



**American Friends  
Service Committee**

*Quaker values in action*

# South Star

Newsletter of the South Region, American Friends Service Committee • Spring 2018

*"We plant trees not for ourselves, but for future generations." — CAECILUS STATIUS*

## STUDENTS RALLY SUPPORT FOR WV TEACHERS' STRIKE

*Right: AFSC Appalachian Center for Equality (ACE) participants showed up prepared for long days of protest during West Virginia's #55Strong teachers' strike. Photo: Liz Brunello*



When the West Virginia legislative session began in January, AFSC staff dreaded 60 days of attacks on working and low-income people and cuts to business taxes and social programs.

Instead, there was a statewide non-violent uprising of teachers and school support workers that resulted in a five percent raise for all state employees, improvements to the Public Employees Insurance Agency, and the defeat of several anti-worker bills.

The uprising, while supported by unions, was grassroots driven, with much leadership coming from younger women.

Discontent had long been brewing, driven by high insurance costs, stagnant wages, and disrespect by lawmakers and the administration of Gov. Jim Justice. A history of unproductive corporate tax cuts not only led to the state's budgeting woes, but also fed the fires of discontent.

After a partial work stoppage in coalfield counties, the wave spread statewide to all 55 counties, resulting in school closings supported by education workers, school superintendents, and much of the public,

After nine days of massive protests, resistance by key Republican legislators, and a roller coaster ride of negotiations, a compromise was reached that was better than most expected.

The AFSC WV Economic Justice Project (WVEJ) has long worked on tax and budget issues with allies such as the WV Center on Budget and Policy. Suddenly, these budget and tax concerns were a huge part of the conversation and the grievance expressed by teachers, both online and at the Capitol.

According to WVEJ director Rick Wilson, "These things can seem boring. But breathing can seem boring until somebody starts choking you. Then it's fascinating. That was the case here."

Wilson noted that longstanding issues with West Virginia's economy, including failure to retain wealth from the state's abundant resources, rose to

the surface during discussions on how to resolve the strike. "This kind of struggle also reveals the consequences of a colonial economy where natural wealth that could have improved education and infrastructure has been drained away by absentee corporations for over 100 years."

WVEJ staff worked closely with the AFSC's Appalachian Center for Equality (ACE) project, which provides mentoring and opportunities for civic engagement for young people in three coalfield counties, starting with a teach-in on West Virginia's long history of labor struggles. Young women from the Boone County program were especially active in public rallies, protests, picket lines, and in supporting community efforts to ensure that children affected by the work stoppage continued to receive food and child care.

The young women took the lead in  
*continued on page 7*

# JACOB FLOWERS: CHANGE HAPPENS FROM THE BOTTOM UP

It's a widely held assumption in community organizing that lasting change comes from the grassroots—that changes comes from the bottom up. If you have lived in the South for any solid period of time, you also know the words of W.E.B. DuBois: "As the South goes, so goes the nation."

This spring, I am excited to write that resistance to injustice in the South is rising, and that this movement is being led from the grassroots. From the bottom, where the roots of oppression have burrowed deep into our communities, for too long leeching the resources out of those communities to benefit the privilege of others.

That is why the work of the AFSC is so important—so that we can do the deep work which loosens the hold that the roots of oppression have on poor and marginalized communities. These AFSC weed-pullers have been hard at work in the West Virginia teachers' strike, in offering sanctuary to five



*Above: Leading an organizing exercise with South Region staff in Greensboro, NC*

Orleans and Baltimore; and in so many more places, in many more ways.

Please enjoy this issue of the *South Star* as we celebrate resistance growing out of the South, which we hope will take our nation in a radically different and more positive direction. Read about our work and consider if you can support by getting involved (program contact information is on the back of this newsletter) or by contributing a small donation to help us continue to grow our presence in your community (a donation envelope is conveniently included inside).

