



*“You are not expected to complete the work in your lifetime, neither may you refuse to do your unique part.”* — JEWISH PROVERB

## STANDING WITH JUANA IN SANCTUARY

*Andrew Willis Garces*  
NC Immigrant Rights Organizer

It was an odd scene: 40 people milling around an office park mid-afternoon on the Fourth of July in High Point, North Carolina—all with cellphones stuck to their ears, the afternoon sun beating down on platters of food and tubs of ice cream on folding tables setup in the parking lot. A large emblem posted on the front of the building gave more away: “U.S. Senator, Thom Tillis.” The festive phone-callers were all leaving voicemails on his Washington, D.C. answering machine to say, “Sorry we missed you at the BBQ we held at your office.” *Independence Day for Juana* was the most recent action held to draw attention to Juana Luz Tobar Ortega, who was ordered to leave the country at the end of the May but instead sought sanctuary at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Greensboro.

In February 2017, Juana and her family attended a Know Your Rights workshop organized by the American Friends Service Committee’s NC Immigrant Rights Program, and reached out to me when Juana received her surprise deportation order in April. I walked her family through their options. The AFSC had previously collaborated with St. Barnabas Church in Greensboro in 2016 to receive an individual facing deportation who did not end up



*Above: Juana Luz Tobar Ortega and family announce her sanctuary status with AFSC NC’s Lori Fernald Khamala at St. Barnabus Episcoal Church in June. Photo: Citlaly Mora*

needing sanctuary, so we were able to work quickly with them to establish a relationship between Juana’s family and the church, prepare them for her life in sanctuary and also prepare them for going public.

Since then, Juana’s family and supporters have focused squarely on Senator Thom Tillis, who as recently as June told a Senate subcommittee that he thought undocumented immigrants like Juana should be “released into the community” rather than targeted by ICE. But Tillis’ staff have so far been unwilling to advocate more firmly on Juana’s behalf, declining to say whether they think she should be forced to leave the country after 24 years here—20 of those years in the same house. The BBQ was timed to coincide with the Senate’s Fourth of July recess, since Tillis had declined invitations to meet with Juana or her family. Juana was detained at her workplace in 2010—she is a seamstress by trade—ICE required her to check-in at the regional office

in Charlotte annually. After granting her six deferrals in a row, ICE officers ordered her to leave the country.

“My parents have spent over \$15,000 in the last two decades trying to resolve her case,” said Lesvi Molina, her daughter. “We would rather have a real fix for her status, but if she wasn’t a priority for removal last year, why should she be forced to leave now?”

ICE detentions were up around 40% in the first half of 2017 from the same time last year, which includes hundreds of people in North Carolina who like Juana thought they were safe until their cases were reopened by ICE. Many families previously not targeted by ICE have been detained as “collateral” arrests on their way to work or school.

Some congregations have decided to re-think what they’re able to do to support families like Juana’s. Some have moved from simply being inactive on the issue to supporting a host congregation like St. Barnabas by signing up for shifts to accompany Juana. Others have made the choice to become hosts by repurposing old nurseries and other rooms into living spaces. Minerva Garcia, another NC resident under threat of deportation, became the second person to seek sanctuary in Greensboro, also through a church.

For now, Juana continues on in her temporary residence, a room that used to be the church’s nursery at the small church, nearly an hour from her home. “I’ll stay here until I can hug my grandchildren at home again,” she

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## ANYANGO REGGY: RETURNING TO AFSC

Being born to a Kenyan father and an African-American mother, I had the unique opportunity of being raised in a cross-cultural home. I was born in Washington D.C. and grew up in Kenya where I completed my elementary and high school education. My parents were both educators who were actively involved in the civil rights movement and they supported the struggle for independence that was taking place across the African continent. From a young age, they instilled in me the importance of having the courage to challenge oppressive systems. I was always encouraged to “Speak the truth, even if your voice shakes” (Maggie Kuhn, American activist).

In addition to the political education I received in my home, my parents believed strongly in formal education as a tool for social change. So with their encouragement, I went on to further my education in Psychology, International Affairs, and



*Above: Speaking at the AFSC's Centennial Gala Celebration at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC*

African Studies.

