



## Focus on: AFSC New Orleans Project

April-June 2010

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The AFSC - New Orleans Peace Building and Economic Justice Project focuses on organizing as a tool for community empowerment utilizing conflict resolution skills to achieve economic justice and a reduction in community violence, and is grounded in the principles of self-help and collaboration. We will work with key stakeholders and social movements to mobilize challenges to militarism and war. Our work is city-wide, but is rooted in the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward and the Desire/Florida community in the 9<sup>th</sup>

## AFSC - New Orleans Peace Building and Economic Justice Project

### Farmer's Market in New Orleans' 7th Ward



By 9 am on Saturday morning April 3, volunteers were busy cleaning and setting up at Hunter's Field, the site of the initial farmer's market in the historic 7<sup>th</sup> Ward. Tables were set up for the fresh vegetables and soon bell peppers, fresh strawberries, greens and okra arrived.

Next vendors, including a nutrition class from Delgado Community College arrived. The nutrition class prepared a stir fry dish on site made with fresh vegetables and sea food.

Other vendors sold art pieces and clothing. Women from the community came to sell Easter baskets. A DJ came to play music.

A trickle of customers began to arrive. Animated discussions about the lack of shopping opportunities and the continued closure of Circle Food Store ensued. We talked to the customers about plans to hold monthly markets and enlisted their help to spread the word. Many said they would be sure to tell their neighbors and would return themselves.

This first event was

revealing and a learning experience for the partnership between AFSC and the Renaissance Project. We realize we made some mistakes—not enough signage and our failure to call upon local church congregations for their support. Our volunteers enjoyed the experience and many will return. We saw promise in the format and location and believe that the monthly Farmer's Market will become a success, if so it can become weekly. We are discussing preparing a weekly produce box that can be purchased in the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward.



### Quaker Workcamps Group Visits New Orleans

"Once I started talking about Katrina, I was flooded with good and bad memories for the rest of the night," is what UNO Graduate Student Lauren Bennett had to say about sharing her Katrina story with the Washington Workcamps group from D.C. Lauren was one of 3 collegiate volunteers that shared their story with the group of about 17 teenagers seeking the human interest stories behind their alternatives spring break work in New Orleans. Greg Woods contacted

the AFSC New Orleans office in early February seeking our help with organizing a meaningful dialogue for his students about our work in New Orleans infused with the unique Katrina stories of young New Orleanians. It was his hope to expose his students to the grass roots stories and programs going on 4 years after Katrina. We believe that this goal was met.

The evening began with dinner prepared by a group of the teenage volunteers. During

dinner, 3 collegiate volunteers told their Katrina stories. The volunteers were: Lauren Bennett from the University of New Orleans, Antoinette Spillers from Delgado Community College, and Domonique Smith from Dillard University.



The New Orleans Peace Building & Conflict Resolution Project is focused on developing youth leadership skills and preparing area youth to be agents of change in all areas of violence. We recognize that our youth are our most powerful asset. We work to educate them about alternative career choices to the military, human rights issues, the power of the arts, conflict management resources and community organizing methods. Every young person must be equipped with the tools to make informed decisions about their lives. Investing these skills in our young people will increase the betterment of our communities and decrease the impact of violence.

*Ahmané Glover, New Orleans Project Community Activist*

**New Orleans Project Area Office**  
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**Malcolm Suber, Project Director**

**Ahmané Glover, Community Activist**

**Alice Lovelace, Associate Regional Director**

## New Orleans Area Office

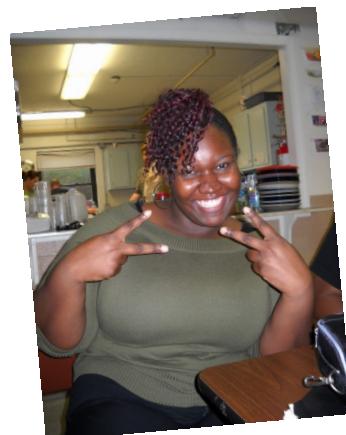
### Get to know Ahmané Glover, Community Activist

#### Why I love the “Big Easy”

There's no place in the world like New Orleans. I moved here in 2004 to attend Loyola University and it has felt like home ever since. The rich culture of the city comes alive with the relentless spirit of its people. When friends come to visit me and are reluctant to return home, I tell them my favorite quote about New Orleans from local journalist Chris Rose, "We dance even if there's no radio. We second line at funerals. We talk too much & laugh too loud & live too large, and, frankly, we're suspicious of others who don't."

