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Committee

NH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

OCTOBER 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2021

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Maggie Fogarty, Director



Photo Credit: Cheryl Senter

“Everything worthwhile is done with others.” (Moussa Kaba, father of Mariame Kaba, abolitionist organizer and movement leader)

Dear friends and supporters of AFSC,

Warm greetings at the close of a year full of inspiration, creativity and persistence in a time of grief, extremism, and precariousness.

As I write this letter, I am thinking about collective liberation and our movement family in New Hampshire – with its leaders of all ages, backgrounds and life experiences, and our various but inter-related priorities. I’m feeling awe and gratitude for this community and for what AFSC contributes to this reality.

As active leaders in the movement for racial, social and economic justice in New Hampshire, AFSC’s work is to seek and tell the truth, to conspire with impacted people to bring justice and healing to our communities, and to imagine and build a world where everyone can thrive. It is sacred work, and it is relational work, because without each other, we simply would not have the power and love that we need to stay in this struggle for a better world.

Amid the many reasons to be heartbroken and demoralized right now, there is also beauty. There’s the growing leadership of young, Black, Indigenous and People of Color community members who bring compelling analysis and clear-eyed demands for change. There are the exciting conversations underway about how an abolitionist framework can transform our systems of community safety and well-being. And there’s the creativity and tenacity of organizers continuing to inspire people to action for positive change, even as the pandemic limits our capacity to be together.

AFSC’s work in New Hampshire – as catalysts, advocates and community-builders - is an expression of our belief in collective liberation as the only way forward if our people and our planet are going to survive and thrive. This vision – that the struggles for justice and peace are interconnected, and that we have to work together to create the world that we want – guides our work and feeds our spirits so that we can continue.

It is good to be in this work with you.

GRATITUDE FOR SUSAN BRUCE

We lost a treasure this past year when Susan Bruce passed away suddenly in mid-June. As our State House Watch researcher and co-writer for the past 9 years, Susan infused our state legislative reporting and analysis with her brilliance, her sense of history and her cleverness. In addition to State House Watch news, Susan left her mark at Concord’s community radio station, WNHN, at the Conway Daily Sun, and in the hearts of all of us who loved her and labored with her for a better New Hampshire.



Courtesy Photo



Photo Credit: Arnie Alpert

ABOLITION & HEALING JUSTICE

Early in the year, we hired our first Decarceration Organizer Intern to advance our work to end state violence by organizing community members who have been directly impacted by the carceral system. Anthony Harris joined us in March, bringing his direct experience, energy, and community connections. Over the summer, we joined the New England Coalition for Clemency as part of the #FreeHer campaign led by the National Council for Incarcerated & Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls. Our goal with this work is to uplift the experiences of incarcerated women and girls, highlight the impact of incarceration on families and children, and find ways to free people from prisons and jails. In May, we organized a #FreeThemAll car rally and in August, a Quilting for Clemency event and a Clemency Now Rally at the State House. We utilized the momentum of these events to widen our Abolition Circle meetings into an Abolition Network, where we gather monthly to build relationships with partners across the state, deepen our analysis, and collaborate for justice in different parts of the criminal legal system and the immigration detention system.

AT THE STATE HOUSE

The 2021 state legislative session was a difficult and demoralizing one, marked by persistent defiance of common sense public health protocols and extremist and harmful policy proposals which were signed into law, despite record numbers of New Hampshire residents registering their opposition via online public hearings. Outcomes include a school voucher program that is rapidly defunding public education, censorship of teachers, erosion of reproductive rights, and tax breaks for the wealthiest Granite Staters. Amid these losses, we celebrate that 'Right to Work' (for less) was defeated again this year by a powerful alliance of labor and faith leaders united for worker rights and well-being.

2022 promises more challenges, as well as more opportunities to raise our voices for the well-being of all New Hampshire residents. We welcome Anne Saunders to our team as a researcher and writer for our State House Watch newsletter.



