

# Quaker Action

## Come together

Resources for allies working for social change

Promoting disability rights in Indonesia p. 7

Changing the immigration debate in Colorado p. 8

Tips for white people taking part in Black Lives Matter protests p. 13



**American Friends  
Service Committee**

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

## 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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*AFSC-sponsored participants in the Urban Bush Women's Summer Leadership Institute in Brooklyn, New York.*

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AFSC Arizona Program Director Caroline Isaacs speaks out against corporations profiting from immigrant detention. For more, see page 5. Photo: Chris Summit

## LETTER FROM OUR GENERAL SECRETARY

**“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time; but if you are here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”**

—ABORIGINAL ACTIVISTS GROUP, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA, 1970s

Photo: AFSC/Terry Foss

In March 2004 I was serving as AFSC's regional director in the Pacific Southwest. On the first anniversary of the Iraq War, our Los Angeles office sponsored an exhibit of military boots and civilian shoes remembering those killed since “Shock and Awe” bombings first rained on Baghdad. This display—first shown in Chicago two months earlier—later traveled across the U.S. as “Eyes Wide Open,” AFSC's way of accompanying both Iraqi and U.S. victims by making visible the human cost of war.

About that time, a Presbyterian seminarian was serving his pastoral internship at AFSC. This unusual request to be placed with a Quaker organization rather than a traditional church had roots in the experiences of his parents back in Germany, who had witnessed the accompaniment of Friends after World War II. As part of his internship, the young man worked closely in planning this memorial exhibit where he would offer the invocation.

The night before the event, we prayerfully arranged the display in front of the Federal Building. Setting out the boots and shoes connected each of us to the more than 550 soldiers and 10,000 Iraqi civilians whose lives had been cut short in just the first year of this terrible war. In the midst of this holy moment, our

seminarian's parents arrived from Germany, coming straight from the airport to join us in our vigil.

I was deeply moved to see people who knew only too well the horrors of an earlier war now accompany and honor casualties of a new war. As the “Eyes Wide Open” exhibit spread, many thousands across the country had the chance to set out the boots and shoes, reflect on the lives each pair represented and, in a small way, accompany the victims of war.

This young seminarian and his parents demonstrated the power of being faithful companions in times of great need. Accompanying those directly impacted by oppression and supporting their quest for liberation brings benefits that resonate across generations and continents for all of us.

Accompaniment builds relationships through which we can experience “that of God” in each other. We appreciate the unique wisdom that those most affected by a problem bring to finding solutions. We understand, too, that those who knowingly or unknowingly oppress also require liberation. A relational process that knits together our human family and reweaves broken connections is essential to building just societies and a peaceful world.

This issue of Quaker Action features

stories of people walking together, accompanying one another on the road to justice. From youth in Indonesia supporting people with disabilities to improve access in houses of worship to more privileged white citizens in the U.S. becoming allies of immigrants who are being profiled and reviled, allyship is a powerful model of social change.

I have a friend who says that our goal in social justice and peace work is to be co-conspirators. That word has come to mean scheming maliciously in secret, but the original meaning is simply to breathe together. In the Bible, the word for breath is the same as the word for Spirit and voice. When we stand side by side at a protest, sit together to plan an action, worship together, or gather to grieve the casualties of war, our spirits align. The rhythm of our breath comes together. Let us then walk and breathe together as co-conspirators for peace and justice.



In peace,

Shan Cretin  
General Secretary

## Readers respond to our last issue

Let me express congratulations to everyone involved in the Summer 2016 Quaker Action issue. I read every word on every page and am deeply impressed by all the remarkable 100 years of AFSC waging peace, its leaders, programs, incredible history, and the so easily grasped timeline. What an inspiring record/history to be celebrated!! Please let as many as possible know of my appreciation of this beautiful and graphic display.

Margaret Parker  
Kennett Square, Pennsylvania

I was so pleased to read the feature on Graciela Martinez in the AFSC magazine, Quaker Action. It brought back memories of my first nights in Visalia in June, 1965, when our group of students from UC Berkeley arrived to experience a summer of picking fruit. Bard McAllister let us sleep in the basement of the AFSC office for a few days until we found a house to rent, but our first night may have been in Graciela's back yard, after a great dinner she and her mom fixed for us, as I remember.

I remember seeing Graciela in Delano

when I was working for the United Farm Workers newspaper, El Malcriado, and am now delighted to read of her continued Service to La Causa over the years and decades.

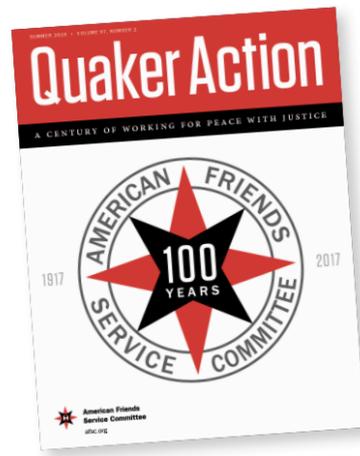
I worked for the union, off and on, until 1971, when I went to work picking grapes under the new union contracts, and ended up in Coachella, working for the David Freedman Company. We have our own house and grow and sell dates. I am the irrigator on my own land, my dream come true.

Well, memories of Graciela and McAllister and David Burciaga and all the good work the AFSC did and is doing—proud to be contributing to such good causes.

Doug Adair (“Pato”)  
Thermal, California

Wonderful Quaker Action! Just had a chance to browse through the century of Quaker Action—well done, everyone! Inspiring and energizing! Thanks for putting it all together.

Jonis Davis  
Seattle, Washington



“The centennial issue: A century of working for peace with justice,” Summer 2016

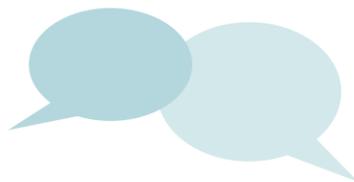
Your Quaker Action issue brought back bitter and sweet memories of 1938—yes, I was one of the still-surviving teenagers the Quakers helped to escape Hitler’s Nazi empire in Berlin.