I have worked at several nonprofits since I've been here. The most recent one was HandsoN New Orleans, an organization focused on rebuilding homes and communities in the city after Hurricane Katrina. All of my experiences in New Orleans have led me to my current job with the American Friends Service Committee. I believe that the peace building and economic justice goals of our AFSC project speak directly to the issues of violence and poverty that I've seen natives struggling with throughout my time here. I know that this community is on the verge of making huge systematic changes and its' refreshing to be a part

of the process. It's true that New Orleanians have a distinct way of dealing with our problems, because when life gives you lemons here-we make daiquiris! That's why I love the “Big Easy.”



#### Pick up Your Peace

Youth organizers lead a New Orleans style peace social forum and second line with a touch of jazz. On Saturday March 27th from 9am to 6pm, youth organizers from the local social justice group, the New Orleans Overcomers, led their second Pick up Your Peace Social Forum at Math and Science High School.

Youth leaders from Atlanta, Mississippi, and Alabama came down to participate in the forum. Around every corner at Math and Science High School, you could find a variety of discussions and workshops on anything from education equality to analyzing community structures.

In true New Orleans style, every break from the workshops was filled with artistic performances. Two young men who met for the first time at the forum, combined the melodic strings of the violin with the

funky sound of the guitar on a couple of impromptu songs meant to inspire youth with their social justice concerns. You could feel the inspiration flowing when the poets and singers from the group jumped in to add the lyrics to this jam session. One young poet took us on a journey with his recollections about the injustice of Hurricane Katrina while another young man explained that he had this woman named, Justice, and he used to love her.

The social forum ended with a one hour debrief that allowed the youth to brainstorm ways to continue these positive actions and connect for a workshop at the 2010 U.S. Social Forum in Detroit. There were 50 youth participants, 8 youth organizers from the New Orleans Overcomers, and 12 adult participants.

On Sunday March 28th from 1-3pm, the New Orleans Over-



comers held a Peace Second Line as a finale to the social forum. The second line marched from the Treme Community Center in the 7th Ward neighborhood, around the community and back to the center. Forty-five counter recruitment youth organizers from the AFSC Chicago office were in town for a visit and came by to participate in the demonstration. There were approximately 28 local high school students in attendance.

The American Service Committee New Orleans Project co-sponsored and helped plan and facilitate these events.



Residents of the Florida community in the 9th Ward attend an AFSC Focus Group meeting.



### Pick Up Your Peace Youth led workshop

### Recommended Reading

Coming this Summer from Haymarket Press:

#### Floodlines: Community and Resistance from Katrina to the Jena Six

By Jordan Flaherty  
With an introduction by Democracy Now host Amy Goodman—And a forward by civil rights attorney Tracie Washington

*Floodlines* is a firsthand account of community, culture, and resistance in New Orleans in the years before and after Katrina. The book weaves the interconnected stories of Mardi Gras Indians, Arab and Latino immigrants, public housing residents, gay rappers, spoken word poets, victims of police brutality, out of town volunteers, and grassroots activists. From post-Katrina evacuee camps, to torture testimony at Angola Prison, to organizing with the family members of the Jena Six, *Floodlines* tells the stories behind the headlines, from an unforgettable time and place in history.

## New Orleans Area Office

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### Fresh food, obesity and poor health in New Orleans

Louisiana's rates of obesity and obesity-related diabetes and heart disease are among the highest in the US. They are among the leading killers of our time, and are affecting not just adults, but increasingly children as well. Nearly 1/3 of all children in this country are overweight or obese.

Obesity results from people consuming more calories than they burn. Healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables, are high in nutrients and low in salt, fat and calories. Thus, access to fresh healthy food is vital to

reversing the obesity epidemic.

But healthy foods are often more expensive and less available than less notorious foods, especially for low income families. Nationwide, research shows that people in low-income areas have significantly less access to healthy foods than their more affluent neighbors. These low-income areas are the same areas with the highest rate of diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

Access to fresh produce was inadequate in inner-city New

Orleans prior to Hurricane Katrina, since then availability has only gotten worse. At Present, only 18 supermarkets have reopened out of 36 which existed before the storm. Pre-Katrina there were 12,000 residents per supermarket. Today, there are 18,000 residents per supermarket.