Thank you for what you do to support the important work of the AFSC, which could be said to be needed now more than ever!

undocumented individuals in North Carolina; to literally planting the seeds of growth in community farms in New

Yours in struggle,  
Jacob Flowers  
AFSC South Regional Director

## SOUTH REGION ONLINE



*Peace by Piece New Orleans recently shared a new video to show our efforts in engaging youth in sustainable living. Our Hollygrove garden has become an education tool for youth who want to be more involved in their neighborhood. Check out the video on [YouTube](#) to see how PxP NOLA is supporting health, economic and community sustainability!*



**American Friends  
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# CALL TO ACTION: TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS

## TELL CONGRESS: SAVE TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) FOR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF IMMIGRANTS!

TPS is a provision under which the government grants protection from deportation to people from countries afflicted by natural disasters, war or dangerous conditions.

President Trump's termination of TPS for El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua and Sudan are cruel attacks on immigrants in the United States. Ending TPS will rip apart our families and hurt our communities. We call on our representatives to pass legislation immediately that provides legal permanent residency and a pathway to citizenship for all TPS holders, such as the American Promise Act.

[Read stories of TPS holders in Florida online](http://afsc.org/action/save-temporary-protected-status-hundreds-thousands-immigrants) and use our FastAction form to contact your representative:  
[afsc.org/action/save-temporary-protected-status-hundreds-thousands-immigrants](http://afsc.org/action/save-temporary-protected-status-hundreds-thousands-immigrants)



*Above: In October, TPS holders and AFSC South Region staff traveled to Washington, D.C. with the National TPS Alliance to advocate for TPS and a path to permanent residency for all TPS recipients.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

.....  
**MAY 1, 2018 • GiveNOLA.org**  
**ONE DAY TO GIVE AS ONE**  
.....



*Photo Cfrees Photography*

Peace by Piece (PxP) New Orleans is a collective of young Black activists, aged 16 and up, dedicated to social justice for communities of color. Through community engagement and grassroots organizing, PxP confronts systems and institutions that engender inequality, poverty and violence. We work in the Hollygrove neighborhood to promote healthy and whole neighborhoods by training youth interns to provide mentorship and education in urban agriculture and organizing around the systemic distribution of resources and economic justice.

Our Sustainable Communities Project focuses closely on gardening to create food security in Hollygrove. PxP and youth residents have built two garden spaces with 17 beds in the neighborhood. The program has hosted summer camps for more than 30 children and employed 10 youth leaders as interns.

This spring, we are building benches and a fire pit to create an outdoor cooking space that reduces the neighborhood's dependence on fast food and convenience stores for sustenance.

PxP and the gardens are giving young people tools to sustain their community, and your support can help us broaden our impact. With as little as \$10, you can help to ensure the success of the Sustainable Communities Project. Please consider visiting [GiveNOLA.org](http://GiveNOLA.org) on May 1st to help us reach our goal of 100 donors!

**- DEE DEE GREEN  
NEW ORLEANS AREA DIRECTOR**

# SANCTUARY SPACES: AN INTRODUCTION

Interview by [Christina Elcock](#), QVS Friends Relations Fellow

*Right: Lori Fernald Khamala speaking at the AFSC's Centennial celebration in Greensboro, NC. Far right: Supported by his family and the AFSC, Oscar Canales enters sanctuary at Congregational United Church of Christ in Greensboro, January 2018. Canales is currently one of [five individuals in sanctuary in NC](#). Photo: Betsy Blake*



*Note: This interview was first published as part of the AFSC's online [Acting in Faith](#) blog, February 2018.*

*Lori Fernald Khamala is the director of the North Carolina Immigrant Rights Program for the AFSC and also serves as the coordinator of the AFSC's Sanctuary Everywhere initiative. One aspect of this initiative is our Sanctuary Spaces project, in which the AFSC highlights non-traditional examples of sanctuary spaces that are created by and for targeted communities. In this introduction to the multi-piece series, I talked with Lori about the concept of sanctuary spaces as a response to oppression, and why it's important to lift those spaces up. - Christina Elcock*

**Christina Elcock:** What is the Sanctuary Spaces Project?

**Lori Fernald Khamala:** Within our Sanctuary Everywhere initiative, the AFSC is training and mobilizing people to resist unjust policies targeting communities of color. But in addition to resisting, we can't lose sight of the world we ultimately want to create. The Sanctuary Spaces project highlights spaces created by and for targeted communities where folks feel safe and where their humanity is honored. The public thinks of sanctuary as something that happens in churches, for undocumented immigrants. But we

want to broaden the notion of who sanctuary is for and where it can happen.