As a second-generation Protestant, I was branded and punished in Berlin ... as a Jew because my grandparents had been Jewish.

You can find this in my 2010 autobiography, “An Endless Struggle,” in chapter 17, “Thank you, Elizabeth Landmann.” She was a Quaker and took care of my safe passage before the outbreak of World War II in 1939. I am today one of the few surviving 10,000 members of the 1930 Kindertransport.

In peace,  
Paul Kuttner  
Jackson Heights, NY

### WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Tell us what you think about this issue by contacting Ronna Bolante, managing editor, at [quakeraction@afsc.org](mailto:quakeraction@afsc.org) or AFSC, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.



Children in Gaza, where AFSC has worked to build peace for decades. For more on AFSC's history, visit [afsc.org](http://afsc.org)/centennial-issue. Photo: AFSC Archives

## News from around AFSC



### Border policies criminalize immigrants, drain taxpayer dollars

Did you know that 49 percent—nearly half—of all federal prosecutions in the U.S. are against people accused of being in the country without documentation? Over the past decade, a range of anti-immigrant policies have shifted what was previously a civil matter to the realm of criminal courts, resulting in the mass criminalization of immigration.

“This has resulted in costly prison sentences, a drain on precious taxpayer dollars, and devastation on communities—all in the name of so-called ‘security,’” says Matthew Lowen, associate director of AFSC’s Arizona office, which works with partner organizations in the state to end immigrant detention and mass incarceration.

Matthew sheds some light on the impacts of anti-immigrant policies in two new publications. He wrote a chapter in the forthcoming book “Intimate Economies of Immigration Detention: Critical

Perspectives” (Rutledge, 2016) and was quoted extensively in the Grassroots Leadership report “Indefensible: A decade of mass incarceration of migrants prosecuted for crossing the border.”

In “Intimate Economies,” Matthew describes Operation Streamline, a federal policy that funnels tens of thousands of immigrants through criminal courts and into federal prisons in border states every year.

“Communities are demanding the end to criminal prosecutions of migrants for border crossing, and the opportunities for intersectional efforts between those working on mass incarceration and immigration issues continue to present themselves” Matthew says. “We must seize these opportunities and confront criminalization in all its many forms.”

MORE: [afsc.org/operation-streamline](http://afsc.org/operation-streamline)

### Advocating against immigrant detention

In August, AFSC mobilized more than 1,600 people across the U.S. to take part in a week of action to end the detention quota—a federal policy that has fueled the mass incarceration of immigrants across the country.

The detention quota requires Immigration and Customs Enforcement to maintain 34,000 spaces to detain immigrants every day. Every year, the U.S. imprisons over 400,000 people in detention centers across the country for weeks, months, even years. Many are locked up merely for being suspected of an immigration violation. Others are seeking asylum. Some haven’t even been told why they’re being held.

The quota deprives immigrants of their basic human and civil rights and devastates communities—all while benefiting for-profit prison corporations contracted to run detention centers nationwide.

From Aug. 22-26, activists took part in a daily action to raise awareness in their communities and advocate to end the quota. Participants emailed, called, and tweeted at Congress; wrote letters to the editor; and urged friends to join them in the effort.

“It was powerful to see so many coming together, calling for policies that respect the humanity in all people, especially in this political climate,” says Kathryn Johnson, AFSC’s policy impact coordinator. “We need more people to step up to help continue our advocacy to end the quota.”

TAKE ACTION: [afsc.org/endthequota](http://afsc.org/endthequota)



Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana

## Not your typical summer school

Over the summer, dozens of young people took part in AFSC trainings across the U.S. They analyzed systems of injustice, honed their advocacy skills, and discussed ways to work toward the future they want to see—experiences that will help them lead social change movements in the years ahead.

In New York, high schoolers impacted by America's criminal and immigration systems took part in the Liberation Summer Youth Advocacy Training Camp. They learned about the roots of injustice in these systems and strategies for advocacy while being trained in the art of filmmaking for change.

In Baltimore and Washington, D.C., youth filmmakers gathered to explore issues of militarization and grassroots resistance as part of AFSC's Humanize Not Militarize Youth Film Festival. Participants met with community activists working to address police violence and planned a public demonstration on the National Mall.

"It is vital for youth to not only be informed about the oppressive political climate in which we live, but to also be actively involved in a movement that can change that," said Darius Goldsby, an AFSC intern from Chicago who participated in the gathering. "Not only that, but it is our role to ensure that the youth of today understand the power we have to make a difference."

 **MORE:** Read participants' reflections on their experiences at [afsc.org/qa-summer-school](http://afsc.org/qa-summer-school)

# What we're reading



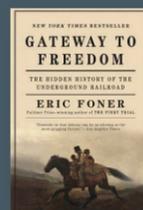
**DOG WHISTLE POLITICS: HOW CODED RACIAL APPEALS HAVE REINVENTED RACISM AND WRECKED THE MIDDLE CLASS**  
By Ian Haney López (2014)

"This book sheds light on how politicians from both major parties in the U.S. have appealed to white people's anxieties about any power earned by people of color. If you want to be a useful ally to people of color or challenge white supremacy among whites, it's helpful to know the recent history of coded political messages." *Recommended by Mark Graham, director of communications, Philadelphia.*



**THIS IS AN UPRISING: HOW NONVIOLENT REVOLT IS SHAPING THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**  
By Mark Engler and Paul Engler (2015)

"This is an Uprising' examines various nonviolent movements around the world that shaped public debate and prompted political and economic change. These movements succeeded with intended planning and core principles. This book helps us to learn about these known and unknown movements from a new angle." *Recommended by Chia-Chia Wang, organizing and advocacy director, Newark, New Jersey.*



