American Friends Service Committee
Centennial First Day School Curriculum

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Thank you for choosing to learn about the American Friends Service Committee with the youth of your meeting or church!

This curriculum pack can be used with children from elementary school through high school, spanning 5-8 weeks.

Part one focuses on each of AFSC’s five key issues areas (Peace Building, Just Economies, Discrimination, Immigration, and Prisons) plus a call to action. Part one will take 3-6 weeks, depending on how much time you choose to spend on each lesson.

Part two of this curriculum is a two-week intergenerational story sharing project for the Peace Works website (http://peaceworks.afsc.org).

Part one and part two can be used separately, together, or in conjunction with hosting AFSC’s portable banner exhibit or travelling to see the museum exhibit celebrating AFSC’s Centennial. Follow this link to find out more about the banner exhibit and reserve your dates: http://exhibit.afsc.org
AFSC Centennial Curriculum, Part 1:
Key Issues

There is a brief introduction to AFSC’s work for the instructor at the beginning of each lesson, and a link to AFSC’s website about the issue area to learn more.

Each issue area lesson begins with some introductory discussion questions, then a basic activity to engage youth of any age. There is a “More” section that may extend the lesson for older youth.

Each issue area includes a question for the youth to think about which traditional Quaker testimony (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, and Equality) it is connected to. Encourage the youth to think beyond the obvious—Peace Building and Peace clearly go together, but Peace Building could also be connected to other testimonies, like Community.

Time: Part 1 will take 3-6 weeks, depending on if you cover one or two issues per week. Each issue lesson will take 30 to 45 minutes to cover, so plan according to how much time the youth have each Sunday.

Materials: Many activities have an art component, so paper and art supplies are necessary. Issue 3 and Issue 6 require printed copies of resources included in the curriculum pack. Issue 4 requires a copy of Dr. Seuss’s “The Sneetches”. Many weeks have supporting or explanatory articles and videos on our website, so access to the Internet and perhaps a projection screen could be helpful, but not always necessary.

Prep: Reading through some of AFSC’s material on each issue may be beneficial to prepare for the short discussion sections at the beginning of each lesson.
**Issue 1:**  
**Peace Building**

AFSC advocates for economic and social systems grounded in nonviolence, building recognition that reallocating resources from militaries to peaceful endeavors will increase security worldwide. Read more about AFSC’s peace building projects here: [afsc.org/key-issues/issue/building-peace](http://afsc.org/key-issues/issue/building-peace)

**Think about:** What does peace look like? How is peace related to safety? Which Quaker testimonies is AFSC’s peace work built on?

**Activity:** *You will need paper and art supplies for this lesson.*

Almost 100 years ago, during wars in Europe, AFSC organized help to children caught in the conflicts, sending them food and supplies. Some children wrote thank-you notes to AFSC, like the ones below.

(see more here: [afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/war-throughchilds-eyes](http://afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/war-through-childs-eyes))

Have the youth talk about someone who has helped them or made them feel safe. Then, write or draw thank-you notes to send to that person.

**More:** AFSC advocates for the U.S. to welcome more refugees and take nonviolent steps to prevent situations where people become refugees. Learn more about the context of the refugee crisis in this series of videos from AFSC staff:

**Issue 2:**
**Just economies**

Billions of dollars are spent annually on militarism and corporate tax breaks while families and communities across the U.S. experience cuts to essential services like education, housing, healthcare, and worker protections. AFSC works at the federal level and at the grassroots in cities and towns across the country pressure Congress to direct funds away from warfare and toward creating a just economic system based on shared security and human needs. Read more about AFSC’s just economy projects here: [afsc.org/key-issues/issue/just-economies](http://afsc.org/key-issues/issue/just-economies)

**Think about:** Why do people need a just economy? What Quaker testimonies is a just economy connected to?

**Activity:** Make a budget for a family with two children and two adults working 40 hours at the 2016 federal minimum wage ($2,513 a month).

Here are some things to budget for:

- Rent or mortgage
- Childcare during time adults work
- Health insurance
- Transportation to job (car + gas + insurance or public transit)
- Food
- Other necessities (clothing, school supplies, toilet paper)

Research how much things cost where you live. How would you spend your money? What government benefits would you apply for? How would that help? See how much a family actually needs to “get by” where you live using this budget calculator. [epi.org/resources/budget](http://epi.org/resources/budget)

**More:** The annual U.S. military budget is almost $1 trillion. Imagine what just one minute's worth of that spending could do if it were used for peace. Visit [oneminuteforpeace.org](http://oneminuteforpeace.org)
**Issue 3:**
**Immigrant rights**

U.S. immigration policy should protect human rights—for everyone. AFSC directly supports immigrant and refugee communities across the U.S. while advocating in Washington, D.C., for humane policy reform. Read more about AFSC’s immigrant rights projects here: [afsc.org/key-issues/issue/immigrant-rights](http://afsc.org/key-issues/issue/immigrant-rights)

**Think about:** Have you ever lived or thought about living in another country? What rights would you want to have? What Quaker testimonies are immigrant rights connected to?

**Activity:** You will need Resource 1.1 (Path to Immigration) and a die for this activity.

Print out the “Path to Immigration” (Resource 1.1). Following the arrows, trace the path to citizenship for the three immigrant profiles below. Do they make it? Using a die, try your own luck at gaining U.S. citizenship.

- **Immigrant 1,** a child coming with her parents from Mexico. They are seeking better jobs and educational opportunities for their children. They have an uncle who is a U.S. resident.

- **Immigrant 2,** a woman from Syria. She is escaping from war and violence in her home country. She has no family in the U.S.

- **Immigrant 3,** a man from France. He has a job as an economics professor at a U.S. University. He has no family in the U.S.

You can learn more about the experience of coming to the U.S. by watching some of these short videos created by immigrants in workshops held by AFSC: [http://tinyurl.com/AFSC100-stories](http://tinyurl.com/AFSC100-stories)

**More:** Explore your own family’s origins. Has your family always lived in the same place? Ask your relatives if they know when and where they or your ancestors immigrated to the U.S. from. Try using an online ancestry or genealogy source to find out more.
**Issue 4:**
**Ending discrimination**

Racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, ageism, religious discrimination, and colonialism are all barriers to building a just and peaceful world. AFSC works with communities in the U.S. and across the globe to foster diversity, inclusion, and equality. Read more about AFSC’s ending discrimination projects here: [afsc.org/key-issues/issue/ending-discrimination](http://afsc.org/key-issues/issue/ending-discrimination)

**Think about:** What kinds of discrimination do you know about? How do you think history impacts how people are treated today? What Quaker testimonies are connected to ending discrimination?