After graduate school, I landed my dream job with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in St. Louis, Missouri. So much of who I am as an activist today was shaped by those early years at the Service Committee. I learned how to navigate through so many of the complexities and contradictions that I found within the progressive community and the society at large. I was stretched, and I grew both politically and culturally.

For six years I served as the Program Director for International Affairs and the U.S. Coordinator of AFSC's Africa Youth Leadership program. Much of my work focused on educating and advocating for more just and consistent U.S. domestic and international policies. I was passionate about issues of police brutality that disproportionately affects Black and Brown communities, immigrant rights, food security and so on. I participated in World Social Forums in Brazil, Kenya, Mali, and the United States; I was part of an AFSC/Quaker delegation to Colombia

to document the struggles of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities that were victims of a misguided U.S. policy to end the war on drugs. This led to several years of education and advocacy on issues affecting communities in Colombia.

Furthermore, I helped train over 240 youth leaders in the US and in Africa; I collaborated with several organizations in the U.S. and around the world to build support for a broad based, mobilized and informed constituency for human rights; and I added my voice to the calls for the 100% cancellation of Africa's illegitimate debts and the end of the war in Iraq, Sudan, and several other countries across the globe.

As a direct result of my work with AFSC's Africa Peacebuilding Unit, I made the decision to pursue a doctorate in African Studies from Howard University. My research focused on the role of women in post conflict reconstruction after the 1994 genocide. My several visits to Rwanda were personally transformative. I learned so much about the importance of healing and reconciliation and what it takes to rebuild communities after unspeakable trauma.

In October 2016, I made the decision to return to AFSC, first as a consultant for six months, and then as the Associate Regional Director for the South Region. I am very excited about being back at AFSC! After working with several organizations and institutions both here and around the world, I have come to the conclusion that nothing can compare to working with an organization that aligns with

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Service Committee**

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# Planting the seeds of peace & justice

CELEBRATING AFSC'S CENTENNIAL IN NORTH CAROLINA



## Featured events

### Waging Peace: 100 Years of Action, AFSC Centennial Exhibit

August 27–November 5, 2017

Guilford College Art Gallery  
5800 W. Friendly Ave. Greensboro.  
exhibit.afsc.org



### Centennial Gala Celebration

Saturday, September 9

5:30-8pm Gala Celebration at Guilford College Hege Library  
Reception and stories of AFSC's impact  
RSVP: BFritz@afsc.org

### Civil Rights City Tour

Sunday, October 1, 2-5pm

Meet at Beloved Community Center, 417 Arlington St, 27406  
Civil Rights Bus Tour of Greensboro followed by snacks and stories of AFSC's desegregation work in North Carolina.  
Info: raleighbailey@gmail.com or ssummerford@triad.rr.com  
RSVP required for bus tour: jcmirand90@gmail.com

## Additional events

### Underground Railroad Tree Tour

Saturday, September 9  
2pm Tour of Underground Railroad Tree at Guilford College  
Info: LKhamala@afsc.org



### We Answered with Love Reading

Tuesday, September 19, 7pm  
Scuppernon Bookstore, Greensboro  
Book event with Nancy Learned Haines, author of *We Answered With Love: Pacifist Service in World War I*  
Info: khood@guilford.edu



### Nonviolent Direct Action Training

Saturday, October 7  
New Garden Friends Meeting, Greensboro  
Led by Ready the Ground  
Info: jcmirand90@gmail.com

### Graveyard Tour

Tuesday, October 31, 8pm  
Graveyard Tour of New Garden Friends Meeting Cemetery, focused on AFSC connections  
Info: mcarter@guilford.edu

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one's values. I look forward to the opportunity to share my skills in leadership, cross cultural communications, conflict management, and activism, but I also see this an excellent opportunity for me to be stretched and to grow even further. On the other hand, I recognize that in this current social and political climate, there is much work to be done to challenge oppressive economic and political systems both in the U.S. and internationally.