**GATEWAY TO FREEDOM: THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**  
By Eric Foner (2015)

"Eric Foner is a Pulitzer Prize-winning author who has written extensively about the Civil War and Reconstruction. This book is about how interracial cooperation emerged to fight against kidnapping by slave hunters in the free states prior to the Civil War. I'd recommend anything he has written, but this one seems particularly relevant today." *Recommended by Rick Wilson, program director, Charleston, West Virginia.*

PEOPLE

## Setia Adi Purwanta

Director of Dria Manunggal, a partner organization of AFSC

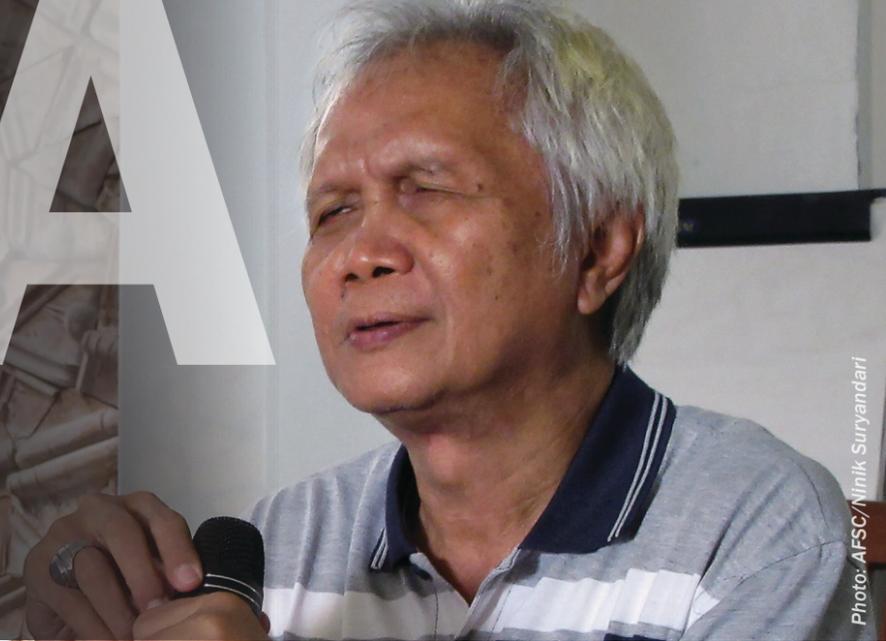


Photo: AFSC/Ninik Suryandari

In Yogyakarta, Indonesia, AFSC provides infrastructure and support to groups like Dria Manunggal to end discrimination against people with disabilities—people Dria Manunggal describes as "diffabled" or differently abled. Activist Setia Adi Purwanta, who is blind, discusses recent efforts to improve accessibility in houses of worship.

**Q:** *Why is accessibility in houses of worship needed, and how is Dria Manunggal addressing it?*

**A:** We work on two things—to encourage religious leaders and governments to facilitate accessibility in houses of worship, and second, to improve accessibility in the process of worship itself. Discrimination takes place because of this ideology of what's "normal/abnormal" and that houses of worship are for the able-bodied majority. Diffabled people are marginalized. People with hearing impairments can't understand sermons, people in wheelchairs can't access places with stairs, people who are blind can't read sacred books, and so on.

**Q:** *You make a point of engaging young people in this effort. Why is that important?*

**A:** We deliberately engage interfaith youth—diffabled and non-diffabled—because this movement will become more effective if supported by youngsters. They are energetic, intelligent, and they discuss

these issues with their friends and networks to raise awareness.

It's important to note that in their work, our young friends work together as an interfaith team. As a group, they will go and approach and advocate this idea to each religious leader from each religious organization. The work that they do is a model for promoting religious tolerance. And for diffabled young people, it helps them find as many friends as possible to support their activism.

**Q:** *What kind of challenges have you faced?*

**A:** Some have told us, "We have no differently abled people in our congregations so we do not need to facilitate that." There's also a way of thinking that God will provide dispensation for everybody to do worship in accordance with their own abilities.

Most of them indicated that it is difficult to find volunteers to be trained as sign language interpreters. That's why part of our model is recruiting youngsters to be trained in sign language. There is also a debate about translating holy books into sign language and who has the right to interpret that.

**Q:** *How have houses of worship responded?*

**A:** Several houses of worship have already agreed to make the improvements—one mosque, one Catholic Church, one Protestant church, one Hindu temple, and one representing Native faiths. We are also

helping some of our Buddhist friends to develop texts in Braille. When we complete upgrading these houses of worship, we will promote it to a broader audience so people will know what accessible houses of worship look like.

There has also been a very positive response from the Yogyakarta branch of the Indonesian Muslim Council of Yogyakarta, which is going to create a fatwa promoting accessibility for diffabled people for mosques in Yogyakarta. The representative office of Catholic congregations is now making a goal that in 2017, at least 50 percent of Catholic churches will be accessible. And the regional office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs has circulated a letter of recommendations to houses of worship to promote accessibility for diffabled people.

**Q:** *What's behind your success?*

**A:** Young people have been successful in persuading these houses of worship because of two main ideas. First, in front of God, all human beings—despite their conditions—are equal. And second, all human beings have the right to be closer to their God.

The main message we want to send around the world is, "Let us support each other in the struggle for the right for accessibility for people who are differently abled, and let us work together to create true religious tolerance and freedom." ■

# LEARNING TO BE AN ALLY

In Colorado, allies accompany immigrant communities in the struggle for justice.

BY RONNA BOLANTE

Maureen Flanigan grew up in a liberal household in the Midwest and describes her parents as socially conscious, action-oriented Catholics. After high school, she took part in protests against the Vietnam War and campaigned for Sen. Robert Kennedy, inspired by his commitment to end poverty in the South. She was what she calls an “off-and-on” activist for most of her life. She first heard

the term “white privilege” when she was in her 50s and taking an ecumenical class exploring social justice issues.