**Christina:** What kind of work is involved in Sanctuary Everywhere?

**Lori:** Sanctuary Everywhere is an initiative of AFSC that equips people with the tools to increase safety for targeted communities, particularly for Black, Muslim, and undocumented communities. We recognize the interconnectedness of many targeted communities across the country and want to lift that up, as well. A lot of the work in Sanctuary Everywhere is about how people of color (POC) can defend themselves in this very hostile environment, and how allies can effectively support those communities.

We have work that focuses on knowing your rights. We are training youth to respond to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and police harassment. We're training Quakers and allies on how to be effective, using accompaniment strategies. We're working with people on how to offer congregational sanctuary and how to do bystander intervention. These are all really important aspects of how we are resisting the oppression of our current administration.

At the same time, there's a really important need to not just resist against oppressive systems but also build new spaces where people feel

safe and comfortable and where their whole humanity is acknowledged.

**Christina:** How is the Sanctuary Spaces project shifting the narrative around Sanctuary?

**Lori:** We know that in today's political environment, most people associate sanctuary with congregations that courageously shield immigrants from deportation. AFSC supports this, and in fact, in my state of North Carolina, we have the highest number of public sanctuary cases in the nation right now, and our office has been involved in several of these cases. But the focus of the Sanctuary Spaces project is to lift up creative and non-traditional programs and spaces that are being created by and for impacted communities to keep themselves safe. For example, several AFSC programs working primarily in Black communities have started community gardens and urban farms, and what we've heard from our staff and our program participants in these locations is that in communities where residents lack access to healthy food, this is an issue of community safety and survival. This work of reclaiming the land and growing food to feed themselves is creating a sanctuary space for the community.

**Christina:** Who else benefits from being in sanctuary spaces?

*continued from page 4*

**Lori:** I remember when Lewis Webb, an AFSC staff member in New York City, first described his office environment. The NYC program works with people who are currently or formerly incarcerated, and there are myriad ways that folks with a record are prevented from having access to lead full lives—like the box on employment applications that you have to check if you have been convicted of a felony or have served time and the housing options that are off limits to many formerly incarcerated individuals. Lewis talked about their office as a space where people can come and just be who they are without having to worry about being harassed by police on the street, or about anybody asking them to check boxes that are defining how human they are or not. I think that sanctuary spaces are those that allow people to be their whole selves. Targeted communities are already creating, and have always created, these spaces where they can thrive in spite of systems and institutions that try to crush their humanity, and those are the kind of spaces we want to lift up and emulate.

My background is in the immigrant rights movement. And since the Trump election, I have seen a huge surge in interest and support by white progressives in wanting to support immigrants targeted by ICE. Which is great—we need all the support we can get. At the same time, I haven't witnessed the same level of support expressed for Black communities, who continue to be targeted—both intentionally and unintentionally—at every level of government. Through Sanctuary Everywhere, we want to name that there isn't just one community that needs sanctuary, we need to stand up for and with *all* targeted communities.

**Christina:** You've spoken about the community gardens and the NYC

office as a sanctuary space. What other form can sanctuary spaces take?

**Lori:** Another example that we are planning to lift up through our series are Freedom Schools; a project of AFSC in many different vocations. As we have learned from our programs actually working on congregational sanctuary for immigrants, the most powerful part of congregational sanctuary is not what happens inside the building, but it's the community that is formed and the bonds and the commitment to each other that is formed. And so, when I started talking to our staff members in programs that had nothing to do with immigration, people started describing the same kind of feeling that some Freedom School participants, for example, describe. And they keep coming back every year because it's often the only place where they really feel that kind of security and are seen as whole human beings.

Sanctuary sustains hope and something more than that, it literally might sustain people's lives. Our government is tearing apart immigrant families by detention and deportation, tearing apart Black families by police violence and mass incarceration and tearing Muslim families apart by surveillance and the Muslim ban. We have an opportunity to stand up for each other and people are creating the spaces in which they can be sustained, where their families can be sustained, where communities can be sustained.