I am willing and ready to add my voice and provide my support to the work on immigrant rights, human rights, political education, youth leadership development, urban gardening, housing justice, and confronting Islamophobia that AFSC is doing in the South Region. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "There comes a time when silence is betrayal, and that time is now!"

**- ANYANGO REGGY**  
**AFSC SOUTH ASSOCIATE REGIONAL DIRECTOR**



*Above: With South regional director  
Jacob Flowers*

## **BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ONE SUMMER AT A TIME**

Peace by Piece New Orleans (PxP) is planting new seeds, literally and figuratively. We work in both the Hollygrove and Desire neighborhoods in New Orleans to promote healthy and whole communities by training youth leaders to provide mentorship and education in urban agriculture and organizing around the systemic distribution of resources and economic justice. Summer camps are a conventional way for programs to provide enrichment activities for neighborhood youth. Peace by Piece is no exception. In summer 2017 the program ran three camps, two of which were run in partnership with a local church and community center. This summer marked a new beginning for PxP and its Sustainable Communities Program in Hollygrove.

Peace by Piece hosted its second youth camp in Hollygrove at St. Peter AME Church where four garden beds were built on the church property. Fifteen youth from the neighborhood attended camp this year planting cucumbers, watermelon, corn, okra, parsley and oregano. A few goals for the summer included: 1) helping Hollygrove youth to understand and realize the vision of a sustainable community; 2) developing the leadership of youth and young adults in Hollygrove; and 3) encouraging



*Photos: Cfreedom Photography*

youth to understand and seek to change the social factors impacting their lives and community.

In 2015, we built a backyard garden on Eagle street in Hollygrove, a traditional New Orleans neighborhood full of life and blight. The garden grew mustard greens, lettuce, melons okra and herbs like dill, and mint. The program hosted three garden giveaways during summer 2016. Once our inaugural summer camp concluded, we were unable to remain on the garden

property. Thanks to lots of love and attention from neighbors, PxP persevered and currently works with the city and St. Peter to continue urban gardening down the block from our original Eagle Street location. PxP has built two additional gardens in the community and continues to use these spaces as tools of engagement with the neighborhood's youngest residents as well as its eldest elders.

The summer programs use a Sustainable Communities Curriculum, created by program associate Tabitha Mustafa, that helps young people explore forms of oppression, different types of economic systems and practices in sustainability. Participants interact with the garden space participating in community building, learning the city and neighborhood histories, and discussions from slavery to the Black Lives Matter Movement.

The program uses academic and interactive learning, the principles of Kwanzaa and popular education methods to positively impact the lives of Hollygrove residents. In addition to all of the learning, there are talent shows, cyphers, field trips, laughter and an overall uplifting and affirming environment that fosters Black joy.

**- DEE DEE GREEN**  
**NOLA AREA PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

*continued from page 1*

says, mentioning how hard it has also been to be so far away from her teenage son. “It’s better to see them once a week than not see them at all.”

While in sanctuary, Juana is learning English and teaching church members to make pupusas. Together with her campaign team, she is helping plan next steps for getting the senator

to put his stated beliefs into action. “We’re not asking for much. Just a straight answer. Does he think she should stay with her family, or return to a place she hasn’t been in over two decades?”

Since then the AFSC has continued coordinating the campaign to win Juana a stay of deportation. We’re planning a simultaneous day of

action in Greensboro, Winston-Salem and Durham on [September 28th](#) for all three North Carolina people in sanctuary.

To support Juana and her family, leave a message at the D.C. office of Senator Tillis at (202) 224-6342 and ask him to tell supporters whether or not he thinks Juana Luz Tobar Ortega should be forced to leave.

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## PEACE ATL HOLDS OUR MELANIN FESTIVAL

Peace ATL and its program Our Melanin hosted an event in Atlanta that was intended to build Black unity within our city, recognize the beauty of our people and the unique representations of culture that we put forward, and share our thoughts and feelings on the actions that we can take to make this city and this country an ideal place for all of us.