“It changed the way I thought about activism,” says Maureen, now 67.

Judith Marquez was born in Colorado, the daughter of immigrants from Mexico. She witnesses firsthand the struggles faced by her parents—and other family members—who were once undocumented. And

she grew up hearing anti-immigrant rhetoric from elected officials and others who influence policies that affect her community.

“I am Mexican, with a working-class background, but I still recognize I have my own privilege—what it means to be born a citizen,” says Judith, 31. “There are things I can take for granted that people who are undocumented can’t.”

Maureen and Judith are both members of Coloradans for Immigrant Rights (CFIR), a volunteer-led project of AFSC’s Colorado office working to create a welcoming climate for all people in their state. Throughout the year, CFIR members like Maureen and Judith give presentations at schools, churches, and community organizations; meet with legislators and testify on immigration-related bills; and support campaigns to oppose intolerance and promote inclusive communities.

Most members of the group aren’t immigrants, but rather citizens who consider themselves allies in the immigrant rights movement. As allies, they take their lead from immigrants and immigrant-run partner organizations. That’s because history has shown that organizing is most effective when it’s led by the people most affected by injustice—in this case, people living the effects of anti-immigrant policies.

“That’s one of the reasons I was drawn to CFIR and AFSC—they’re constantly evaluating the motivations behind what they do and who’s driving it, and it’s very much led by the people affected,” Maureen says. “There isn’t a step taken not initiated by people affected by immigration policies.”

AFSC and community members launched CFIR as a project in 2003, responding to the surge in anti-immigrant sentiment in Colorado and across the country. Federal policies—from restriction on government-issued IDs to militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border—were becoming harsher.

“There was a lot of discussion about the role of citizens in the immigrant rights movement, and it took almost a year of research and planning—reading about privilege, talking with different immigrant rights organizations,” says Jennifer Piper, AFSC’s interfaith organizing

director in Colorado. “It became clear that our role was to be in our own community—talking about the impact of the system on people we care about, correcting myths about immigrants, and educating the citizen community to move people from apathy or indifference to solidarity and accompaniment.”

## Challenges of allyship

Today, CFIR members represent a range of personal experiences with immigration. Some have family members, friends, employees, or neighbors who have been detained or deported—or they know people who are vulnerable to deportation. A few are teachers who see the fear that stu-

“When we first began organizing, it was a little bit clumsy. People weren’t sure they were able to speak on these issues, but they recognized that it was important for us to speak out as allies and bring other people along to support immigrant communities.”

— JORDAN GARCIA

One of CFIR’s first actions was to lead a protest, says Jordan Garcia, AFSC’s immigrant organizing director in Colorado. Anti-immigrant groups had organized a rally as part of their campaign to ban Spanish reading materials at the Denver Public Library. CFIR members wanted to stage a counter-protest and introduce a different narrative to support being bilingual and having access to materials in one’s native language. They asked immigrant-led partner groups what they thought, and “they said, ‘Go for it! We don’t have the capacity to respond, but we’d love you to,’” Jordan says.

Denver libraries now carry multilingual resources across their system, as well as classes to learn more than six different languages. CFIR’s action is a part of that legacy.

“People who were citizens were upset by the rhetoric, which was detrimental and nasty, and they didn’t want to see that in their community,” Jordan says. “When we first began organizing, it was a little bit clumsy. People weren’t sure they were able to speak on these issues, but they recognized that it was important for us to speak out as allies and bring other people along to support immigrant communities. It’s been beautiful watching this process unfold.”

dents from immigrant families live with every day.

“We also have a lot of allies who are people of faith who see a huge disconnect between the values we say we have in the U.S.—family, human dignity, due process, fairness—and the immigration system that’s in place, which is in direct opposition



Denver staff and volunteers accompany Jeanette Vizguerra at a check-in with immigration officials. Photo: AFSC/Eric Leveridge



Judith Marquez, a member of Coloradans for Immigrant Rights. Photo: AFSC/Denver

to all of those things,” says Jennifer.

Being an effective ally requires dedication and constant learning. People who get involved with CFIR are equipped with a packet of materials, including a guide on basic tactics for being a strong ally and information that can be useful in countering

anti-immigrant rhetoric. They also have the opportunity to attend monthly public sessions, ranging from trainings—on policy advocacy or public speaking, for example—to talks on topics that intersect with the immigrant rights movement, such as reproductive rights in Latin America.

CFIR also offers members a space to discuss challenges they encounter as allies—including hostility from others. When one member confided that a fellow church member had asked her, “Why should we support immigrants who have criminal convictions?”, others in the

group helped her articulate a response.

Maureen had similar experiences when she first began working in support of immigrant rights. Several years ago, she decided to organize an informational event on immigration at her former church, and she was surprised at the response from some of her fellow congregants.

“One person told me, ‘You’re just trying to make me feel sorry for *those* people,’” Maureen recalls. “She felt strongly that people should come here legally, but she had a lack of understanding of why people migrate. I thought the compassion part would automatically come out, and instead [it] stirred up something else that I wasn’t aware of.”

One common pitfall to being an effective ally in the immigrant rights movement is allies may immediately assume they can find a solution using the resources they have, Jordan says. They may want to fix the problem by hiring a good lawyer or talking to the right person in government. That’s not always how the system works, and those decisions must be made by those individuals who are actually affected by injustice. It can be hard for citizens to recognize their own privilege as citizens and overcome the habit of taking charge in difficult situations.

“I have to be as consistent as possible in asking how to use my privilege to support



Maureen Flanigan has volunteered with Coloradans for Immigrant Rights since 2010. Photo: AFSC/Denver

## A model for working toward social change

Last year, AFSC introduced a new program, Quaker Social Change Ministry (QSCM), to provide a simple but transformative approach for Friends meetings working for social change.