**Activity:** This activity was adapted from Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

*You will need a copy of Dr. Seuss’s “The Sneetches” and some green stars for this activity*

Read “The Sneetches” together as a class. Then, make a list of “privileges” that individuals in the group could have (e.g., walking around the room, getting to speak first, being allowed to have two snacks). Those are green star privileges. Next, assign youth to be in two groups: Green Stars and no stars. Allow them 5 minutes to interact, then switch the groups.

Spend some time reflecting on the experience. Ask:

- How do the Star-Belly Sneetches look? How do the Plain-Belly Sneetches look?
- How is the language different for plain and Star-Belly Sneetches?
- When you were without a star, how did you feel about people with stars?
- What kinds of things do we use as “stars” that make people feel special?
- What makes you feel like a Plain-Belly Sneetch, a Star-Belly Sneetch?
- What feelings did you have during the class activity?
- What lessons did you learn? List three actions you will take to help everyone feel like they belong.

**More:** Watch this video about anti-racist organizing from AFSC staff member Dustin Washington:


Were there any new ideas for you in this video? What kinds of systems do you participate in? Do you see racism in them? Is it there, but hidden from you? What do you think you can do to change those systems? (For example, could you help your school make a new policy to give every student more equal opportunities?)
**Issue 5:**
**Addressing prisons**

AFSC is addressing four points about the U.S. prison system: ending mass incarceration, improving conditions for people who are in prison, stopping prison privatization, and promoting a reconciliation and healing approach to criminal justice issues. Read more about AFSC’s addressing prisons projects here: afsc.org/key-issues/issue/addressing-prisons

**Think about:** What happens when you do something that's against the rules? What does “justice” mean? What do you think AFSC means by “Addressing Prisons?” What Quaker testimony is addressing prisons connected to?

**Activity:** This activity was adapted from Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. You’ll need an internet connection or printed copies of the story from AFSC.org for this activity.

If you’re not familiar with the restorative justice process, watch this video about how it works in schools: youtube.com/watch?v=9pYuA3o6WuU

Talk with the youth about what restorative justice means. It may help to compare it with punitive justice (Who is involved in each process? What is the goal? What are the consequences?)

Ask the youth to share stories about when they participated in a justice process (either restorative or punitive). Ask them who was affected by their conflict, and how they were affected. How was the conflict resolved? What would have happened in a punitive justice process, and what would’ve happened in a restorative justice process? Ask for some volunteers to do a role-playing scenario of how one of the stories would play out in a punitive and a restorative justice process.

(Ask for permission to use one of the youths’ stories this way, and have an example ready from your own life that you can share, in case no one wants to use their own story.)

Talk about how restorative justice is beneficial to communities, and what some of the challenges are.

To end, read this article from afsc.org to learn about how a St. Louis school used restorative justice to change the way their school discipline system worked (if you have younger youth, you may want to summarize it for them): afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/missouri-school-takes-steps-to-disrupt-school-to-prison-pipeline

**More:** The prison where solitary confinement started is called Eastern State Penitentiary. Located in Philadelphia, the grounds now house a museum of the prison's history, as well as an exhibit about the prison system today. Visit their website and take a virtual tour of the “Prisons Today” exhibit to explore the U.S. prison system in the age of mass incarceration. easternstate.org/prisons-today
**Issue 6:**
**Call to Action**

AFSC’s great legacy of caring peace and justice work was achieved with the help of many ordinary people who believed in the message of humble service to the world. After learning about all that AFSC does, we hope you are inspired and empowered to bring that message into your own life.

**Think about:** How does AFSC make change happen? How do you make change happen?

**Activity:** You will need Resource 1.2 (Wage Peace Sign) and art/drawing supplies for this lesson.

Complete the sentence “I Wage Peace by …” on a Wage Peace sign (Resource 1.2) by writing or drawing ways you wage peace in your own life. Then, share with us by taking a picture with your sign and posting it on social media using the hashtag #WagePeace100. (Make sure you have parent or guardian’s permission before posting a photo online!)

**More:** What issue from the past weeks do you feel strongly about? Find out what organizations near you are doing and join them! Try Googling the issues and your city, or ask people who might be involved.
AFSC Centennial Curriculum, Part 2: Peace Works

We’re excited to hear the stories you’ll share with one another, and we hope it gives folks in your meeting an opportunity to learn more about one another.

The Peace Works curriculum has two one-hour sessions. There will be two groups: AFSC storytellers (probably elders/adults in the meeting) and listeners (children, youth, and other adults who want to participate).

The first session is to prepare each group for their roles, and does not require the two groups to be together. The youth can be prepared during their First Day/Sunday school time, and the adults during their Sunday school time or the coffee/fellowship hour (depending on how your meeting’s Sunday is structured).

The second session brings the two groups together. It can be used as an intergenerational 5th Sunday worship or a joint Sunday school program.

Each session begins with a focusing query, and we encourage you to share with one another as you contemplate it.

Follow the movement of Spirit in your group—if there is particular excitement about a section, stay with that until everyone is ready to move on.

We look forward to reading the stories you’ll upload to the Peace Works website at the end of the second session.

Time: 2 sessions (2 consecutive First Days), approximately 1 hour each.

Materials: This curriculum guide, printed copies of the “Writing a Peace Works Story” page (Resource 2.1), printed copies of the selected stories from Peace Works (Resource 2.2), and on Week 2, computers to type up stories. Optional: YouTube intro video for Peace Works, a copy of Resource 2.3 for the Week 1 younger listeners option, and art supplies and a camera on Week 2.

Prep: Identify some meeting members who have had a connection to AFSC during their lifetime. They could be current or former staffers, people who have participated in AFSC programs (such as work camps, Eyes Wide Open, or other activities), or people who donate or otherwise support AFSC.

