison
- 54 percent** of prisoners are parents with children under 18

COST OF INCARCERATION:

\$39 billion
U.S. spending on incarceration every year

\$31,286
Average cost per prisoner per year

To learn more, visit afsc.org/prisons

SOURCES: AFSC.ORG/INCARCERATION-INFOGRAPHIC

Promoting hope, healing in the justice system



Elizabeth Fry Halfway House in Pasadena, California, 1968. Photo: Robert and Edith Worth

The American Friends Service Committee has provided support to people in prison in the U.S. for nearly 100 years. The driving force behind AFSC's work in this arena has always been the Quaker belief that there is that of God in each person, leading us to respect the worth, dignity, and equality of all and to promote healing—rather than punishment—in the criminal justice system.

Quakers played a major role in the creation of the first penitentiary in the country, the Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia. In 1790, a prison reform group in Pennsylvania, half of whose members were Quaker, was also pivotal in the introduction of a new unit designed to keep people deemed the hardest cases in long-term isolation.

Their thinking was that if prisoners were isolated for a length of time, they would reflect on what they'd done and,

eventually, repent. Instead, the prolonged isolation amounted to cruel and inhumane punishment.

Says Laura Magnani of AFSC's Healing Justice Program in San Francisco: "This was a reform that was better than dungeons, but it got out of hand immediately. Yet once the first institutions were built, there was no going back."

Although Friends helped to create prisons as we know them, they also provided aid to the people who had been incarcerated. Quakers visited prisons, supplying inmates with food and other necessities.

During World Wars I and II, AFSC monitored the inhumane treatment of conscientious objectors held in prisons and military facilities, arranging visits and calling for amnesty and the restoration of their civil rights.

Working with conscientious objectors reawakened Quakers' historic concern for

all prisoners. In 1946, AFSC began to encourage Friends meetings around the country to establish local committees to help people in prison in their communities. "It is important that all of us become more aware of our own direct or indirect involvement in the crimes committed, and of our responsibility toward the men and women who have served or are serving time in penal institutions," the AFSC board wrote.

A focus on communities of color

By the 1960s, AFSC's criminal justice work had spread to cities across the country. Halfway houses were operated in cities such as Des Moines and Los Angeles. Pre-trial assistance programs for those who couldn't afford to post bail began in Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.

Through these programs, AFSC saw firsthand the disproportionate harm inflicted by the justice system on the poor and

communities of color. When AFSC publicly reaffirmed its opposition to the death penalty in 1967, the board underscored these racial and economic injustices, citing New York as an example, where 80 percent of people sentenced to death between 1959 and 1964 were Black or Puerto Rican.

"As a pacifist organization, we often have to redefine what we call violence. It is violent to take parents from children. It is violent to put people in prison for 20 to 30 years."

—LEWIS WEBB

When police officers shot and killed dozens of residents following race riots in 1967 in Detroit and Newark, New Jersey, AFSC took a stand against police brutality. The board wrote that, "A terrible question is being raised in American society today concerning what value our culture and civilization places upon human life. ... Our commitment is to a system of maintaining domestic peace and order which is based on justice for all citizens and so has their respect, and which apprehends, judges, and deals with offenders in ways which respect human dignity and the potential for good in each person."

As the passage of "tough-on-crime" laws swelled populations in U.S. prisons in the 1970s and '80s, communities struggled with the shattering effects of large numbers of men and women behind bars—separated from their families and society, given limited opportunities for rehabilitation, and faced with meager economic prospects after their release.

"As a pacifist organization, we often have to redefine what we call violence," says Lewis Webb, Jr., director of AFSC's New York office. "It is violent to take parents from children. It is violent to put people in prison for 20 to 30 years. It's a form of violence that anyone who claims to be a pacifist should be against."

Calling for transformational change

Even before President Richard Nixon declared a "war on drugs" in the U.S., AFSC recognized that the system of criminal justice was not working.

In January 1970, AFSC formed a working party to examine the system and explore alternatives. The group included people who had been—or currently were—in prison, along with criminologists, educators, and lawyers.

The result was the book "Struggle for Justice." The report earned national acclaim for its harsh criticism of the criminal justice system's role in perpetuating second-class status for people of color.