That is why AFSC is partnering with the Renaissance Project to bring a monthly farmer's market to the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward, making it possible to bring fresh produce at a reasonable cost to inner city

### Get to know Malcolm Suber, New Orleans Project Director

I moved to New Orleans in 1978 to take a job as an assistant professor of political science at Xavier University. I left Xavier after one year, but by that time I had fallen in love with the people and culture of New Orleans. People here are warm and invite you into their homes and introduce to their entire family. I fell in love with the food. I also embraced the brass band music and the second lines. To see and feel the spirit at a second line on Sunday afternoon is quite an experience. It is equal parts spectacle—the way the social and pleasure clubs dress up for their parade; and release—the way the second line dancers seem to be on another plane with their moves and gyrations.

In my spare time I like to read and I like to go to clubs and parties and dance the night away.

The tragedy of New Orleans is that it is a very poor city where the poor and working class are treated savagely. I immediately became a champion and brother in their fight for freedom and justice. This is a battle that I still fight today. That is why I was attracted to the AFSC, an organization with a long history of fighting for the oppressed.



I was a student in a 1965 AFSC summer program in South Carolina where they prepared the first cohort of students to integrate local schools.



Photo: A snapshot of the New Orleans youth who attend the 2nd youth organized "Pick Up Your Peace" social forum at the Math & Science Charter School on March 27th. The event was sponsored by the youth group New Orleans Overcomers and co-sponsored by AFSC.

# AFSC South East Regional Office Calendar

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**Atlanta Regional Office**  
189A Sams Street  
Decatur, GA 30030  
404-373-7410

**May 1-2:** Tabling at the Human Right Festival

**May 7:** Dinner and Discussion at Wonder-Root, "Be the Change" is the topic. 7:30pm

**June 8:** Dinner and Discussion at Wonder-Root, 7:30pm

**June 23-29:** Tim Franzen facilitating a workshop @ 2nd USSF entitled, "demilitarizing your campus".

**July 13:** Dinner and Discussion at Wonder-Root, 7:30pm

**School Career Alternative Project (SCAP)**  
weekly potluck/planning meetings each Wed at 6:30pm, Atlanta AFSC office. All are welcomed.

**Miami, Florida Office**  
111 N.E. 1st Street 3rd Floor  
Miami, Florida 33132  
305.600.5441

**May 8:** Free TPS Clinic. Golden Gate, Florida

**May 15:** Free TPS Clinic, Homestead, Florida, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., Evangelique Chretienne Unie Church

**May 16:** Palm Beach County Quakers Meeting House, Lake Worth, FL, "AFSC Work and Haitian TPS work in Miami", 10:00 a.m.

**Weekly Creole Radio Program** hosted by Paul Mondesir May 4, 11, 18, 25 and June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Tete Ensemble Radio Station, 1580 AM, [www.radioteteensemble.net](http://www.radioteteensemble.net)

**Greensboro, North Carolina Office**

6306 W. Market St.  
Greensboro, NC. 27409  
Phone: 336-854-0633

**April-10-July every Saturday,** Immigrant/Refugee movie making class

**Friday 5/7, Winston-Salem, 10:30am-1:30pm:** 2010 March on RJ Reynolds Shareholders' Meeting in support of justice for tobacco pickers and farm workers. Meet at Loyd Presbyterian Church, 748 N. Chestnut St. 27101.

**Saturday 5/8, Greensboro, 10am-2pm:** Human Rights Abuse Documentation Training: Learn how to document abuses in your community. Register in advance: <http://tinyurl.com/y7fna43>. FREE. Contact AFSC, 336-854-0633 or Rebecca Fontaine, [rebecca@southerncoalition.org](mailto:rebecca@southerncoalition.org).

**Thurs.5/20, Charlotte, 6-8pm:** Charlotte Immigrant Solidarity Committee, Charlotte Friends Meetinghouse, 571 Rocky River Rd. West, Charlotte, 28213. Info, 336-854-0633.

**Mon. 5/24, Durham, 6:30pm:** Durham Immigrant Solidarity Committee, Durham Friends Meetinghouse, 404 Alexander Ave. Durham 27705. Info, 336-854-0633.