If no one in your meeting has AFSC stories to share, invite folks to do intergenerational worship sharing about social justice or transformative experiences, or do the Week 1 Listeners session with the whole group.
**Week 1:**
**Storytelling Preparation**

*Focusing query:*
*How would you tell a story about an important moment in your life? What makes that moment significant?*

AFSC storytellers:

- Invite participants to spend 20 minutes with the focusing query—5 minutes of silent reflection, and 15 minutes for sharing.
- Then give each person in the group a copy of the “Writing a Peace Works Story” page (Resource 2.1) and have them start brainstorming some good story ideas together. They can start writing if they're ready.
- Ask them to type up their story and bring in a copy to the next session, paper and electronic, if possible.
- They will also need a picture to upload—they can either take one in the next week, or bring in one from the time of their story.
- Be prepared to offer some tech support!

Listeners:

- Invite participants to spend 20 minutes with the focusing query—5 minutes of silent reflection, and 15 minutes for sharing.
- Pass out story selections from Peace Works (Resource 2.2), and leave 5 minutes for each person to read the story they received.
- Spend the rest of your time having participants read their story out loud.
- After each story, ask the group what they liked and didn’t like, what moved or touched them, what they would change to make each story flow better.

An option for younger listeners:

- Invite participants to spend 20 minutes on the focusing query, or long enough that each kid can tell a story about something important that happened to them.
- Ask them to name what kinds of things were important to the group, and why they think those moments were important.
- After that, read Nancy Clarke Williams Otter’s and/or Jennifer Clark’s (Resource 2.3) story out loud.
- Ask the kids to think about what they would think or feel about moving somewhere where they didn’t speak the language for their parents to work? What would be exciting? What would be scary? Were there any things in common with the stories they told?
**Week 2:**
**Story sharing, refining, and uploading.**

*Focusing query: How do stories shape our place in this world?*

- Everyone who participated in week one should come together for this session.
- Begin with 10 minutes of silent reflection on the focusing query, and encourage people to share during that time if they feel moved.
- Split into partners or small groups, with one AFSC storyteller per group. Have the storyteller share their story and have the other members of the group give feedback. If the small groups might not know each other, have them say their names and share their significant story from the Week 1 query as an icebreaker. Remind folks of some tips for giving constructive feedback—Think about the model “Praise, question, suggest”.
- Invite the group back together for 10-15 minutes and ask if any of the storytellers want to share with the whole group. Give them the option of sharing only, or sharing with feedback from the whole group. Have 2-3 people share during this time.
- Spend the rest of your time uploading stories. Have some tech-savvy folks in the group pair up with the storytellers who need more tech help to create an account and enter their stories and photos on Peace Works.
- People who aren't helping with the web portion can illustrate the stories shared and post the drawings in the meetinghouse, or start designing a play describing the events from a particularly vibrant story, or start brainstorming questions for a forum or panel. (see the “If your meeting is going to host the banner exhibit” section below for more direction about a play and forum/panel preparation).
Follow-up activities
After the curriculum is over

- Use peaceworks.afsc.org to explore milestones in AFSC’s history. Split into groups or pairs to research a milestone (maybe ones that are unfamiliar or ones from the stories told by the AFSC storytellers.) Explore the related archive material, the centennial issue of Quaker Action (Summer 2016), and consult other sources as needed. Present back a report as a creative project (poem, play, art project such as collage or comic strip, etc.), either to the class or the whole meeting at the rise of worship or a special program. The present-back products can be incorporated into an event around the banner exhibit, if your meeting hosts it.

- For elders who are particularly interested in telling their AFSC story or have a lot to say, do an oral history project! Use storycorps.me app to record an interview. You can upload it to the Library of Congress through the app, and send us a copy, too.

- Host the Waging Peace banner exhibit on AFSC’s mission and current work. Follow this link to reserve the banner exhibit.

If your meeting is going to host the banner exhibit:

- Turn one of the stories told (with permission) into a short play. The AFSC storyteller can narrate for silent actors, or it could be scripted. Folks who don’t want to perform can illustrate the background with a roll of paper. See our event guide for hosting the banners for details on how to combine your play with other events.

- Invite some who have the most vibrant stories to tell their stories at an event at the banner exhibit. Identify folks who can coach the storytellers or be an MC.

- If you’re hosting a forum, have members prep questions during the leftover First Day school time, and invite the kids to think of some to ask as well. Think about questions that are open-ended, so people can answer in whatever way is most relevant to them. Think about good question words: Why, How, Tell me about… Think about connections between Quaker faith and the work that the panelists do.

Even deeper into AFSC’s peace and justice work, specifically for Quakers:

- Denormalizing whiteness for Racial Justice, a resource and reading guide for Quakers.
- Host “39 Questions for White People” Art Exhibit at your Meeting.
- Explore the Quaker Social Change Ministry Program for your Meeting.
- Invite a staff person to visit your meeting and present.
- Host a film screening and discuss one of our key issues.
- These resources and more can be found at afsc.org/friends-engage and its sub-pages.

If you have questions, comments, or need support, email Emily at AFSC, emcgrew@afsc.org.
Evaluation of the AFSC Centennial Curriculum

Please fill out and email to emcgrew@afsc.org or friends@afsc.org

Your Name:

Monthly Meeting or Church:

Did you use all parts of the AFSC First Day school curriculum? (if not, which ones did you use?)

Approximately how many people (youth and adults) participated in the curriculum?

Did the Key Issues section of the curriculum (Part 1) build on the youths’ knowledge of AFSC and justice work?

Absolutely not  --------------------------------------------------> Yes, very much!
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please elaborate:

Was the Peace Works intergenerational story sharing (Part 2) enriching to the life of your meeting?

Absolutely not  --------------------------------------------------> Yes, very much!
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please elaborate:

Did anyone upload a story to the Peace Works website?

Are you planning other activities for AFSC’s centennial (hosting the banner exhibit, etc.)?  YES   NO

Please elaborate:

Additional Feedback/Reflection:
What should I write about?

Write about any meaningful aspect of your connection with AFSC. For example, you could tell about:

- A memorable experience or event
- How working with AFSC changed you
- A person who had a major influence on you
- A problem and how you solved it
- An accomplishment or outcome of your activity
- The impact AFSC had on you and your life
- How you heard about AFSC
- What the biggest challenge you faced with AFSC was
- What inspires you about AFSC’s work
- What lessons you learned
- What you are proudest of from your time with AFSC
- Or just tell the story of the time when…

How long should my story be?