QSCM brings together small groups of Friends to focus on an issue that connects the congregation, the local community, and AFSC. A QSCM group is a place to worship, build trust, take risks, make mistakes, learn together, and deepen the connection between social change and spiritual growth. The group becomes a home base from which Friends engage with the world and return for reflection, discussion, and renewal.

QSCM connects Friends to that which is larger than ourselves and calls us into right relationship as we walk beside our partners and endeavor to co-create the beloved community. AFSC provides one-on-one support, program materials, training opportunities, and regular conference calls with other QSCM groups.

The center of the QSCM model is companionship, accompanying, and following those most impacted by injustice on the way to social change. As part of the program, we explore what followership and accompaniment mean.

Here are examples of scenarios and prompts we use for discussion and exploration that you might find helpful in your own work:

**Scenario 1:** The Rev. John Fife was co-founder of the Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s and more recently No More Deaths, a ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson. Rev. Fife says that if you’re doing committee work in the community, make sure you’re following the voices of those most impacted by systems of oppression.

Don’t serve on any action committee in the community that isn’t led by those voices. And always listen. We can come back to our church committees to share our experiences—and there we can set the agenda and use our language. But when we’re companioning, we don’t set the agenda. Communities most impacted by oppression do. Companioning has to lead to disrupting the systems of oppression. It has to move us to raise our voices—resisting, confronting, and challenging—together.

**Prompt:** *What would it look like and feel like to do social justice work in this way? What would it look like for you to “follow the voice of the oppressed?”*

**Scenario 2:** Two social justice activists who are undocumented immigrants say what they want from their solidarity partners:

Don’t take over when we’re trying to get something done. Don’t act out of control at a rally. Be someone we can trust. Be someone who

wants to get to know us. We want to be viewed as experts.

And we need the help of partners to get access to decision makers, and to do some of the dirty work like fundraising, donating, and rallying their people. The most important thing is to be in it for the long haul. And be our friends.

**Prompt:** *What would it look like and feel like to do social justice work in this way? What do you need to stay in it “for the long haul?”*

These excerpts were collected by Kelly Dignan, who granted AFSC permission to use them as we work to spread this model of social justice work. We are grateful to her and Kierstin Homblette, originators of the model.

—LUCY DUNCAN AND GREG ELLIOTT



AFSC Corporation members, staff, and others took part in a workshop on the Quaker Social Change Ministry in April. Photo: James Wasserman

### GET INVOLVED

AFSC will enroll a new cohort of Quaker Social Change Ministry groups from Quaker meetings this fall.

 **MORE INFORMATION:** [afsc.org/QSCM](http://afsc.org/QSCM)

immigrant organizations for feedback.

“They told us, yeah, the cost is high, but the thing that impacts our lives more right now is the fact that we can’t get driver’s licenses,” Jordan recalls. “They said, ‘If we can’t drive, we can’t work. But if we get caught driving without a license, that puts us at risk for deportation every day. It

and demonstrations. Far too often, their efforts fail, and they see the individuals they’ve supported ripped away from their families and communities by deportation.

“One lesson about being an ally: You’re going to have to give a little more of yourself, and it’s not always going to be comfortable. It might hurt a little,” Judith says.

She recounts providing support for Jeanette Vizguerra—a community activist and a close friend—in her years-long fight against deportation. “It was emotional because I saw the impact that this deportation was having on her and her family, and I felt very involved. I was stressed, worried, and my parents could see that. They said, ‘Why don’t you just leave them alone?’

“Inside of me, I knew I couldn’t do that. Once it gets hard, you can’t just leave and go back to your comfort zone. That’s what privilege is: We can escape these difficulties, while others can’t. We’re not here to save people; we’re just here to support them and bear witness, to get others involved.”

### Supporting meaningful change

Ask CFIR members about the most memorable efforts they’ve supported over the

“One lesson about being an ally: You’re going to have to give a little more of yourself, and it’s not always going to be comfortable. It might hurt a little.”

— JUDITH MARQUEZ

efforts of people who should be at the center and directing the movement,” Jennifer says.

In 2013, for example, some CFIR members were appalled to learn that it cost people \$600 to apply for citizenship—an amount they thought would deter a lot of immigrants from applying. Members wanted to organize a campaign to reduce those fees, so they consulted with local

would be impactful if you helped us work on this.’ And that’s what we did.”

There’s also an emotional investment that comes with allyship, both Maureen and Judith say. CFIR members develop relationships with the immigrants they are accompanying—getting to know their families, going with them to immigration hearings, and standing with them at vigils

“People insist that immigrants should get in line to come to the U.S., not knowing that there isn’t really a line. But when we start to unmask these myths and get people educated, they become outraged, saddened and sometimes, engaged.”

— JENNIFER PIPER

years, and you’ll get a range of answers.

Judith recalls the emotional roller-coaster of supporting her friend Jeanette and the relief of receiving news that she would not be deported.

Maureen talks about the honor she’s had working with many young immigrant organizers who’ve led successful advocacy campaigns, including one that resulted in Colorado granting in-state college tuition for undocumented students.

Jordan also points to some of the advocacy victories that AFSC’s project has supported, including statewide legislation to keep local police from coordinating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to deport people.

In 2014—in response to increasing anti-immigrant rhetoric from politicians and the media—CFIR launched a campaign called “Keep Families Together.” The idea was to gather as many signatures as possible to present to members of Congress to show broad public support for immigration policies that respect the humanity and dignity of immigrants and recognize them as important members of our communities.

CFIR members worked with churches, schools, and community organizations to educate people about detention, deportation, and the many challenges facing immigrants and their families in Colorado.



In Denver, AFSC engages people affected, community members, and allies in calling for policies that respect the humanity in all people. Photos: AFSC/Denver

In the process, they collected more than 3,000 signatures to present to Colorado’s Congressional delegation to show public support for keeping families together.