It also called for sweeping changes—decriminalizing drug-related offenses and applying criminal laws uniformly, among others. But its primary recommendation was ending indeterminate sentencing, a practice that left release dates largely up to parole boards. However, when states took action to end indeterminate sentencing, a new system with its own injustices was introduced: mandatory sentencing laws. The introduction of these laws is one example of the difficulties involved in advocating for incremental change at the edges of a dysfunctional system.

Today, AFSC continues to support people affected by the criminal justice system, both with programs for people in prison and through research and advocacy efforts focused on issues such as ending mass incarceration, abolishing solitary confinement, stopping prison privatization, and opposing the detention of immigrants. While accompanying people and communities most affected by this system, AFSC has continued to call for systemic changes focused on redeeming lives rather than throwing them away.

"In the U.S. justice system, we have given ourselves permission to respond as violently as we think we need to, to people accused of crimes, including killing them," Laura says. "We have to behave very differently if we want to break this cycle. What kind of world do we want to live in? That's a question we all need to ask ourselves." ■

—RONNA BOLANTE



(Above, top) Youth conference on criminal justice organized by AFSC in Haverford, Pennsylvania, 1981. Photo: Terry Foss

(Above) Austin McCormack Halfway House in San Francisco, 1960. Photo: AFSC

Struggling for immigrant justice

The U.S. imprisons nearly half a million immigrants every year, shattering families and communities across the country.

Fortune A. was still in high school when immigration agents arrived at his father's workplace one morning and took him away from his family. His father, who had lived in New Jersey for 16 years, had been arrested for violating immigration law. Fortune shared his story with AFSC:

"My little brother who was 7 years old asked where his dad was. I told him that he travelled but will be back soon. He would cry at night and say he will not sleep if his dad is not home. ... When I went to visit my father, I would see many kids there visiting their parents, and it made me upset. I always wondered why people would send good fathers and good people to jail. ... We want to be with our parents because without them, we are lost."

Every year, the United States imprisons nearly half a million immigrants in over 250 detention centers—with devastating effects. Detention tears apart families and results in lost wages for households struggling to get by. Inside detention facilities, immigrants can face inhumane treatment that sometimes amounts to torture.

Many immigrants are locked up merely for being suspected of committing an immigration violation and have yet to see a judge. Others await deportation. Some don't know why they're being detained and aren't given a reason when they ask. Immigrants can be locked up for months, even years, without a single charge filed against them.

Detention tears apart families and results in lost wages for households struggling to get by. Inside detention facilities, immigrants can face inhumane treatment that sometimes amounts to torture.

A quota for incarceration

While federal policymakers sound the alarm over America's soaring prison population, they overlook how immigration detention fuels mass incarceration in the United States.

Between 1992 and 2012, the number of people sentenced for violating federal criminal laws grew by more than 50 percent.

Nearly half of this increase was due to the rise in convictions for "unauthorized re-entry" into the U.S., according to the Pew Research Center. Until 1998, unauthorized border crossing was considered a civil offense that would not have resulted in detention by the Bureau of Prisons.

What's driving these convictions? One major source is the creation of unjust federal immigrant policies over the past 20 years, such as the "detention bed quota." The detention quota policy requires Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to have 34,000 beds available for detaining immigrants on any given day. That makes ICE the only law enforcement agency in the country that operates with an incarceration quota.

Immigrant detention has become a multibillion industry. Every year, the U.S. spends more than \$2 billion in taxpayer dollars to detain immigrants. Not surprisingly, much of that money lines the pockets of for-profit prison corporations like GEO Group and Corrections Corp. of America, which have together spent more than \$32 million lobbying the federal government since 2003 and now run nine of the 10 largest ICE detention centers in the country, according to immigrant advocacy organization Grassroots Leadership.

"On the one hand, ICE is encouraged by the administration to use discretion [in how it handles immigration-related violations] while on the other hand, the agency is mandated by Congress to meet arbitrary and profit-driven goals," says Jennifer Piper, interfaith organizing director for AFSC and coordinator of the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition. "These goals focus the debate on numbers, rendering faceless and nameless the people being deported as well as the communities and families they are ripped away from."