The most compelling and readable stories are brief and simple – from one paragraph to a short page. But feel free to add more than one story!

What can I do to improve my story?

- Build your story around a defining moment or turning point
- Give your story a beginning, middle and end
- Include concrete details to help your reader feel like they are there
- Include vivid descriptions of people, places, moments
- Answer questions like:
  - Who was with you?
  - What was your goal?
  - What did you see and hear?
  - How did you feel?
  - What was the result?
I was a Volunteer
Hugh Corbin

In the summer of 1965 Maris and I went together to the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles to run a work camp for the American Friends Service Committee. We were working in a daycare center running a summer camp program. Most of the program had taken place when the riots began in August and our entire group was evacuated.

We sat in a house outside of the city watching as everything fell apart on TV. The work camp participants were so frustrated because they wanted to do something – help in some way. But I think even that experience, knowing that sometimes you have to step back, that was an important realization for the young people. And it made them want to stay involved.

We saw while we were in Watts that very few civil rights groups actually had grass roots contact in the area. We saw some of the conditions that led to those riots – 50 percent of the neighborhood was out of work. The participants in our work camp that summer saw, first hand, what can happen when people become completely frustrated by the system.

I am a Partner
Arnie Carter

“The Story of Sanctuary”

This is a story of how when we stand together and work towards justice we can win. This is the story of small group of dedicated people who organized a church, a congregation that came together to say yes to justice, and small AFSC office who provided leadership, experience and hard work. Most importantly, this is a story of a man full of integrity, courage, faith and strength.

This story began a few years ago, when a small group of people at First Unitarian in Denver started an immigration justice group. The focus of this group was to educate ourselves and the congregation about the injustices in the immigration system, as well as to support the immigrant community and organizations working on immigrant rights. About a year into this project the immigrant community came to us though AFSC and asked us to consider providing a sanctuary space for folks facing deportation.

Our Justice Group decided to move on this opportunity with out much delay. Working with the Minster and board, we started holding forums to educate and inform the congregation about our plans. To provide sanctuary we would have get two-thirds approval from the congregation. No problem, right!

Well, the first couple of forums didn’t go so well. We had over estimated the congregation's education level on this issue and under estimated the fear factor. We were getting what felt like a lot of blow back and, to be truthful, that really hurt. But we stayed with it, making sure not to over react and kept gently educating folks.
And in the end, with the support of our Minister Mike, we secured an overwhelming amount of votes and became a Sanctuary church.

This is where the real heroes step into the story: Arturo and his wife Anna. Arturo had a final deportation order that was just a few days away. He had been accused of a crime he did not commit, was found innocent and was released from jail, only to be put into detention and deportation proceedings.

Arturo and Anna did not know us, did not speak our language or understand our crazy culture. But they did know that this was wrong. They knew that they were good people and their family had to stay together, and that no one had the right to tear them apart. So Arturo took a leap of faith and courageously entered Sanctuary where he boldly stayed for nine long, hard months.

We, alongside a larger supporting community, wrote letters and made calls, organized press conferences, marches, vigils, fundraisers, met with officials, went to Washington twice, and fasted. Literally thousands of people were involved in this work at some level. Arturo was interviewed by the press frequently, often several times a day. He was visited by students and educated many about immigrant justice. Arturo spent Christmas, Thanksgiving, his and Anna's birthday, as well as the death of his mother in Sanctuary, never once leaving the Church.

There were many ups and downs during all of this. There were many times we felt very close to winning, only to be let down and felt lost wondering what else we could do. Arturo was incredibly strong though all of this and really kept all of us going through leadership of example. And finally we received an email from ICE officials saying they would not be seeking Arturo for deportation. A small-but-huge victory for all of us.

Now almost a year later, Arturo and Anna are with their family and still working with us, leading us. And we are still companioning with folks seeking justice. Anna and Arturo are strong, confident organizers and speakers, and our church is bolder and more open. We have all changed.

None of this would have been possible without the love, leadership and support of AFSC and in particular Jennifer Piper, who was practically in sanctuary for those nine moths herself. She was and is always there for us and was incredibly dedicated.

I was a Participant
Mae Bertha Carter

My name is Mae Bertha Carter and I was born in Sunflower County, Mississippi. I was born on the farm, the plantation, 69 years ago. They owned the farm where I was born. We didn't have schools for black people to go to at that time. They had to go to a church house for about two or three months in the year. At the church house, they had one teacher that would teach all grades and all subjects. I had to pick cotton when I was about six years old. I wasn't old enough to pull the sack behind me. You know when you pick cotton you got a sack come over your shoulder and then you pull about a hundred pounds. I wasn't old enough to pull this, so I had a 16-pound bucket. Sixteen pounds of lard came in this bucket, and when I picked cotton I emptied it into my mother's sack. So I didn't get an education.
I married a man who lived on the farm and we had 13 head of children. When my first little baby was born, I looked at it and I said I want you to have an education. I don't want you out in the hot sun at 103 degrees, picking cotton for 14 hours a day. Then came the Freedom of Choice business in the ‘60s. We had been going to meetings and we would sing those songs, and when we got through singing those songs we felt so good we wanted to get out and march; so my children had gone to jail marching and protesting. Ruth went to jail and stayed five days; didn't have no food to eat. Hominy was all they had; nowhere to take a bath. Naomi stayed there for 11 days, cold grits. So the children was motivated when [the law said] they could go to any school they wanted to.

They wanted to go to the all-white school because they felt they could get a better education there. We knew they could get a better education there. The kids were so sick and tired of getting materials from this all-white school: all wore out books, half a piece of crayon, anything white children in Mississippi didn't want they passed down to the black children; old raggedy school books. Then they would go out and buy brand new school books for the white children.

So my children said yes, they wanted to go there. And I said, okay now, if you go there you are going to have to stay there because it's best not to start a thing and then stop. We was not stopping people.

When I walked into the superintendent's office and handed him the papers I noticed that he turned red. They weren't expecting anyone to do this. A couple of nights after that, about 3:00 in the morning—and we live way back on a dusty, gravel road, hardly any car ever comes back at that time—my husband looked out the window and said, “What is all those cars doing coming in here?” About then the shots came into the house. One of the shots came into the room where my daughter Ruth was sleeping.