“A lot of people have a hard time accepting how intentionally destructive our system really is—that there are 1,100 deportations that happen every single day in the U.S., and that has a tremendous impact on children, families, and communities,” Jennifer says. “People insist that immigrants should get in line to come to the U.S., not knowing that there isn’t really a line. But when we start to unmask these myths and get people educated, they become outraged, saddened and sometimes, engaged. And that’s when we can move them to become allies, too.” ■

#### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Get guides on citizenship privilege, basic tips on being an ally for immigrant rights, and more.

VISIT: [afsc.org/qa-cfir](http://afsc.org/qa-cfir)



Justice for Freddie Gray protest in Baltimore, April 2015. Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana

# Note to self

## 9 tips for white people taking part in **Black Lives Matter** protests

BY VONN NEW

*Editor’s note: In January 2015, AFSC published this piece on our Acting in Faith blog ([afsc.org/friends](http://afsc.org/friends)), and it has since been viewed more than 90,000 times—our most popular blog post to date. It garnered so much attention one day that our website briefly went down. For those who missed it, we thought we’d share it in the magazine.*

I am a white person who recently participated in Millions March NYC as part of Black Lives Matter. As a queer, gender-queer person, I know about some forms of oppression, but I didn’t want my own unconscious racism, entitlement, and unexamined privilege to perpetuate the pathology and systems we were there to protest. So I came up with some guidelines for myself

while participating in public demonstrations against racism and police violence.

One thing I’m figuring out is that it is important for me as a white ally to engage in anti-racism work with other white people. Racism is a white person problem, not a Black person problem. We as white people need to be talking to each other about it. So with that in mind, I feel led

to share my personal guidelines and am open to any feedback.

Note to self:

**1. Remember that you are there as an ally in solidarity—it's not about you.**

No matter how outraged or indignant you feel, a Black person will still have different feelings. Respect and be present to differences in emotion, experience, and politics. Consider that your role might be as a witness and support to others' expressions rather than expressing your own feelings.

**2. Don't provoke or antagonize police with your words or deeds.**

If police respond with violence and arrests, the people of color in your demonstration will face much harsher repercussions than you will. Putting them at risk is itself a form of privileged violence. Organizers from the Black community need to set the tone of the action.

**3. It is not your job to police or tone down Black protesters who have a right to express anger.**

If you cannot support what they are saying, it's OK to leave and find a different way of working on anti-racism.

**Consider that your role might be as a witness and support to others' expressions.**

**4. If you have a smartphone in your pocket, use it to lift up the voices of the Black people at the demonstration.**

Post photos and videos of the action on social media. Document police presence and interactions. You are allowed one selfie and that is it. Do not be the white person who fills their social media with self-congratulatory photos of themselves at the demonstration. Black people are not trophies.

**5. Don't lead chants.**

Make room for the Black people around you to lead chants. Support them with your voice and rhythm. Pay attention to the impact of who and what you are supporting and doing. Some words are not yours to say.

**6. Anticipate that reporters may seek you for a comment out of their own unconscious racial bias.**

Before a demonstration begins, try to find out who are the designated media spokespeople. If a member of the press approaches you, here is your talking point: "I am a white ally, here in solidarity with the Black community," then direct them to a spokesperson.

For example, a reporter comes up to you and asks what you think of the grand jury system. Your answer is: "I am a white ally, here in solidarity with the Black community." A TV station shines the camera on you and asks, "What do you think the militarization of policing will do to First Amendment abuses against peaceful protests?" You say: "I am a white ally here in solidarity with the Black community." In order to do this, you have to accept that members of the Black community will be more informed and better able to talk about these issues than you.

**7. Don't hijack the message.**

Yes, "All Lives Matter," but that's not the problem or the movement. The problem is that in our society, Black lives are valued less than white lives. Chanting "All Lives Matter" at a "Black Lives Matter" protest is like going to a funeral and telling the bereaved, "Hey, Everyone Dies."

If you are part of some other marginalized group, it's OK to show up as your whole authentic self, just don't make it all about you. Being queer, I felt OK putting a rainbow on my Black Lives Matter sign as a way to represent my community, but I didn't make the message Queer Lives Matter Too.

Just because something else also happens to be true does not mean it needs to be the focus of this action. You wouldn't run through an AIDS fundraiser with a Breast Cancer sign. Don't use the Black

Lives Matter actions to push your own agenda, no matter how noble.

**Don't hijack the message. Yes, "All Lives Matter," but that's not the problem or the movement.**

**8. Be responsible for yourself.**

Educate yourself about the organizations, leaders, and issues that are represented at the event. Don't participate in direct action unless you have been trained by the organizers to do so. Carry your own water, food, money, and phone. Write important phone numbers on your body so you can't lose them. Have a plan in place with people at home to support you if necessary. Don't expect action organizers to take care of your needs—they have their hands full already.

**9. Stay involved after the event is over.**

It is important to attend major events and marches to show solidarity, but it is even more important to stay active afterward. Remember that racism needs to be dealt with in white communities, so join with other white people to do our own work. Don't ask Black organizers what you can do to help unless you are prepared to actually show up and do that thing. Be humble if your offer is received with skepticism and try to understand why that might be. ■

*Vonn New is a member of Bulls Head-Oswego Friends Meeting in New York Yearly Meeting.*

**LEARN MORE**

This fall, AFSC's Board endorsed "A Vision for Black Lives: Policy demands for Black power, freedom, and justice." All Quaker monthly and yearly meetings are encouraged to join us by considering and endorsing the platform.

**VISIT:** [afsc.org/VisionBlackLives](http://afsc.org/VisionBlackLives)

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

# Welcoming the stranger

Throughout our history, AFSC has supported communities in struggling against xenophobia and calling for inclusion

BY WILLIE COLÓN

After September 11, 2011, there was a great, brief moment of international solidarity and then there was a loud and politically powerful call for vengeance. In the days, weeks, and years that followed, AFSC was a leading voice calling for a peaceful response to the violence perpetrated. Just as critically, we worked to counter the threat posed by the xenophobia, nativism, and diminished civil liberties brought on by Islamophobia and war hysteria.

