AFSC-NH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: OCTOBER 2019 TO NOVEMBER 2020

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR
Maggie Fogarty, Director

This extraordinary and challenging year has given us so many opportunities to build and to be the Beloved Community. In person and through video conferencing, we continued to connect, to learn, to organize, and to do the labor that is required of us to build the world that we want. Together, over these past many months, we declared unapologetically that Black Lives Matter, that no human being is illegal, that everyone deserves to survive and thrive; and we deepened our commitment to live into these truths. Together, we acknowledged that the work of racial justice and immigrant justice and economic justice is OUR work, and that we need to move forward in loving accountability and encouragement to transform ourselves and our world, so that all of us are welcome and safe.

It has been a year of transitions for the AFSC New Hampshire program. We celebrated the remarkable legacy of Arnie Alpert, who retired in June having gifted us with vision, strategy and skills for nonviolent, revolutionary change-making for almost 40 years. We cheered Martin Toe as he completed his nearly two years as our Grassroots Organizer intern, and we hired another shining young adult leader from Concord, Lidia Yen. And we celebrated the arrival to our staff of the magnificent Grace Kindeke.

We are thankful, energized and inspired to be on this journey with each other and with you. Let us continue to care for ourselves as we move together into a new moment.

WELCOME LIDIA!
Grassroots Organizer Intern
Lidia Aloyo Yen is a senior in college studying healthcare administration. She loves playing tennis, binge-watching tv shows, and being involved in the community. She has participated in Change for Concord since 2018 and is passionate about helping to strengthen the community by fostering spaces where young adults can connect and positively impact their communities.

WELCOME GRACE!
Program Coordinator
Grace Kindeke is an artist, dancer, activist, community organizer and a B.A. student of Africana Studies and Sociology at UMASS Boston. Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, she immigrated to the U.S. as a toddler and grew up in NH. She is a passionate advocate for justice and liberation and grounds her work, passions and pursuits in a Black feminist, Afrofuturistic, and anti-oppression practice.

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The 2020 legislative session began with an array of good policy proposals related to family and medical leave, tenant rights, higher wages and other measures which would have improved the lives of New Hampshire families. But the pandemic, the ensuing disruption to regular legislative processes – made more chaotic by politically-motivated disruptions – and a continuous run of vetoes by the governor, meant that most of this good work was lost. AFSC tracked the process and explained the many twists and turns for our State House Watch newsletter readers and on our weekly radio show (at WNHN 94.7 FM) which transitioned from in-studio to Zoom studio, with Arnie serving as our Zoom producer. We also used these tools to share important information about the COVID-19 crisis, the state’s response, and how NH people could access resources and other supports. As she has done since 2013, Susan Bruce was our tireless State House Watch researcher and member of our writing team.

New Hampshire people showed up again and again this past year in solidarity for immigrant justice. In partnership with many faith-based organizations, immigrant community leaders and people of conscience, we called upon our elected leaders to free immigrants from detention, to cut funding for ICE and CBP, to defend the rights of asylum seekers, to protect immigrant families in need of COVID relief, and to enact humane immigration policies. Until mid-March, we continued our interfaith prayer vigils and Jericho walks and our detainee visitation program, and then we adapted to the pandemic shutdown by finding other ways to protect people from detention and deportation. The Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition worked closely with the UCC Immigrant and Refugee Support Group to connect people to quarantine housing and other supports through our congregational host home and support networks. We continued our shared learning about accompaniment, anti-racist organizing and the abolition framework.

It has been a year of inspired activism for Change for Concord (C4C) as members stepped up for Black Lives Matter, advocated for racial equity in Concord schools, hosted cross-cultural dialogues and community-building events, promoted voter engagement and created their first-ever school board candidate forum, all while navigating the economic and social challenges of COVID-19 within their own lives and their community. C4C leaders accumulated experience as rally speakers, panelists, presenters and forum facilitators. Martin Toe’s spirit, creativity, and passion for justice earned him a 2020 Rising Star Award (Civic Leader of the Year) from NH Stay Work Play. Lidia Yen stepped into the AFSC grassroots organizer internship and the C4C lead organizer role in August and has been hard at work building the group’s infrastructure, facilitating weekly meetings, speaking to student groups and coordinating C4C’s response to local issues of concern. Oh, and she’s still a full-time university student (for one more month)!

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**VOTER OUTREACH**

In the weeks leading up to the general election, Grace coordinated voter outreach in the form of a digital information/social media campaign. In collaboration with the ACLU-NH, the NH Campaign for Voting Rights and Manchester Community Action Coalition, and with funding from the New Hampshire Progress Alliance, we designed informative graphics and boosted them on our various social media platforms, targeting New Hampshire voters, younger voters and the communities of Manchester and Concord. Topics included ‘know your voting rights,’ deadlines for requesting and mailing absentee ballots, how to vote safely in person, and what to do if you experience problems exercising your right to vote. One infographic was designed to address a gap in voter knowledge about down-ballot races and the role of local elected officials, and where to find reliable information about candidates’ positions on various issues. These helpful tools were translated into French, Swahili, Spanish and Nepali and distributed throughout the Manchester community.

**ARNIE ALPERT ACTION FUND**

THANK YOU for your tremendous generosity! More than 250 of you made gifts and pledges as part of our campaign to raise $100,000 for the Arnie Alpert Action Fund. Because of you, we surpassed our goal! This fund – which will be spent down over the next five years - will honor Arnie’s legacy by making it possible for us to sustain strong programs, provide paid internships and engage in creative new projects along the way.

**FAREWELL TO ARNIE**

For nearly four decades, Arnie Alpert helped build movements for justice, peace and equality in New Hampshire. As his retirement approached, friends, colleagues, faith leaders, elected officials, and former interns expressed deep gratitude for Arnie’s dedicated leadership of campaigns – for the nuclear freeze, for the Martin Luther King, Jr. state holiday, for the abolition of the death penalty - as well as for his trainings and practice of active non-violence and “bird-dogging;” his songwriting, story-telling and street theatre; and for always showing up in support of a worthy cause. Arnie was honored to receive the “Granite Service Award” from Keene State College at their 2020 commencement ceremony, and also the “Work of the People Award” from the New Hampshire Council of Churches.
The NH Program does most of our work in collaboration with others through coalitions and informal networks. In the past year, we have worked closely with the UCC Immigrant and Refugee Support Group, ACLU-NH, Indonesian Community Support, UU Action NH, the Granite State Organizing Project, United Valley Interfaith Project, Black Lives Matter NH, Manchester Community Action Coalition, Rights & Democracy NH, Kent Street Coalition, NH Youth Movement, 350NH.org, Never Again Action NH, NH Peace Action, NH Council of Churches, Open Democracy, the Union of Concerned Scientists and many more. AFSC has been convening the statewide Immigrant Rights Network since November of 2016.

We are part of GSOP, the NH Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the NH Alliance for a Moral Economy, the NH Immigrant Solidarity Network, the Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition, NH Voices of Faith, the NH Poor People's Campaign, Housing Action NH and the Martin Luther King Coalition. The Nuclear Weapons Working Group is jointly sponsored by AFSC and NH Peace Action. Our “State House Watch” radio show is produced and broadcast from WNHN-LP.