They couldn't find who shot into the house. The government can go to the moon, but they can't find out who shot in my house. I know we didn't have $40 to our name, we didn't have no home, no land, and we had seven kids at home. My husband had to go up the next day to ask for some credit. The man at the store said, “You withdraw your children out of the school, and you have until 3:00 to do it, and then you can have credit.” That was the way it was—all the credit was cut off. We didn't know how we was going to live. But we did know we weren't going to let this man tell us where we could send our kids to school.

About five or six days after that two ladies came to our house. They'd heard about the problem but they hadn't heard about the shots into the house. They'd heard we had enrolled the kids. Some days later, one of the ladies wrote and said, some people will give you money one time and then no more. You need to have someone help you all along, and the next thing I knew I got a letter from the American Friends Service and the American Friends Service told me they had heard all about it so they sent some help.

My family and the AFSC worked together for ten years and we're still in touch.

I was a Volunteer
Toshi Salzberg

The American Friends Service Committee found me at the Manzanar internment camp during World War II. We were being held simply because my family was of Japanese ancestry.
The AFSC placed me with a family in Pennsylvania so that I could complete my nursing degree. They also offered me some of the most exciting experiences of my young life. In 1948, once I had completed my training as a nurse, I volunteered with AFSC for a two year service position in Gaza.

I was part of a team helping to resettle Palestinian Arab refugees in the Gaza Strip. The work was hard but I was young, I could handle it. There were so many sick people and not enough volunteers. We were trying to keep the children healthy.

The Palestinians were planning on returning to their homes. They assumed that what they were going through was temporary. The people were so warm, so friendly.

But it was not only the Palestinians who made an impression on me. I formed lasting friendships with the other volunteers. My friend Sirka Hilke was a nurse from Northern Finland. I remember she told me she would ski to her patients at home. We remained lifelong friends after our experience.

My time in Gaza was perhaps more meaningful to me because just a few years earlier I had been a prisoner in a camp myself – and now I found myself in another camp where people had been taken from their homes. I understood a little bit of their experience.

I was a Participant
Ricardo Salinas

I am 19 years old and I am part of a youth organization that uses hip hop culture as a tool for peacebuilding in our community, Cuscatancingo, which is a vulnerable community with high levels of violence.

I had never heard of AFSC before, until a person from another NGO recommended me to get in with AFSC in El Salvador. Since our first meeting I felt confidence and support; AFSC understood and accepted the work our youth organization was doing. It was very exciting for me to get to know about AFSC programs around the world and the methodology, but especially to know that AFSC is willing to support youth in El Salvador.

I am convinced that being part of a youth organization and receiving trainings to strengthen our leadership capabilities is the best thing that has happened to me. I have been able to grow in many ways (academically, emotionally and socially). With AFSC’s support, we have been able to learn about topics that are prohibited or commonly thought as “not for youth”. With the Local Peace Network methodology, youth in our organization and I have the opportunity to own a space where we can talk about key issues regarding our community and organizing activities to build peace in Cuscatancingo.

I want to keep learning and really hope that organizations like AFSC keep supporting youth that are willing to transform their own countries and communities. As youth, we have the desire to contribute to build a better place with our knowledge, talents and experiences. In Cuscatancingo, many people are thankful with AFSC for opening opportunities they never thought they would have. It is very fulfilling to know that the work AFSC is doing helps us build social cohesion for a better future in our community.
I am a Staff Member
Lucy Duncan

Dominque Stevenson, program director of AFSC’s Friend of a Friend program, picked me up at the Baltimore train station and we drove the 90 minutes to Hagerstown, MD where I would accompany her into two prisons.

In heavy rain we arrived at the Maryland Correctional Training Center (MCTC) late in the afternoon and we walked up to the gates, chain link with endless concertina wire encircling the prison, and guard towers perched above us. Dominque has been working with the men at MCTC since 2006. The men themselves were instrumental in designing the program, establishing the focus on mentorship.

A guard escorted us into the locked and empty classroom building, and then he called for the men to join us there. One by one the men gathered in the room, all of them African American. It is clear that Dominque has had a long relationship with them and that they were excited to see her and one another.

It was time for the men to begin their dialogue. Dominque said, “The basis for this program, for all we do, is love, but we haven’t talked about love for a while and its time again.” She invited a man to read a poem she brought. Then she asked, “What do we mean by love?” As I listened to the men, I felt as though they were reciting Corinthians 13, but the words were their own and had been written on their hearts.

A tall, older man started, “Love can be defined as a noun or a verb. When you’re in love, that feeling can fade, then what? Mature love is about what you do, how you act, the sacrifices you’re willing to make.”

A younger man continued, “Love is a willingness to endure, tolerate those who are unpleasant, unkind, unforgiving. Love is patience, a willingness to withstand onslaught, stand on what you believe.”

One of the men said, “Love is a service. You do something for someone else.” Across the room, an older man responded, “Love makes us vulnerable, to feel another’s hurts.” Another replied, “Sometimes love is letting go of someone, letting them make their own mistakes. I let you go, so you can learn yourself.”

Too soon the guard came and told us it was time to finish up. The men said a very warm “good-bye” to me, invited me to visit again. It felt so incongruous to me, to have such amazing spiritual energy locked up, hidden and almost inaccessible to those of us in the community. It’s clear these men are sharing their wisdom in the prison, changing their world, mentoring younger men and ministering.

But what could they do if they were among us, teaching us, living and growing? I wonder what does it do to us to miss their smiles, their wisdom, their amazing powerful, loving energy? What does it do to us, to our hearts, to exile them apart, away from their children, their partners, their communities? What about forgiveness?

I was an Organizer
Congresswoman Eva M. Clayton (ret.)

In 1962, married to Attorney Theaoseus Clayton (TT) with two children, we moved to rural Warren County, North Carolina, where the majority of the population were Black. TT had been invited to the county by a white attorney to form a partnership, the first integrated law firm in North Carolina. We became engaged with the
community and recognized that voter registration was very low and civic engagement very limited among Blacks. The year of 1963, I invited AFSC to consider sending a youth group to help leaders in Warren and Franklin Counties motivate and educate citizens about the importance of voting and provide instructions on how to vote. We were pleased to serve as the sponsor of this AFSC youth group.