The festival was painstakingly designed to create a sense of family reunion between the guests, so people would be willing to be a little more vulnerable and share parts of themselves. To that end, we held an open mic that was hosted by Atlanta’s Youth Poet Laureate 2017, Ogechi Odofu. Ogechi, a 19-year-old Nigerian college student here in Atlanta, requested guests to be open about their feelings and share them with the public. Attendees opened their hearts about the pains of systemic oppression; the glory of their melanin; the challenge ahead of us in creating a just society.

We took that further in our festival’s activism circle, which highlighted gentrification in the city of Atlanta and what we, as Black people, can do about this seemingly unalterable state of change in the city, which currently is shifting away from the 54% African American population that it has today. Headed by Avery Jackson, youth leader of the program ATL Is Ready, the talk went over its scheduled time as activists and attendees huddled together in close



*Above: Atlanta entrepreneur Tiffany Williams closing the first Our Melanin festival. Photo: AFSC/ATL*

exchange and shared ideas and actions to join in on.

Others at the festival joined in on our activities for support of health and well-being. We held a Caribbean Dance Fit class that got festival goers moving and shaking to better health to amazing vibes, and held a Master Your Morning health class with famed speaker Stic, of the social justice hip-hop group Dead Prez, and his wife Afya, renowned nutritionist and health coach. Festival-goers learned helpful facts such as the right foods for the morning to keep energy all day, and best practices such as meditation that can lead to overall better health in mind, body, and spirit. We took that

idea of applying meditation a step further with our “Trap Yoga” class, which infused the important benefits of yoga with a type of music popularized in our city today.

What we didn’t anticipate, as organizers of the event, was just how grateful people, including vendors and festival goers alike, would be for the event itself. Throughout the day guests poured thanks and expressed surprise about just how positive the energy felt in the space, and vendors were particularly grateful to have the *free* opportunity to sell their goods and continue to build their companies and their dreams.

Our last speaker, young African American business owner Tiffany Williams, who recently opened the only all-Black, all-female art studio in the city of Atlanta, finished out the event with a call for guests to make their dreams happen now. “You have it within you. Look inside you, to what your idea is, and don’t think that it’s not possible, that it’s not worth investing in, that it’s not worth dreaming about daily, because you can do it.”

We believe that we can create a spirit of change in Atlanta that inspires Black people to come together to create positive change within our shared culture, and this festival was our first step in advocating for and moving toward that vision.

- JOEL DICKERSON  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, PEACE ATL

# AFSC'S FIFTH ANNUAL D.C. HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMIT



*Introduction by DC Peace & Economic Justice intern Cristina Rosa Tono*



*In June, 13 youth leaders from the U.S. and around the world took part in AFSC's fifth annual Human Rights Summit in Washington, organized by the DC Peace & Economic Justice Program and led by program graduates Alex Garrison and Jodie Geddes.*

*Over five days, these high school and college students learned about human rights and how to effectively advocate before their elected officials to bring about meaningful social change and lasting peace. Participants joined us from California, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Florida, Costa Rica and South Africa.*

*This is the first year the Human Rights Summit included international participants. Instead of visiting local representatives, several youth had the opportunity to visit the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights to present their issues. Here's what they had to say about their experiences in the nation's capital.*

**RUJA BALLARD, PHILADELPHIA:**

Most of my advocating goes to equality in the LGBTQ community. I know so many people are silenced because of whom they love and who they choose to be. I want to show kids how powerful they are and the potential that they have. Being here makes me want to go and do it more. I know that I have this ability to change someone else's life.

The Universal Declaration of

*Clockwise from left: Cristina Rosa Tono; 2017 summit group at the U.S. Capitol building; youth advocacy workshop with the FCNL; AFSC Miami staff Lis-Marie Alvarado (center) with participants Yoana and Ana; Jazmyne (center) and Tiana of Logan, West Virginia meet with U.S. Representative Evan Jenkins about the importance of increasing funding for education and after school programs in their county.*

Human Rights will help me to share my opinions and give my friends a platform to talk about issues not only in their private lives but also at school and how they get through it on a daily basis. Before this summit, I thought when you organize something you should be the person talking. I realized here that I don't have to. I also learned that it is okay to take a break from a cause. You can know what your plan is, but it is important to know that you don't have to do it right away.