Living in "iceboxes"

ICE detention facilities look a lot like prisons. Barbed wire fences line the perimeter of many facilities. Inside some centers, detainees are held in what they call *las hierleras*—Spanish for "the iceboxes"—rooms so cold they feel like walk-in freezers.

Detainees have been refused access to health care, even in emergencies. And for some immigrants in detention, medical attention comes too late. Between October 2003 and May 2015, more than 150 people have died on ICE's watch, according to the agency's own count.

Stories of abuse abound in these centers. Women have reported sexual assaults by guards. Immigrants have been placed in solitary confinement—a practice that has been condemned by the



Arturo Hernández García, who had lived in the U.S. for 16 years, took sanctuary in a Denver church to avoid deportation. He was finally able to return home to his family after nine months. Photo: AFSC/Denver

U.N. Committee Against Torture.

In Newark, New Jersey, and other cities, AFSC offers legal services to immigrants in detention. "These deplorable conditions should never be imposed on anyone—immigrant or U.S. citizen," says Amy Gottlieb, associate regional director of AFSC's Northeast regional office.

Organizing against immigration detention

There's growing momentum in the United States to stop immigrant detention. Last summer, a federal judge ordered the release of hundreds of immigrant women and children held in detention centers, calling their conditions "deplorable" and a violation of an earlier court settlement. National media stories continue to expose mistreatment and abuse in detention facilities.

And immigrants have organized in communities across the country to impact policies that affect them.

In June, hundreds of community members in Colorado, Washington, D.C., and other cities took part in a three-day fast to demand more humane immigration policy. Participants also called for the immediate relief of Arturo Hernández García in Denver and Rosa Robles Loreto in Tucson, two immigrants living in sanctuary, supported by faith communities.

Arturo, a father of two, had spent nine months in sanctuary at First Unitarian Society of Denver Church, part of the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition. The Coalition is made up of seven member congregations and coordinated by AFSC.

Unlike many undocumented immigrants, Arturo was able to return home to his family. Although there is still a deportation order against Arturo, ICE has stated that it would use its discretion not to deport him when he left sanctuary. The decision was a "partial victory," Arturo said when he left sanctuary in July.

"There is so much still to be done in my case and to change

FACTS ON IMMIGRATION DETENTION

- 34,000: Number of immigrants that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is funded to detain every day.
- \$5.5 million: How much the U.S. spends daily to detain immigrants.
- 9 out of 10 of the largest immigration detention centers are run by for-profit prison corporations.

 **MORE:** afsc.org/immigrant-detention

unjust immigration policies for thousands of families," he says. "As a community we have to speak up, we have to be visible if we want justice."

Community-led efforts like these are critical to advancing public policies that honor the dignity of all people, regardless of the country in which they were born. AFSC supports individuals and communities in advocating for change, from accompanying immigrants holding vigil outside of detention centers to taking part in coalitions organizing on legislation.

"Policymakers are disconnected from real people who are facing deportation—people who have lived in this country and are part of our community fabric," says Alix Nguefack, program coordinator for AFSC's Immigrant Rights Program in Newark, New Jersey. "It's urgent that policymakers understand the hardship their policies have caused by breaking up families and taking away any sense of hope for a better future for them." ■

—LIA LINDSEY

Lia Lindsey served as AFSC's policy impact coordinator in Washington, D.C., working with our immigrant rights programs across the country.



Governing Under the Influence

It's no secret that money creates a great deal of influence in U.S. politics. Corporate influence and profit is a key factor behind problems like mass incarceration, excessive Pentagon spending, and the transformation of the U.S.-Mexico border region into a war zone.

A new AFSC project is helping to shine a light on corporate influence on public policy. In Iowa and New Hampshire, where the campaign for the 2016 presidential nominations has already been intense for months, AFSC has launched a project called Governing Under the Influence (GUI) to remind candidates that the interests of the people must come first.

AFSC has already trained more than 725 volunteers to question—or “bird dog”—candidates about the corporate influence that drives our country toward more wars, more prisons, and more violence. Teams of volunteers and staff are at town hall meetings, TV studios, city sidewalks—anywhere candidates appear—to ensure these issues get the attention they deserve.