A group of 16 diverse integrated college students, including two leaders, came to rural Warren County to live and participate with citizens that summer. With great respect and expectation, they met with citizens at churches, community centers and parks; had great discussions, role playing, and invited speakers on the importance of voter registration. The students were well received in both counties by the Black communities. However, there were two incidents where white men gathered in front of their living quarters with Klan signs to threaten the students. Two of the three black students were from North Carolina; one left because her parents were concerned for her safety. On one occasion the students came to our home, which was not far from their living quarters, for their safety. The students were brave and resolute, no physical harm occurred, their leaders were reassuring and called the police.

The project was a success in spite of these incidents. Voter registration increased greatly in both counties. This was the beginning of political empowerment and citizen engagement for Blacks and Indians in these counties.

Many of these college students, now mature adults retired from various careers, came back to Warren County in 2013 to reflect on their engagement, to reunite with one another, to visit with the citizens, and to note and celebrate the progress made in these counties over the past/last 50 years. Again, it was my privilege to invited and serve as a sponsor.

In 2016, Franklin County Blacks have been elected to serve both on the Board of Education and County Commissioners. Warren County has a majority minority elected officials serving on both the Board of Education and the Commissioners.

**I was a Participant**  
**Mary Anne Curtiss, M.D.**

In the autumn of 1970, the AFSC office in Dayton, Ohio organized a trip for teenagers to the United Nations in New York City. This included me (age 15) and about dozen other youth, including a number of inner-city teens from Detroit, as well as Quakers from various Ohio meetings.

Among the UN representatives our group met with were those from apartheid South Africa and recently-embattled Chile. I rode a subway for the first time. We visited a Hispanic bodega for a meal in a culture very different from what any of us had ever experienced. We visited Charlotte Street in South Bronx where purportedly even mailmen refused to go, and the stark and bloody Emergency Room of Lincoln Hospital—a visit that had to be cut short when one of us fainted. We visited a late-night meeting of radical medical resident doctors from that same hospital later that night.

This was a pretty strong experience for a serious-minded fifteen-year-old Quaker and I have never been the same. I am now a doctor who has always cared for inner-city poor people and my current practice is limited to drug addicts and alcoholics. I have continued my international interests with visits to Japan, Egypt, Vietnam
and Cambodia. I wonder if the people at the Dayton office of the AFSC have any idea what their efforts led to!

I was a Volunteer

Floyd Schmoe

From an AFSC Oral History:

We got a call from [The Hoover Commission] one night, asking for volunteers to convoy a train load of relief supplies from Paris to Warsaw. The Poles were still fighting on the East Front [and] they were not only suffering from the war but from a typhus epidemic.

We got out of Paris late at night. I remember when we got to Berlin, [it was] before daylight on Easter morning in 1919. We were parked at the side of a railroad yard only a few feet from a high woven wire fence. That morning, Easter morning, I was standing in the door of this boxcar that we used for commissary and cooking, having breakfast.

A little girl, little seven- or eight-year-old blonde fraulein, came up to the fence and was hanging on the wire with her two hands looking up at me eating. I saw she was hungry and I looked around for something to eat. And I found the French Red Cross who had outfitted us had put a wooden pail of hard candy, the stuff you used to get at Christmas time [in our supplies]. So I got a handful of this and I passed it through the wire to the little girl and she did a little curtsy and a “danke shoen” and ran. In about 15 minutes she came back with a dozen other kids and we passed out the entire pail of candy that morning.

The interesting thing is that 70 years later, in Seattle, I was talking at a FOR [Fellowship of Reconciliation] meeting and I told the story as I’ve told you. A young man got up immediately, he was a guest of someone at the meeting, a student from the University of Hamburg. He popped up and he said, “That girl was my grandmother! She was in Berlin at that time and she has told me that same story.” After 70 years! This is bread upon the water coming back, definitely.

I was a Volunteer

Keith Brinton

I worked with the AFSC in Vietnam from 1966 to 1970 and again from 1973 to 1975. When the Saigon regime fell apart, I had the unique opportunity to witness the end of the war and the first two months of PRG control.

The Quakers were known for trying to help “all sides” and some had tried to deliver medicines to the North. I was working as a CO in Quang Ngai in the South. Early in 1967 I had come to the local USAID office to arrange for receipt of some cement we needed and could obtain for free. There was a U.S. Army captain looking through some papers in the back, and a young Vietnamese woman clerk. She couldn’t find our application form amid the heaps of stacked folders. I told her, “The money spent on one single Phantom bomber jet would pay for filing cabinets for all USAID offices everywhere.” The woman gave me an embarrassed smile and then found our application. “Now, will you be picking up this cement with your truck?” she asked me. “No, we don't have
Two months after Liberation in 1975 it was time for my wife and me to return to the U.S. We went to the Foreign Office to ask for exit visas. In friendly fashion they quizzed us about what we would be taking home with us. “We have six rolls of undeveloped color slide film,” we told them. “Well,” they said, “you’ll need to have those developed, and let us examine the photos.” We complained that the photographic chemicals used in Saigon were so old and diluted that all the color was lost and the photos rendered nearly useless. We would be handicapped in our plan to show the photos in the U.S. and educate the people about the Revolution. The officials hemmed and hawed and finally told us to go home and both parties would try to come up with a solution. We would meet again on Thursday. When we returned three days later, they cheerfully told us they’d found a solution: We could let them send the undeveloped rolls via diplomatic pouch to Paris, where their Peace Delegation was. The photos could be developed ‘with good chemicals’ there, and sent back to Ho Chi Minh City for examination. We looked at each other: It was a great plan. “Very good!” we told them; “let’s do that.” They gazed at us for a long moment, and then said, “Okay. It doesn’t matter. You can take the undeveloped films home with you.”

**I was a Staff Member**  
**Valerie Barlow**

I believe that the work of the American Friends Service Committee is meaningful, Spirit-led, hard work.

Among my many, many memories, I recall participating in a Management Team meeting at a time when the Criminal Justice Program was desperately working on mitigating the sentence of a man who was about to be executed. During the meeting we received the news that the authorities has proceeded with the execution. AFSC staff had done everything within their power to save his life – but it was not enough.

This work is emotional work. We couldn’t keep going – we just sat in silence. What had been a working session in that instant became a Meeting for Worship. We had been talking about work plans for the future but we got slapped in the face by reality; the reality that our work is and has always been about life and death.

It was continually like that – work with the AFSC pulled at your emotions. Staff had to be courageous.