**New Orleans Project Area Office**

1137 Baronne Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
504.565.3596

**Second Saturday of Each Month – May 8; June 12; and July10. 11am – 3 pm.** Farmers' Market will be held at Hunters Field Corner of St. Bernard and N. Claiborne.

## An interview with Greg Williams, Washington Quaker Workcamps, Inc.

### **Greg Williams talks about his New Orleans experience, March 27, 2010.**

**Q:** What is the goal of your trip?

**A:** The goal of the trip was, one, to learn more about what happened during Hurricane Katrina and the recovery effort afterwards in New Orleans and, two, to assist in the effort. Right now New Orleans is out of the news headlines, but the recovery work is still happening.

**Q:** Why did you want someone to talk to the group about their Katrina experience?

**A:** I wanted to have the high school students hear from young people about their experiences, so the students could relate to the speakers more because the students are closer in age to the speakers. The young women were in their first year of college when Hurricane Katrina struck and these high school students are only a couple years away from entering college.

**Q:** What did you learn from the Katrina experience discussion?

**A:** Even though New Orleans still needs a lot of physical help, the New Orleanians I have met are strong and resilient, especially the three speakers. I thought it was great that all three young women decided to come back to New Orleans to finish their college degrees and continue to live in the city after their graduations.

**Q:** What work do you feel still needs to be done in N.O.?

**A:** Obviously, a lot of physical rebuilding work still needs to be done in poorer areas of the city. At the same time a lot of residents haven't returned yet, so neighborhoods are still not altogether, even if the physical structures are all rebuilt. In addition, I heard several residents talk about lingering emotional scars. I cannot imagine what residents have been through over the last four and half years.

**Q:** What do you like most about New Orleans?

**A:** I love the people, the food, and the culture. Washington DC is an intense city where

everyone has busy and overwhelming schedules, so I enjoyed being in the laid-back culture of New Orleans.

**Q:** How would you like to contribute to the work being done in New Orleans?

**A:** The high school students really felt like they accomplished a lot and I think just returning each year and letting the New Orleans community know that they are not forgotten and groups are still committed to working alongside them in rebuilding the city.

**Washington Quaker Workcamps, Inc.** offers opportunities for community service which seek to address social concerns in concrete ways. All weekend workcamps strive to bring together people who might not otherwise find ways of bridging differences of race, religion, or economic circumstance. All workcamps are open to individuals and groups, 9th grade and above. Workcamps are generally limited to a maximum of 15 participants. For more information see <http://william pennhouse.org/?q=workcamps>

## FOCUS ON FLORIDA: Meet Paul-Andre Mondesir (Quaker Action PAGE 7)

Haitian Community Social Advocate Paul-Andre Mondesir has worked with AFSC since 2006. The January earthquake in Haiti stepped up his work with Haitian and other immigrants throughout south Florida. The disaster finally brought Temporary Protective Status (TPS) to Haitians. Paul-Andre explains the situation here:

**Q:** Can you describe the Haitian immigrant community in Florida?

**A:** About 350,000 Haitians live in South Florida, more than 40 percent of whom are naturalized citizens. Because many work in construction and the service industries, the economic downturn has hurt them badly. Ten years ago, their median household income was \$28,000, but it dropped to \$10,000 in 2008.

**Q:** What are remittances and how do they help Haitians in their country?

**A:** No matter what their income, Haitian immigrants send home payments called remittances that have sustained life for literally millions of families in Haiti, where the jobless

rate is about 70 percent. Those families use the money for day-to-day expenses such as rent and food, and to pay school fees. Haitians in the U.S. send an average \$100 million monthly.

**Q:** Three days after the Jan. 12 earthquake, the INS granted Temporary Protective Status (TPS) to undocumented Haitians living in the U.S. What does TPS mean for them?

**A:** This welcome and overdue change as meant less stress and fear. For the first time, after five, 10, even 20 years, these people have a transitory legal status which means they can work openly, pay bills and easily send money to Haiti.

**Q:** How has AFSC worked with Haitian immigrants in the past and how did you incorporate TPS into the program?

**A:** We've focused on educating them about their rights, tapping into a large network of pastors in different cities. Staff conducted community meetings and started a weekly radio show in Creole. We taught peace and reconciliation programs not only in Miami,

Homestead and Fort Lauderdale, but also in smaller cities such as Fort Myers, Naples, and Immokalee. After the staggering impact of four cyclones in 2008, AFSC incorporated TPS information into our outreach. We formed a coalition including an attorney, a Catholic priest, a member of the Haitian media, and community activists.