When the Department of Justice created a "special registration" program targeting Arab and Muslim communities in 2002, AFSC declared that "immigrants and visitors are our neighbors, not our enemies. In the end, 'they' are 'us.'" That understanding—along with our belief that every person deserves respect, compassion, and fair treatment—has served as the backbone of AFSC's support for marginalized communities during critical periods when fear and exclusion have increased tensions and insecurity in the U.S.

AFSC has followed the lead of those most affected by inhumane policies in calling for inclusive and welcoming communities, while lifting up the human dignity and fundamental equality of all people.

Not long after our founding, AFSC spoke out against the U.S. Immigration Act of 1924, a discriminatory policy that barred immigration from Japan. And when the U.S. government established internment camps for more than 120,000 people of Japanese descent during World War II, AFSC publicly voiced its opposition while visiting and providing material

aid to people interned. The organization established two programs to get people out of camps, eventually securing the release of more than 4,000 individuals. AFSC also provided support and raised legal funds for Gordon Hirabayashi, who was convicted and imprisoned for two years for challenging exclusion and curfew orders.

Throughout the following decades, AFSC continued to stand with individuals and communities opposing exclusionary laws. In the 1950s, we advocated for more humane immigration policies as part of our support for migrant farmworkers who were organizing to improve their lives and working conditions.

The late 1970s marked the beginning of AFSC's work to support Haitian refugees fleeing the repressive Duvalier regime. We connected them with legal representation as they applied for asylum in the face of U.S.

government laws and policies that favored refugees from other countries. Around the same time, we provided critical support to the Sanctuary Movement, which established safe havens for people fleeing U.S.-backed violence in Central America as restrictive federal immigration policies made obtaining asylum difficult for Central Americans. AFSC organized speaking tours, provided legal assistance to refugees, and developed important resource materials for activists, among other activities.

In the mid-1980s, AFSC was one of the first organizations to address human rights abuses by the U.S. Border Patrol. Our Immigration and Law Enforcement Monitoring Program (ILEMP) worked with affected border communities to solicit and investigate reports of violence and racial profiling. From 1987 to 1990, ILEMP documented 380 cases of excessive force, racial

During World War II, AFSC publicly opposed the internment of people of Japanese ancestry and provided support and material aid to those interned, such as these children in Manzanar, California. Photo: Francis Stewart





Above left: AFSC's Farm Labor Program/Proyecto Campesino in Visalia, California, supported the struggle for farmworker rights and human dignity. Photo: AFSC/Terry Foss. Above right: AFSC's Project Voice immigrant organizing work with the Somali Bantu community in Baltimore included a digital storytelling project. Photo: AFSC/Tony Heriza

harassment, and sexual assault.

In 1996, several new punitive and restrictive laws sparked an explosive increase in the federal immigration detention system and created fast-track deportation procedures. We supported community-led efforts that advocated for the rights of detainees and challenged police brutality, harsh and abusive conditions of incarceration, immigration raids, and the militarization of the Mexico-U.S. border.

Then came 9/11, and the subsequent unleashing of the U.S. government's "war on terror." Building on previous decades of support for immigrant communities, AFSC programs initiated numerous efforts to resist the increased attacks on rights and liberties. Our Immigrant Rights Program in Newark, New Jersey, was one of the first groups in the country to gain access to Arabs and Muslims rounded up by immigration officials and detained as "terrorism" suspects—although no criminal charges were filed. Together with partner organizations, AFSC provided legal rights information to individuals held in county jails and increased their access to representation.

"We met with probably hundreds of people who were detained simply because they were Muslims," recalls Amy Gottlieb, director of the Immigrant Rights Program

at the time who is now the associate director of AFSC's Northeast region. "It was an extraordinary time, a moment when the rest of the country was so focused on punishment that people were not paying attention to the civil liberties issues that immigrants were facing. We also used that

document abuses, provide legal services, and advocate for the end of mass detention and deportation of immigrants and migrants.

We know that peaceful and safe communities are built on foundations of cohesion and inclusion, not xenophobia or seg-

Peaceful and safe communities are built on foundations of cohesion and inclusion, not xenophobia or segregation.

regation. As we partner with communities across the country that are challenging the fear and hate embodied in inhumane immigration policies and the rising tide of Islamophobia, we offer hope—hope that compassion will win out over fear, and that together we can create the open, welcoming communities we all deserve. ■

moment as an opportunity to deepen our work on immigration detention." In 2002, AFSC launched its nationwide Project Voice network and joined with immigrant-led efforts that pushed back against the post-9/11 surge in discrimination and bias. The initiative laid out a strategy and principles for achieving just and humane immigration policies. These principles influence our work today, as we

WHERE I STAND

# What I want from an ally

We asked several AFSC staff members who work on a range of issues for their perspectives on what it means to be an effective ally.



**Sandra Sanchez, Director, Iowa Immigrants' Voice Program**

An effective ally is willing to say "I want to follow your lead, recognizing that I am no expert on your community/issues, but I am willing to learn from you and share anything I might know which you may find helpful." Such allies respect and recognize our own power and wisdom, and meet us wherever we are. They recognize that the entire society and cultural constructs of the majority and those in power in this country have been developed in such a way that it takes true honest allies to open doors and opportunities that otherwise we cannot access alone.



**Joshua Saleem, Director, Peace Education, St. Louis**

Kayla Reed, an organizer here in St. Louis,

uses this acronym for ALLY: Always center the impacted. Listen and learn from those who live in the oppression. Leverage your privilege. Yield the floor.

What's most meaningful for me is that first "L"—listening and learning from those living in the oppression. Earlier this year, I met with a guy from our church—he's white—and he asked me, "What's it like for you to live as a Black man in St. Louis on a day-to-day basis?" That was the first time any white person had ever asked me something like that.

