

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
CITLALY MORA

MAY/JUNE 2017



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Area Office of the Carolinas



We've
moved!

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JUANA IS WELCOMED INTO SANCTUARY AS DEPORTATIONS HIT HOME

The past few months have been difficult for immigrant families who have been anxious and fearful of whatever next steps the Trump Administration takes. Undocumented families in particular, have been hit hard. There has been an increase of 40% in arrests of undocumented immigrants. During the last week of May, Wendy Miranda Fernandes, a Central American young woman, was deported after a long struggle to stay in the US. In the NC Triad area, two families have decided the fight the deportations of loved ones.

One of them is Nestor Marchi, a Brazilian native who has resided in the United States for over two decades. Despite having no criminal record and a health condition that is fatal without regular treatments, Nestor was ordered to leave the country. His son Andy Marchi, who works for the City of Greensboro Fire Department, has been very outspoken and continues to advocate for his father to stay in Greensboro. After advocates and community members petitioned ICE, he was granted just a 3 month stay. Advocates and his family continue to work on getting his removal order canceled.

Keep this North Carolina grandmother with her family



TAKE ACTION
tiny.cc/JuanaShouldStay
#JuanaShouldStay #Not1More



Another story that made national headlines is the one of Juana Tobar Ortega, a mother and grandmother residing in Asheboro with her family. AFSC has led the effort to support Juana and organize to stop her deportation. Juana fled violence in Guatemala

more than two decades ago. Despite being married to a US citizen and living in the US for 24 years, ICE ordered her to leave the country by May 31st. Juana had applied for asylum, but the process was revoked after she left the country due

to her daughter being seriously ill back in Guatemala. During her yearly check in last month, ICE informed Juana she would no longer be allowed to stay.

Dozens of supporters accompanied Juana to the ICE office in Charlotte when she reported for her check-in. Unfortunately the stay of removal was denied and her deportation order for May 31st was upheld.

On Wednesday, May 31, the same day she was due to board a plane for Guatemala, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Greensboro opened its doors and offered sanctuary to Juana. Wednesday morning at 10am a press conference was held at the church, where over 100 supporters gathered to welcome Juana in the first Sanctuary congregation in the Southeast. An hour later, supporters accompanied Juana's family to Senator Thom Tillis' office as they requested Sen. Tillis to intervene in her case.

How can you help?

- Sign the petition at <http://tiny.cc/JuanaShouldStay>
- Call Sen. Tillis' office to ask him to support her case by urging ICE to grant a stay: (202) 224-6342
- If you are local to Greensboro and want to support the family, fill out the form at <http://tiny.cc/juanasupport> or call AFSC 336-854-0633 for details.

-Citlaly
Mora,
AFSC
Intern



THE TRIAD UNITES FOR MAY DAY AND JOSE CHARLES



An informal coalition of immigrant and refugee organizations, non-profits, and local racial justice and political organizations came together across the North Carolina Triad region in order to plan a series of events around International Worker's

Day under the name Triad Unite. The Triad consists of three major cities, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point, all of which share in a radical working class history, from the large chapter of the Black Panther Party in Winston-Salem, the Greensboro sit ins and student movement at the HBCU North Carolina A&T in Greensboro, to the labor struggle in High Point's now vanished textile industry.

Among the over 20 organizations who endorsed the events were the American Friends Service Committee, Church World Service, the North Carolina African Service Coalition, Million Hoodies, The Winston Salem Sanctuary Coalition and the ISO branches in both Greensboro and Winston-Salem. Through a series of organizing meetings, the coalition established a statement outlining points of unity centered on solidarity in the struggle for worker power, refugee and immigrant justice, racial equity, LGBTQ rights, and transparency and accountability in government. All of these issues have reached a high pitch of urgency nationwide as a result of the far-right agenda of the Trump administration and Republican majority in congress, but are particularly acute in North Carolina.