At a management retreat led by former General Secretary Mary-Ellen, we were charged with determining ‘two big hairy audacious goals’ for the work of the Committee. The depth and passion of the discussions that followed made it clear to me that the people who worked for the Service Committee put the world’s needs before their own.

The work and experience were not always easy but AFSC offered me the opportunity to leave the world a better place than I found it by means of my faith. Ultimately, the Service Committee changed my life and made me the ‘much improved’ human being that I am today.

For the rest of my life I will always be grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the blessed souls of the American Friends Service Committee.
Thank you Madeleine, Mary-Ellen, my fellow Regional Directors, the staff and volunteers of SERO, colleagues in Philadelphia and everyone else who I worked with and learned from during my tenure ~ Valerie.

**I was a Staff Member**  
**Sophie Quinn-Judge**

I was a Russian major in college and I attended an AFSC work camp organized for young people from the Soviet Union, Britain and the US. It was called Tripartite dialogue, and in true Tripartite tradition I ended up marrying one of my fellow participants who was British, Paul Quinn-Judge. Neither of us were Friends at the time, but I finally joined a meeting about seven years ago.

After we graduated from college we pursued Quaker work for about the next 12 years. We spent two years in Paris, working in the international Quaker Center, trying to promote youth activities. And it wasn't long before we got recruited to go to Saigon for AFSC in 1973. Our job was to serve as backup for the Quang Ngai Rehabilitation Center, which provided a whole range of services for civilians but focused on artificial limbs for amputees -- of which there were very many during the war. People of all ages could easily step on a mine, which were planted around military bases, on land that could overlap with the peasants' fields. Paul and I carried out a variety of jobs -- from purchasing supplies in Hong Kong to keeping in touch with Vietnamese peace activists in Saigon. Early in our time there, an outbreak of plague occurred that required refrigerated vaccines from the Pasteur center in Saigon to be flown to Quang Ngai. You never knew what would come up.

The center had a policy of serving only civilians and there was a rule that you could not bring a weapon into the hospital. The patients included civilians from all the zones -- Saigon, NLF and the no-man's land in between. For example, there was one woman, a double-amputee, who came quite clearly from the Communist side. She had been dumped in the Quang Ngai hospital after having both her legs cut off in a US military hospital. The Quakers really saved her, rehabilitated her, and looked after her. A number of former patients ended up working in the rehab center, including many of the prosthetists.

One of the things that I've always been amazed about with AFSC is that they entrust such jobs to young people -- we were only in our 20s. We were very sure at that time that there was one side that should win: the National Liberation Front. But in the spirit of the Paris Peace Agreement, signed in 1973 not long before we arrived in Vietnam, we hoped that peace would be established by means of a coalition government. Unfortunately, the provisions of the agreement were ignored in Saigon, so the war ended in 1975 with the communist's military victory. Looking back, I believe more strongly than ever that AFSC and the Quakers played an important role in trying to bring about a peaceful solution to the war. The war ended in tragedy for many people and a peaceful resolution would surely have been better for all of the Vietnamese.

**I was a Staff Member**  
**Scilla Wahrhaftig**

Did Eyes Wide Open impact the country's views on the Iraq War? Many people believe it did. For three years AFSC staff, Quakers and friends worked to display the empty boots for the soldiers killed in Iraq--and shoes representing the Iraqi civilian deaths--at sites around their states.
Here in Pennsylvania, we were able to display Eyes Wide Open at sixty locations, but we added a new dimension to the exhibit. We believed it was important to try to bridge the divide between those for and against the war and to gain a greater understanding of the differing points of view. At each site we trained many of the volunteers working the exhibit to do listening with the people who attended. To listen to the fear of more attacks on our country, to listen to the scars past wars such as Vietnam had left on soldiers and others and to listen to the pain of loss for those who knew the people the boots represented. It was heart wrenching and life changing for those listening; important, hopefully, and a little healing for those being listened to.

One site in PA was especially meaningful. Memorial Day at a Walmart parking lot in mid-state PA. The volunteers had the exhibit set up and waited nervously for the cars to roll in. They came with their “Support our Troops” and “God Bless America” bumper stickers. One man with his “Support Our Troops” bumper sticker on his beat up truck came to look. He was rough looking and had on a muscle shirt and the volunteer who approached him was sure there would be trouble. “What’s this all about,” he demanded. The volunteer explained it was the boots for the people from Pennsylvania who had been killed in Iraq and the shoes for the Iraqi civilians. “My son was killed in Iraq,” the man said abruptly. The volunteer said how sorry he was and offered to take him to his son’s boots – which were prominently displayed. The guy stood quietly by the boots with the volunteer standing respectfully nearby before he got back into his truck and drove away.

The whole day was like that with many people spending time with the boots and shoes, appreciating the display, and adding messages to the boots of the people they had known. At the end there were many messages in our message book and our donation jar was stuffed with dollars.

Did this change the attitude of the people who attended? Those who had been in support of the war? Changing hearts and minds is hard to measure but it was clear that the Eyes Wide Open volunteers had a newfound understanding of those who had supported the war. I can only imagine that we must have had a similar impact on those who had been in support of the war, but still came to see the boots.

I am an Organizer
Joseph Gerson

September 11: With Colleagues, Turning on a Dime

September 11, 2001 was a Tuesday, the day after Labor Day, the day that many of us were getting back to work after vacations or otherwise settling back into work. A number of AFSC staff from across the New England Region had planned to meet in our Concord, N.H. office that day to share our plans and ambitions for the year and to see how we might best coordinate our organizing. That was back before the era of “smart” phones and texting. Some of us drove to the meeting with our car radios on. Others enjoyed silence and the scenery. But once we reached Arnie Alpert’s second floor office across from the New Hampshire State House, we were all confronted by the news of 9-11 attacks, and by the challenges of what we knew would be its terrible long-term consequences.

It wasn’t quite chaos, but emotions ran very high. Jo Comerford from Western Massachusetts and Joseph Gainza each had family in New York, and they worked those old phones and overloaded land lines as furiously
as they could, anxious to learn if their loved ones were safe. Others of us worked with near equal intensity to reach our colleagues in Philadelphia to learn how AFSC was responding.