Photo Credit: Grace Kindeke



Photo Credit: Arnie Alpert

NH CAMPAIGN FOR A PEOPLE'S BUDGET

Starting in late February, AFSC organized with many partners to create the NH Campaign for a People's Budget, a robust, multi-stakeholder coalition advocating for the state budget that New Hampshire people deserve – one that “invests in our communities’ health, education, recovery, opportunity and vitality.” Acting from our shared values of justice, dignity and sustainability, we used every opportunity during the budget negotiations to uplift our vision for an equitable, compassionate society where everyone can thrive. Hundreds gathered at the State House on June 24 to show support for the People's Budget, building power and connections for next steps.

ORGANIZING FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE



Photo Credit: Esmeldy Angeles

The movement for immigrant justice in New Hampshire continues to grow! This past year, NH people were organized and persistent in our advocacy for a pathway to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants and an end to detention and deportation. In October, Lidia and Grace traveled to DC with the We Are Home campaign, joining eight other immigrant leaders from NH to deliver these urgent messages to our Members of Congress and to call upon them to become champions for humane immigration policy. We facilitated monthly meetings of the NH Immigrant Rights Network to share policy updates and analysis, and to collaborate for impactful advocacy. We also worked closely this year with the Philadelphia-based Familias Separadas project to create a public art installation of large banners featuring two African asylum seekers who live in the Seacoast area. The banners were displayed at Dover Friends Meeting until November. At the close of the exhibit, we hosted *Umokuumani*, a celebration of Black & African immigrants in NH. For the 4th year in a row, we co-hosted the Immigrant Solidarity Walk in September, walking for three days with community partners and interfaith allies from Manchester to the Strafford County jail in Dover to raise awareness of the importance of acting locally to protect immigrant communities with solidarity, accompaniment and humane immigration policy. Onward!



The Familias Separadas Banners featuring G and Mark, two local African immigrant community members seeking asylum in the US.

Photo Credit: Michelle Angela



Gorgeous models featured in the fashion show for "Umokuumani," our November community event celebrating Black and African immigrants in NH.

Photo Credit: Felipe Salas-Ogilvie

CHANGE FOR CONCORD

Young adults in Concord, organized as Change for Concord and led by AFSC's Lidia Yen, engaged in multiple actions for racial and economic justice this year, including energetic opposition to censorship legislation, support for a pathway to citizenship and for welcoming Afghan people to New Hampshire, promoting equity in the Concord school district, and advocating for good state policy including paid sick leave and higher wages. Change for Concord members contributed to an important win in November, helping to convince the Concord City Council to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. We are delighted that Lidia is now doing a second year as our Grassroots Organizer intern; we know that she will find many more opportunities to put her passion, intelligence and organizing skills into action for the greater good.



Photo Credit: Lidia Yen



*Top row (left to right): Emelyne Adios, Margaret Hawthorn, Lina Shayo, Asma Elhuni, Lindsay Dearborn (clerk)
Bottom row (left to right): Kesaya Noda, Candace Cole-McCrea, Jan Armstrong, Anne Saunders, Ginny Cole*

THANK YOU FROM OUR SUPPORT COMMITTEE!

The Support Committee and staff of the NH Program give sincere thanks to all the donors and volunteers who made our work possible this past year.

Our funders include The Clowes Fund, the Anne Slade Frey Charitable Trust, NH Progress Alliance, and the NH Charitable Foundation, including the “You Have Our Trust” fund.

Please visit our website for more information and to make a donation.

SO MANY PARTNERS!

The NH Program does most of our work in collaboration with others through coalitions and informal networks, and this year was no exception. We are thankful for our longstanding partnerships as well as new relationships, and the many opportunities to work together for the greater good.

AFSC-NH convenes the NH Immigrant Rights Network, the Campaign for a People's Budget, the NH Abolition Network, Change for Concord and the NH Host Home Network. We coordinate NH Voices of Faith; we co-lead the NH Immigrant Visitation Program; and we are active in the NH Alliance for a Moral Economy, the Manchester Community Action Coalition, the Immigrant Solidarity Network, the Faith & Labor Coalition, the RENEWS Coalition, and the Martin Luther King Coalition.

Our “State House Watch” radio show is produced and broadcast from WNHN-LP, 94.7 FM in Concord.

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