Triad Unite and its member organizations planned several events emphasizing the need for community building and solidarity while also raising awareness of important local struggles. On Saturday, April 29th, Protect GSO, a group seeking to expand the definition of Sanctuary in the "Gate City" led the efforts in organizing "The People's Picnic", an afternoon full of food, music, and games that allowed for people from across the city to come together and share a meal, participate in group activities, and learn about what various groups in the area are doing. Participants were able to learn about the work being done by groups such as the PB project (participatory budgeting), Protect GSO, Food Not Bombs, and GSO Operation Transparency which has been doing powerful work around police accountability.

On Monday, May 1st, despite the rain, over a hundred people

came together for a rally that celebrated a radical history of resistance and called attention to our present struggles. The event brought together speakers from various groups and organizations to talk about the issues impacting their communities and how their struggles were intertwined.



The rally was interrupted by an emergency press conference concerning Jose Charles, a sixteen-year old being charged with "assaulting a police officer" after he was brutalized by the cops, according to his mother. Lindy Garnette, Executive Director of the Greensboro YCWA and member of the Police Citizen Review Board, announced her resignation from the board after being pressured by city officials for publically supporting Jose and his mother, Tamara Figueroa. On May 11th, Jose Charles' charges of assaulting a police officer were dropped.

Following the press conference and the rally, community members were invited for a community dinner at the Beloved Community Center. The meal was an opportunity to break bread together, reflect on the happenings of a powerful day, and continue visioning a better, more just, and healthier world for all.

-Juan Miranda, Community Organizer & AFSC Volunteer



Picture of May Day People's Picnic. Courtesy of Carol Newsome

BUILDING FLOATS FOR PEACE

Another important piece of the vibrant AFSC centennial celebration is well underway, led by AFSC intern and Guilford College graduate Tawanna Maryland. The project, called “Waging Peace: Youth Share”, is bringing together elementary and middle-school aged students with young artist mentors to design a parade float that embodies their perceptions and hopes for peace and justice in our world.

Tawanna was motivated to start this particular project by the idea that a float could serve as a “movable stage with a message” that kids would have the opportunity to create themselves, rather than passively watch pass by in a parade. Throughout March and April, Tawanna and five committed volunteer artists visited three refugee and immigrant majority communities in Greensboro. As she watched the students share their thoughts on peace, Tawanna described being “amazed at how eager they were to draw their own pictures.”

The consultant artists stepped in to ensure that their group’s voice was collaborative and assisted in helping capture what they were sharing into visual art.

With all the designs finished and published online, the youth voted to determine the winning design, which will be made into a full-sized parade float and entered in parades throughout the coming months. Although the project is far from finished, its first stages have been a success, challenging students from diverse backgrounds to explore the topics of ‘peace’ and ‘sanctuary’ in a truly welcoming and creative setting.



-Milena Wuerth, AFSC Intern

5th ANNUAL UNDOCUGRADUATION TAKES PLACE



By the time the sun was rising on Wednesday May 17th, I was on my way to Raleigh with over a dozen courageous Latinx students from Greensboro and High Point. We were attending the 5th annual Undocugraduation, where we planned to participate in a mock diploma ceremony and speak one-on-one with our representatives about tuition equity.

While all representatives whom my students spoke to, applauded our students for participating in the legislative process, their overall reactions and responses were as bipolar as our national politics. The representatives who seemed to understand the narratives and experiences of our youth the most, expressed serious concerns for the political environment that students are living in and committed to doing everything in their power to protect them.

Other representatives gave a response that is all too familiar to those who have been in this fight for years, a response that acknowledges that our students have a right to speak up while at the same time favoring other voices over theirs. Some of our local representatives remarked that in order for tuition equity to become a reality, the business sector has to be advocating alongside our students for tuition equity.

Sometimes it is easy to become so infused into our national politics, that we do not realize that the same realities and anti-immigrant rhetoric are found all over our state.

Although our students did not receive support from all of our representatives, it was left clear that it is time to hold both our representatives and business owners accountable.