When we could get ourselves to something approaching being settled, before returning to the phones, we thought and sorted ideas and possible responses together. Given our political culture's militarist reflexes, we anticipated that there would be powerful calls for war. Against whom, it wasn't yet clear. That meant returning to our communities – if possible before the day's end – to launch our organizing. And it dictated getting the messaging right. We came up with “No More Victims Anywhere!” and – drawing from our earlier Gulf War slogan – “War Is Not the Answer!”

That afternoon, back in Cambridge, I convened a meeting of leading Boston area peace organizers, people who had worked together in the nuclear weapons freeze movement, for justice and peace in the Middle East, and in the Central America solidarity and anti-corporate globalization movements. We put aside discussion about how to name or structure our coalition for another day (in time it became United for Justice and Peace and remains the primary peace movement coalition in the Boston area). We focused on what we could do immediately. Our situation was a little different than in other cities that were digesting the images and pain of the attacks. The planes that took the lives in New York's twin towers had taken off from Logan Airport, just across the harbor from downtown Boston. Police were swarming seemingly everywhere searching for the attack's perpetrators, and the air was thick with fear. And as in much of the rest of the country, between the trauma and fear, few people had yet discovered the vocabulary needed to communicate what we were thinking and feeling.

We opted to call for a silent vigil the following day -- the 12th -- in Copley Square in downtown Boston. Our message was clear: We grieve the loss and suffering beyond comprehension. We condemn the attacks. War is not the answer. Join us in healing and ending the cycles of violence and retribution. We would distribute our short statement to the press and all passersby. That evening, through the night, and into Wednesday morning we scrambled to inform our networks, prepare our statement, reach the press and make our banners.

The organizing went well until noon on Wednesday, when the radio reported that the Copley Square area had been cordoned off by the police. They were searching the district's hotels in pursuit of those associated with the terrorist attacks. What to do?

Via frantic phone calls, we agreed to move the vigil across the river from Boston to Harvard Square in Cambridge, but we had no idea how many people we could reach with new of the change. E-mail was not yet in his heyday, but that was about all that we had.

It was still light when we gathered and began to line up in front of the First Parish Church in Harvard Square. Those who had been designated spoke to the swarm of media that had found us, while others handed our statement to commuters who stopped to stare or hurried past us as they headed for the T (our subway) and buses.

To our amazement people kept coming and coming and coming to join us, extending our line around the corner, opposite Cambridge Common. By the time the sun began to set we were 700 people communicating a vision of a more humane society, and building the community and solidarity that would be the foundation for the Boston area peace movement, for our contribution to what the New York Times came to term “the second superpower” of the international peace movement, and for much of my work here and with partners around the world to this day.
I was a Relative: Jennifer Clark

In 1960, my three sisters and I were living the quintessential small town American childhood in Oberlin, OH. Well, being raised Quaker was a little different, there were so few of us. Sunday morning, we went to meeting and First Day School, sometimes. When the sailing weather was good, not so much. But otherwise, pretty uneventful.

Until my parents, Bronson and Eleanor Clark, announced we were moving to North Africa for two years. My father had accepted a position helping Algerian refugees in Morocco who had fled the fighting from the war of independence against the French colonial administration. We would sell our house and our possessions, my oldest sister would finish High School as a boarding student in Europe, and the rest of us girls, ages 6, 11 and 13, would go to public school in Morocco while my parents worked for the American Friends Service Committee providing refugee relief and education in North Africa from 1961-1963.

The AFSC was headquartered for the first year in Oujda, Morocco, and we were joined by two nurses from a British Quaker Relief organization, and two Conscientious Objectors from the United States. There was a full on press to learn French, the language of most public commerce, with mixed results. We lived in a beautiful compound with a front gate and a walled garden, a vestige leftover from Morocco’s own colonial days. There was a housekeeper/cook, maid, and gardener. This staff was Moroccan, and spoke Arabic. Another language to try to learn. Year two, following the end of the Algerian war of independence from France, the program moved to Tlemcen, Algeria.

What I remember of the work was the ateliers, or workshops, separate for men and women, where my mother taught sewing, and my father and the CO’s taught carpentry and other skills which would be useful in re-building war torn communities. There were dinners and meetings at our house where local Arab and French community leaders came to dine together, hosted by these unusual Quakers, who believed that people of such different backgrounds could come together and find common ground. I remember hearing bombing in the distance across the border at night. I remember sorting donated clothing, distributing food, and riding with the nurses to clinics with lines of women and children getting check ups and shots. Basic, uncomplicated service delivered with uncomplicated kindness. Respect for all, by example. A living demonstration that everyone could work together for a common purpose, and get along.

In the manner of Friends, there was no proselytizing. Those who were curious about Quakers, and our worship style, were invited to sit with us in silent meeting for worship on Sundays in our garden, outside, in a simple circle of chairs.

As children, we gained “lived experience” of another point of view, another perspective, another continent, another way of life. We became citizens of the world.
I was a Relative:
Nancy Clarke Williams Otter

I was just four years old when I became an AFSC volunteer. In 1957-58 my mother and father were leaders of an international work camp in Mexico. My five-year-old brother and I were part of the package. We lived for a year in the tiny town of El Verde in Puebla state, right at the foot of Iztaccihuatl.

The work camp groups---there was a summer crew and a winter crew---all lived together in an abandoned hacienda, sharing meals and stories, songs and chores. The hacienda had no electricity or running water, but a perfectly fine pump, and an inner courtyard with four fruit trees. I remember lemon, lime, orange, and pomegranate. We were told there were ghosts---which was thrilling---and I was early-on instructed to turn my shoes upside down after taking them off at night so that scorpions would not drop into them from the ceiling.

I guess all of the international volunteers helped take care of me, but I especially remember Doris (from the UK), Gigo (Israel), and the very tall Von Peacock who sometimes carried me on his shoulders when we walked around town. I became best friends with a girl named Yolanda, and pretty soon refused to speak English with my family.

The AFSC work camp became a foundational part of my growing up. My parents and grandparents were left progressives and civil rights activists in the US South, so I began with immediate understanding of the call to care for one’s neighbors, one’s community, one’s world. The international volunteers drew my young attention to the universal nature of that call. In later years I watched my mother, in particular, give her energy and time to fair housing, peace (often at the Washington Peace Center), anti-apartheid activity, and voter registration. She turns 92 this year, and two weeks ago the two of us went to a vigil, in Easton, Maryland, for the Orlando shooting victims.