We hope people will be inspired by the communities that are creating sanctuary spaces and we hope that we will shift people's thoughts about who deserves sanctuary and what sanctuary means. We hope that it will inspire people to go about creating their own sanctuary spaces and identifying where those spaces already exist and supporting them. We want to create sanctuary everywhere so that no one needs sanctuary anywhere.

Through this project, we also hope to generate dialogue and engage

with the broader community and create spaces for people to share what creative forms of resistance they are witnessing in their communities and how they are creating sanctuary. There's a movement across the country of organizations led by people of color like [Mijente](#) and [BYP100](#) that have been taking the lead on defining the concept of Expanded Sanctuary. There's a project called [Freedom Cities](#) that is based on a more inclusive notion of what sanctuary cities looks like. We've been talking to ally groups that support the vision of Expanded Sanctuary, like [Church World Service](#) and the Unitarian Universalists, about how we can work together to shift the broader perspective on sanctuary.

We will continue to support and work to grow the congregational sanctuary movement, while at the same time really recognizing that the sanctuary movement has to expand beyond the current perception of what sanctuary is.

**Christina:** Absolutely, the faith aspect of this work is important too. Thank you so much for sharing all this valuable information about this project—I'm really excited about it.



*Above: Communities have a right to define what safety and sanctuary spaces look and feel like within their neighborhoods. To this end, Peace by Piece New Orleans works with Hollygrove neighbors to create safe, youth-friendly, green spaces to improve food security and reinforce the viability of unused lots for community enrichment and sustainability. Photo: Dee Dee Green*

## MIAMI INTERN RETURNS TO AFSC'S IMMIGRATION TEAM

In Miami, Florida, a young immigration rights advocate has returned to the AFSC's American Friends Immigrant Services (AFIS) program to continue her work assisting communities in need of legal guidance.

Mariana Martinez, 23, first became involved with the AFSC as a volunteer, helping her father Herman Martinez who previously worked as a community organizer with the Miami office. Mariana remembers growing up fascinated by her father's work, and wanting to get involved by the time she reached high school. From there she learned that AFIS not only performs legal services for individuals by providing assistance with paperwork and direct representation, but also focuses on community leadership development, education, coalition building and campaigns for immigrant rights.

In 2014, Mariana was encouraged by Miami staff to apply for a youth convening in Cape Town, South Africa, and was chosen to attend along with over a dozen other young AFSC participants from around the world. "They shared with me the work and struggles they were facing and it completely changed my whole view of life," she recalls. "I was inspired by the work these young people did and I wanted to do the same."

With a new perspective, Martinez completed her associate's degree in psychology and began courses for bachelor studies in international relations and political science. When not in school, she volunteered for multiple local and national immigrant rights groups. She appreciates the collaborations she witnessed, including with the AFSC. AFIS has long worked in partnership with other grassroots organizations in Florida to strengthen immigrant communities. "I have always been moved by the dedication and stability AFSC has had throughout [the years]. With any



*Above: Mariana Martinez leads a recent Sanctuary Everywhere workshop with AFIS Community Organizing Coordinator Lis-Marie Alvarado. Photo: Anyango Reggy*

organization there usually comes a time for reevaluation and sometimes drastic change, but with AFSC there seems to be consistency with the vision of work," she notes.

Through her ongoing involvement in the immigrant rights network, Martinez returned to AFIS in 2017. After the election of Donald Trump in October, the office has seen increased demand for legal assistance, especially since the administration called for an end to Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for El Salvador and Haiti, provisions which affect thousands in South Florida. This has put additional stress on Martinez and all AFIS staff as the program fields calls and visits from individuals and families beyond the Miami area.

Of the AFIS legal staff, Martinez says she is moved by their dedication

to make sure the AFSC can serve as many as possible. "Marie [Jean] and Lucio [Perez-Reynoso] do excellent work, and clients always leave feeling hopeful and well-educated on their case, rights, and options. With the Trump administration attacking immigrants of all statuses, people are scared and need legal guidance."

The government's recent actions affect family and close friends of Martinez, and have caused uncertainty even in those who have permanent residency. So far with the AFSC, she finds that "...the most important work AFIS has been doing is educating community members on immigration avenues they are applicable for, because many people are not aware of what other options they have."