I am currently going to school for psychology. I know I want to be an educator, but that I don't need to be a teacher to do so. Hopefully, even if I am not with this organization, I want to do similar work bringing different cultures and people together in one room to solve issues.

**BEKITHEMBA NTONI, SOUTH AFRICA:**

I am incumbent on myself to make a difference not only for my country, but also for the world. Any injustice

committed concerns me as a human. Coming from a war-torn country that advocates for global peace and that advocates for other war torn countries, I feel strongly about advocating for the individual rights of others.

One of the key things that the AFSC has taught me is the art of organizing. When getting people together to advocate for a cause, it is important to do so from the standpoint of the individual, and to understand the issues they are facing.

I feel strongly about youth empowerment because [youth] are the future. They are the individuals that are able to make a difference, they are the most affected from the past, and they are the ones that will rectify the future. They will be able to create a better world for all of us. I feel empowered by the AFSC to be a change agent and run with the baton.

Following two days of human rights education, youth organizing sessions and advocacy coaching with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), participants visited with their representatives on Capitol Hill to present concerns and ask for action on issues in their local communities.

The summit also included a special collaboration with the South African-Washington International Program (SAWIP), which invited participants to attend a celebration of young leaders at the South African Embassy in D.C.

# VIETNAM SUMMER: ACTIVISM DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

Introduction by Brooke Fritz



From 1965 through 1970, AFSC helped build the antiwar coalitions that challenged U.S. policy in Vietnam. One of the biggest initiatives occurred during the summer of 1967, commonly known as Vietnam Summer. By the end of August, Vietnam Summer (a coalition of many organizations with two AFSC staff members as the co-directors) had over 26,000 volunteers working in about 700 local projects throughout the U.S.

Volunteers participated in Vietnam Summer by canvassing door-to-door, counseling on draft resistance, holding teach-ins, conducting local demonstrations, and disseminating anti-war literature. Many of the local projects fostered by Vietnam Summer continued beyond that date, working independently or with other national peace organizations.

It was a time of growing distrust in government. It was a moment when Peace marches moved from being a few thousand students to tens of thousands of diverse individuals. People were moved to stand up and resist. A populist uprising forced the nation's leaders to change course. Many parallels can be drawn between that moment in time and today, and some things are also very different.

As we commemorate the 50th

anniversary of Vietnam Summer, it is worth recalling a year that changed America.

*Tony Avirgan's memory of Vietnam Summer and beyond:*

In 1967, a group of us, including my now wife Martha, started meeting. We wanted to resist. We came together for different reasons but together we had a profound collective sense that the military machine must not continue to destroy lives. We wanted to put sand in the gears of the system, challenge the government to arrest us, refuse to cooperate with the Selective Service System.

In the beginning, we leaned heavily on AFSC. They paid a core group of us \$25/week and they gave us access to their telephones and money to print literature. Vietnam Summer was a time of transition for the anti-war movement. It was a push from college campuses into the community.

For us, Vietnam Summer was just the start. After that summer our group formed Philadelphia Resistance. Over the years, I was arrested 15 times. One time I ended up in jail for 30 days. We ran a printing press. We got intense media coverage. We refused to pay taxes. We held countless rallies

—at one such event the Police Chief punched me in the face. We accompanied men to Canada. We protested with props at sporting events. We even had an infiltrator—a policeman joined our group under cover.

All of it was our way to defy, slow down, and make it more expensive for the Selective Service System to continue to operate. Each year, more and more people turned against the war. It became more and more unpopular. We found people who agreed with us in the courts and in the military.

Wars always end—one way or another. A bomb or negotiation. Vietnam ended through negotiation because we raised the cost of war. Today there are new things to resist, and we must work together to raise the cost of violating human rights. In some ways, organizing today is so much easier. With a click of a button you can send thousands of emails. But if we want to make a difference, if we want to change opinions, I think we need to go back to what we learned during the summer of 1967. You need to get out into the community and knock on every door.

- TONY AVIRGAN  
AFSC SUPPORTER



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