**Q:** How much of your time these days is spent on TPS?

**A:** At least 50 percent of our staff time is spent on TPS. On a recent day, twenty-five out of thirty walk-ins to the AFSC office were people needing TPS help. Staff are working full out. For example, our paralegal, Marie Jean, volunteers whenever the City of Miami and the local Association of Lawyers give free TPS advice and applications. We also have volunteers and we've enlisted prominent Haitians such as attorney Ralph Francois who made presentations at two community meetings in Immokalee.

## News From the Area Office of the Carolinas

### PAINT FOR PEACE—THE HUMAN COST OF WAR

The American Friends Service Committee in Greensboro, with help of students from Guilford College has created an exhibit calling attention to the inconceivable loss of life in Afghanistan due to the war.

Designed by Guilford student volunteers and painted by walkers on the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace as well as the Trail of Dreams, we created four unique mural panels for a traveling memorial to Afghan civilian casualties of the war in Afghanistan.



The exhibit, when completed, will contain 30-40 panels created by artists across the country responding to the human cost of the war to Afghans.

In addition to murals, Guilford students are honoring the fallen soldiers of North and South Carolina and countless thousands of Afghan civilian lives in an outdoor memorial. For more information, call AFSC at 336-854-0633.



Students put finishing touches on Paint for Peace Murals at Guilford College.

### Another World is possible. Another US In Necessary

On March 4<sup>th</sup> various social justice organizations around Greensboro, NC met to discuss arrangements for attending the United States Social Forum (USSF). Groups involved included AFSC, Jobs for Justice, Parents Supporting Parents, Greensboro Indy Media, the Interactive Resource Center, Cakalak Thunder, and the Beloved Community Center.

The US Social Forum will take place June 22<sup>nd</sup>- June 26 in Detroit MI. Individuals of all age, race, ethnicity, and background across the United States, travel to this event. The US Social Forum provides a space in Detroit to build relationships, learn from other's experiences through self organized workshops for dialogues, and reflection on how to improve communities. It will help develop leadership, vision, and strategy needed to bring positive change in communities across the United States to make another world possible.

## "Be the Change" Youth Convergence

**Get ready for the 2nd Annual "Be the Change" Youth Convergence May 21-23, 2010 at Koinonia Farms near Americus, GA**

In 2009, the Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition (GPJC) held its inaugural youth convergence at Koinonia Farms near Americus, GA. The momentum generated from that event resulted in successful resistance to the establishment of a military-run high school in DeKalb County, statewide actions in October to protest the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and deceptive military recruitment practices and a legislative proposal to limit access of military recruiters which has attracted national attention.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Be the Change" Youth Convergence is May 21-23, 2010, again at Koinonia Farms.

The grounding text of the annual "Be the Change" Youth Convergence is a speech by Martin Luther King Jr. called "Beyond Vietnam," where King called for eternal hostility to militarism, racism, and poverty.

The goal of the convergence is to bring together progressive leaders from all over the state of Georgia to connect the dots between these powerful social issues and become "the change" in our home communities.

For registration and other information visit: [www.gpjc.org](http://www.gpjc.org)

Here's a link to the brochure:  
<http://gpjc.org/uploads/gpjc/BTC%20Promo%20Brochure.pdf>

## "It's My Life" Art Contest

The contest challenged students to create art works inspired by one of four themes:

- \*Young People Acting for Local and Global Change
- \*Your Vision of a Peaceful and Sustainable Future
- \*Non-Military Career Paths and Dreams
- \*Is America Addicted to War? If so, How Does it Affect you?

We had 63 amazing entries currently on exhibit at WonderRoot.

On Saturday March 20th we held our art opening and awards ceremony at WonderRoot. Everyone that entered the contest was given a certificate of participation and invited to get a picture taken next to their art work. Next the judges announced the winners.

Grand Prize Winner was Samara Abdulla- she wrote an essay on the Non-military career paths and dreams. For a full list of winner and judges or to learn more about the contest visit <http://afscatlanta.blogspot.com/2010/03/its.html>



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