“The GUI project isn’t partisan; it’s not about ranking the candidates or telling anyone how they should vote,” says Arnie Alpert, co-director of AFSC’s New Hampshire program. “It’s about shifting the political discourse by exposing forces that steer the country in the wrong direction.” As of this summer, the campaign had drawn out responses from more than 20 candidates and garnered attention from media outlets like the Boston Globe, Fox News, and Huffington Post.

MORE: afsc.org/gui

Next step in the Mekong Peace Journey

The Mekong region in Southeast Asia has endured painful conflicts throughout its history, which has sometimes led to political distrust, cultural prejudice, and an absence of mutual understanding among peoples from different countries.

That’s why every year since 2011, young leaders from countries in this region have come together to rebuild that understanding through the Mekong Peace Journey, a two-week training program, supported by AFSC and partners. Participants discuss

perceptions that divide the region and develop skills to build peace in their communities from the bottom up.

This year, participants from Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar (Burma) traveled to China, where they met with other young leaders in Nanning, Guangxi Province. “The journey gave us a chance to become friends with people in other Mekong countries that we used to have misunderstanding and conflict with,” says Sotheavy Srey of Cambodia. “When I learn about issues in other countries, I see how we share a commitment to building peace.”

All participants this year were alumni of previous Mekong Peace Journeys. They were being trained to take a lead role in facilitating future peace journeys. Alumni of the program have also organized peace-building trainings and forums in their own countries, coordinated peace marches, and published journal articles. One even produced a documentary series addressing Thailand-Cambodia tensions for public television.

MORE: afsc.org/mekong

No Way to Treat a Child

Every year, more than 700 Palestinian children are arrested, imprisoned, and tried in the Israeli military system. Most of them are accused of simply throwing stones. Many children—some as young as 12—are taken from their families in Israeli army night raids and detained without charges or due process.

From the moment of their arrest, these children encounter ill treatment, and in some cases torture, at the hands of Israeli soldiers, police, and interrogators.

To advocate for the rights of Palestinian children, AFSC helped launch the No Way to Treat a Child campaign this year. The campaign is a joint project with the Chicago Faith Coalition on Middle East Policy, Defense for Children International Palestine, and other organizations.

The No Way to Treat a Child campaign held a congressional briefing on the issue of Palestinian child detention in June, drawing staff from more than 30 congressional offices. The campaign also mobilized thousands of supporters to urge congressional members to sign a letter to the U.S. State Department, calling for the administration to prioritize children’s human rights in its bilateral relationship with Israel. Nineteen members of Congress signed the letter, authored by Minnesota Rep. Betty McCollum, in an unprecedented show of concern about Palestinian children.

“The military detention of Palestinian minors by Israel raises serious concerns that serve as a call to action for those who feel a responsibility to care for the most weak and vulnerable members of society,” says Jennifer Bing, Palestine-Israel program director in Chicago. “We are glad to see that members of Congress are willing to raise this important issue with the U.S. State Department, but more advocacy is needed to pressure officials to do the right thing.” ■

MORE: nowaytotreatachild.org



SNAPSHOT

A look at AFSC around the world

A group of Seattle-area anti-racist organizers came together for the People’s Tribunal on the U.S. Juvenile Justice System, organized by AFSC’s Community Justice Program. Photo: Alex Garland



- Left to right, top to bottom:
1. Palestinian youth leaders from Gaza; Jerusalem
 2. Pendle Hill conference on mass incarceration; Wallingford, PA
 3. Pendle Hill conference on mass incarceration; Wallingford, PA
 4. Dispute Resolution Center Awards; St. Paul, Minnesota
 5. Film screening of “1971;” Philadelphia
 6. Action to stop border brutality; San Diego, California
 7. Peace and Planet mobilization; New York City
 8. Peace and Planet mobilization; New York City
 9. Youth Peace Building and Justice Program; Chicago
 10. No Way to Treat a Child campaign; Washington, D.C.
 11. Palestine Youth Together for Change; Jericho, West Bank
 12. Peace and Planet mobilization; New York City

Photos: AFSC/Middle East, Joe Hulihan, AFSC/Jon Krieg, AFSC/Tony Heriza, AFSC/Pedro Rios, AFSC/Arnie Alpert, Kyle Depew, AFSC/Jon Krieg, AFSC/Carl Roose, Skip Schiel, Kyle Depew



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