Along with legal work, Martinez has contributed to the expanding [Sanctuary Everywhere](#) movement, an AFSC initiative that aims to educate communities on how to protect one another. "Sanctuary Everywhere to me means being unafraid to live. I really like that the initiative is intentional [about] being inclusive of several issues, not only immigration." AFIS was one of the first programs to offer workshops to the public on how to provide sanctuary, which Martinez believes can "...incorporate all of the AFSC's social justice work and guide future projects of inclusion and protection for all people."

Looking forward, Martinez plans to continue learning the ins and outs of immigration law. "I want to put my studies to use and continue working for the local communities in need, and eventually international work," she says, and she also notes that she would like to apply her experience to serving youth. With so many AFSC programs tied together by the shared goal of empowering youth, we certainly need more advocates like Mariana to help young people plant the seeds of justice.

- BRYAN VANA  
REGIONAL COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR

organizing a youth-led rally and march in support of teachers that drew over 1,000 participants and was pictured on state and national media, including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.

Liz Brunello, ACE youth coordinator, said it did not take long for students to engage and recruit support. "Rather than being frustrated at the inconvenience and worried about losing their spring break, our students were immediately ready to jump into action to help their teachers."

ACE participants Jazmine Aliff, Manar Hesino and Juliana Perdue explained in an [op-ed with the Charleston Gazette](#) that when the strike started, youth were quick to recognize the dedication of school employees. "Before the strike, our teachers already set an amazing example for us of what it looks like

to truly care about your job and your community. They don't just spend eight hours a day, five days a week on students. They stay after school to tutor us, take time out of their weekends to grade our work and help us improve."

"The students understood the connections between treatment of their teachers and the quality of their own education, so it was really a no-brainer," Brunello reported. "I think some members of the legislature underestimated the amount of passionate support that would come from these kids and their families throughout this whole thing."

Social media, particularly a public employees Facebook page with about 25,000 members, played a valuable role in the struggle. It allowed the AFSC and allies to provide talking

points, analysis, charts, graphs, rally songs, etc.

During the strike, WVEJ's Lida Shepherd pointed out that "The big dog lobbyists, who usually saunter around the State Capitol like they own the place, seemed shell-shocked by the thousands of teachers suddenly drowning out their influence." She was sad to see the teachers leave after their victory. "You could feel the energy drain away after the victory, so we know our work over the next months will be to keep that fire burning."

The movement has inspired friends of working people and has contributed to actions by teachers and public sector workers in other states. The task remaining is to build on this incredible victory and use the momentum to raise awareness and push for more positive change.

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## HONORING SOUTH REGION SUPPORTERS MARJORIE SCOTT & JOHN MICHENER



Marjorie Forbush Scott passed away in February. She was a much loved member of the AFSC family.

Marjorie worked for the AFSC out of the Baltimore, Maryland office starting in 1969 as an administrative assistant and eventually served eight years as the executive secretary, finishing in 1986. Long before and after she was an employee of the AFSC, Marjorie was an active volunteer, supporter and advocate.

From helping to place Prince Edward

County, Virginia pupils in schools outside of the state after public schools were closed in opposition to integration, to her work for affirmative action in Maryland, Marjorie was always admired and celebrated for her dedication to human rights.

Thank you Marjorie for your tremendous commitment to peace and justice, and the Quaker values which continue to drive our work in the South Region today.

*Photos provided by Scott and Michener families*



John Michener also passed away in February. He grew up with the AFSC because his mother was a peace activist dedicated to our work.

John was a conscientious objector during World War II and joined the Civilian Public Service Program where he worked both in North Dakota and in the Smoky Mountains.

From his participation in a Congress on Racial Equity (CORE) sit-in at the University of Kansas in 1946 to his work on the

Affirmative Action Committee at the AFSC, John was dedicated to improving relations between racial and ethnic groups and recognizing the Divine in every person.

John's contributions to the AFSC were many so we will not list them all; but we will say thank you for your wonderful work and dedication to peace and justice!

- AFSC SOUTH REGION STAFF



**American Friends  
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