Keep in mind that there was authentic relationship before he asked that question, and I felt comfortable answering it—there are times when that wouldn't be the case. I appreciated that he asked the question because it's important to listen to how people of color move differently in this society, and to acknowledge those differences. I think that's an important initial step in becoming an ally.



**Pedro Rios, Director, U.S.-Mexico Border Program, San Diego**

It's important for allies to acknowledge that affected communities need space to speak for themselves, especially when we're in unequal power relationships. When allies step outside of that space, affected communities can share their truth

and help shape a reality that is inclusive of everyone's lived experience. In our leadership trainings, we encourage those affected to recognize that their story matters and they assert their dignity when they share it. Without their story, somebody else will communicate it for them, and it won't be a genuine reflection of their experience.



**Jerry Elster, Healing Justice Program coordinator, San Francisco**

An ally who is accountable is a treasure for coalitions and campaigns. This is the person who shows up first for meetings and actions. They are the ones who the team usually turns to in a lurch for materials and just come to rely on, especially in emergency situations. They are the person that demands some serious tactical thoughts when planning an action of civil disobedience.

I have witnessed campaigns lose their vigor simply because of such inconsistencies of meetings not starting on time, people not being valued, and countless other ways to say someone has a habit of dropping the ball. Accountability is another treasure for a good ally relationship, and it certainly does not hurt to have a person of substance on your team. ■

# Cyrus Johnson, Jr.

BY WILLIE COLÓN

Cyrus Johnson, Jr., has memories with AFSC that stretch back to childhood, thanks to his parents' many years of service with the organization. One experience during the summer of 1973 still makes him emotional and reminds him of the impact AFSC's work has on people's lives.

Following in his parents' footsteps, Cyrus was volunteering at an AFSC work camp in San Felipe Pueblo Nuevo, Mexico, after his freshman year at college. He and the other Mexican and U.S. college-age volunteers helped expand the village cemetery, repaired latrines and dug new ones, taught sewing and cooking classes, and led recreational activities with children.

The mountainside village was remote, isolated, and mostly ignored, Cyrus says, until the work campers arrived. "The head of

campers. "I told them that I was the only son in my family and they would need me back in North Carolina," he says. "And they accepted that explanation."

But the experience further reinforced his conviction that AFSC's focus on supporting locally led initiatives is the best way to create lasting change. "AFSC really shows what individuals working together with communities can accomplish," he says.

Cyrus's work camp experience formed another chapter in his family's AFSC story—a story that began during World War II. Cyrus Johnson, Sr., was a conscientious objector who discovered Quakers and AFSC, and eventually became a Quaker himself. "He believed that it was everyone's duty to live their life in a way that would improve the status of mankind," Cyrus says.

Cyrus, Sr., and his wife, Lynn, volunteered in a number of AFSC work camps in the 1950s. They also co-led work camps in the '60s, and worked in AFSC's Philadelphia office for a time. They took their two children, Cyrus, Jr. and his sister Beth, everywhere they went. As Lynn Johnson wrote recently for AFSC's Peace Works website: "[AFSC] offered my husband and me the opportunity to make the world a better place."



Above left: Cyrus Johnson, Sr. and Lynn Johnson took part in AFSC work camps in the 1950s and '60s. Photo: AFSC Archives. Above right: Cyrus Johnson, Jr. followed in his parents' footsteps, volunteering with AFSC in Mexico in 1973. Photo: AFSC/Brooke Fritz

the municipality and the district priest came to visit to see what we were doing. The municipality actually sent a bulldozer to improve access and level out a playing field for kids," he says. "Just by our being there, they got more attention."

When it was time for the group to go home, the villagers weren't ready for their young helpers to leave.

"One of the village elders said they had all talked about it and wanted to offer me a corn field if we would stay and help," says Cyrus with a catch in his voice. "They'd give us a corn field because that's all they had. That's how much it meant to those villagers to have us there that summer."

Cyrus, who's now a business attorney in Charlotte, North Carolina, respectfully declined the sincere offer, as did the other work

Cyrus's career has not left him enough time for hands-on involvement with the Service Committee. But as a donor he feels connected to AFSC's global efforts to promote peace with justice and help people improve their lives—efforts that his family contributed to for so many years.

"I love to read about the work AFSC is doing around the world," Cyrus says. "When I started to earn money myself, one of the organizations at the top of my list to support was AFSC."

"Given the forces, the pressures in the world pushing for division and violence as a solution to problems, I think it's important that we support an organization that works to take away the causes of violence," he says. "That's the only long-term solution, in my mind." ■

**"AFSC really shows what individuals working together with communities can accomplish."**

— CYRUS JOHNSON, JR.



SNAPSHOT

## A look at AFSC around the world

In July, AFSC brought together youth filmmakers for the Humanize Not Militarize gathering in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana



Left to right, top to bottom:

1. Hiroshima-Nagasaki vigil, Des Moines.
2. Humanize Not Militarize gathering, Baltimore.
3. Conflict transformation workshop, Guatemala.
4. Humanize Not Militarize gathering, Baltimore.
5. Humanize Not Militarize gathering, Washington, D.C.
6. People's Peace and Justice Convention, Cleveland.
7. People's Peace and Justice Convention, Cleveland.
8. "Countering Islamophobia" town hall meeting, Philadelphia.
9. Repairers of the Breach Revival, Philadelphia.
10. Urban Bush Women's Leadership Institute, Brooklyn.
11. Humanize Not Militarize gathering, Baltimore.
12. Demonstration to end the immigration detention quota, Denver.

Photos: AFSC/Jon Krieg, AFSC/Bryan Vana, AFSC/Miriam Camas, AFSC/Bryan Vana, AFSC/Bryan Vana, AFSC/Northeast Ohio, AFSC/Northeast Ohio, AFSC/Tony Heriza, AFSC/Don Davis, AFSC, AFSC/Bryan Vana, AFSC/Denver



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