The voice of undocumented students matter. Their education matters. It is time that we listen to them as a state and put their voices at the forefront of more community spaces.

-Kelly Morales, YWCA High Point



FEDERAL BUDGET ON IMMIGRATION: THE GOOD AND THE BAD



Congress has reached an agreement to fund the federal government through the end of this fiscal year, avoiding a government shutdown. The proposal is clearly a compromise between the Trump administration, various factions of Congressional Republicans, and Congressional Democrats. On issues related to immigration, there's both good and bad news.

U.S.-Mexico Border

The good news: The final appropriations bill includes less funding for border enforcement and militarization than was requested by the Trump administration. This is thanks to intense public pressure on both Democrats and Republicans. The administration had asked for \$3 billion in additional funding for the Department of Homeland Security, and Congress approved only \$1.5 billion. The bulk of the difference is at the border.

The bad news: Despite Democratic rhetoric, this bill does include additional funding for border walls. They're conveniently called "pedestrian barriers," but pedestrian barriers are physical barriers intended to keep migrants from crossing the border. The expansion of these barriers will cause even more migrant deaths as people fleeing violence and poverty in their home countries are forced to travel through harsher terrain.

What's more, the appropriations bill includes other funding for further border militarization, including \$65 million to speed up the hiring of additional Border Patrol agents and \$170 million for additional technology along the border. Although the \$65 million doesn't pay for additional agents, it does pay for changes

to hiring practices in preparation for the additional funding for more agents that U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) anticipates in the following year. The continued militarization of our border terrorizes border communities and fails to address the lack of accountability for horrific abuses committed by CBP agents.

Detention

The good news: The detention quota—an inhumane federal policy that AFSC and our partners have along with partners have worked for years to abolish—has been eliminated. The detention quota required Immigration and Customs Enforcement to maintain spaces to detain 34,000 immigrants on a nightly basis, and for many years, was a driver of the mass detention of immigrants in the U.S.

The bad news: The bill provides funding to detain well above the number of immigrants that the quota required. In fact, it provides funding for ICE to detain 39,324 immigrants each day across the U.S. For much of the last year, the number of people held in detention exceeded the quota, recently averaging between 40,000 and 42,000 people per day.

Although we've eliminated the quota as a driver for detention, Congress is now handing over funding to allow the administration to keep detaining thousands of immigrants, ripping apart families and lining the pockets of the for-profit prison corporations that own most ICE detention centers.

Interior Enforcement

The good news: Despite Republican attempts, the bill does not pull funding from or otherwise punish sanctuary cities. Nor does it limit Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which helps young people who came to the U.S. as children avoid deportation and obtain employment authorization.

The bad news: The bill maintains the outrageously high funding levels for immigration enforcement. Immigration detention and deportation destroys communities, rips apart families, violates due process rights, and often sends people back to situations of dire poverty and extreme violence.

It also unfortunately maintains funding for E-Verify. Employment verification systems like E-Verify lead to exploitation of workers and a permanent divide in the workforce. To compound those problems, E-Verify has been plagued with errors and problems. Continuing this program will perpetuate existing workplace discrimination and lead to more labor violations.

The bottom line? This bill could have been much worse. The fact that it's not is due to intense public pressure rejecting the Trump administration's plan to build a wall on the southern border. Thank you to everyone who took action and contacted their member of Congress!

However, this compromise bill also clearly demonstrates the dangers of focusing only on the border wall. Though that piece of the president's budget proposal was rejected, the administration still won \$1.5 billion more for an already bloated and deadly immigration detention and deportation machine.

This is why we at AFSC will continue to oppose any funding for border militarization or immigration detention or enforcement. We need to keep up the pressure on both Republicans and Democrats to reject the administration's xenophobic rhetoric that says we need to keep immigrants out. Instead we must work toward humane policies that respect the rights and dignity of all.

—Kathryn Johnson, Policy Impact Coordinator
AFSC's Office for Public Policy and Advocacy