



in this issue >>> Greensboro students go to DC film festival, local quilting for immigrant rights, summer interns, and more!



American Friends Service Committee

Area Office of the Carolinas

Quaker values in action

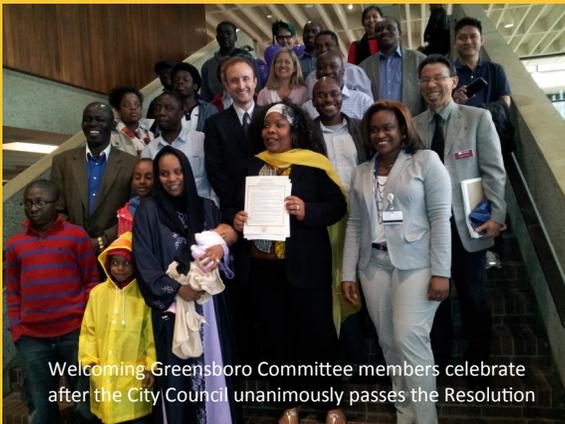
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April-May 2014 Newsletter Editor: Tim Leisman

Welcoming Greensboro Resolution Passes with Flying Colors!



Welcoming Greensboro Committee members celebrate after the City Council unanimously passes the Resolution

A growing number of cities and municipalities in the United States are recognizing the economic and social benefits of welcoming diverse voices into their communities. On Tuesday April 15th, 2014, the city of Greensboro became part of this movement that includes 31 cities and counties across the country.

The Greensboro City Council unanimously voted in favor of a resolution recognizing the city of Greensboro as a welcoming city that celebrates the growing diversity of its residents and acknowledges that immigrants enhance the culture and the economy. This day was one of my proudest moments as an AFSC intern.

This resolution is the culmination of a six-month comprehensive project called the “Welcoming Greensboro Initiative (WGI)” led by the Greensboro office of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). AFSC adopted a participatory approach by reaching out to leaders of diverse immigrant communities and friends from

academic, non-profit, refugee resettlement and advocacy organizations to form a Welcoming Greensboro Committee that oversaw the project.

We reached this outcome following many meetings with diverse stakeholders in our community including refugees and both documented and undocumented immigrants from around the world. These discussions centered around what challenges they face on a daily basis, what the positive aspects of living in Greensboro are, and what recommendations they have for a more welcoming city.

Moreover, the WGI Committee

held multiple meetings to discuss, analyze and will soon release an extensive report of our findings. The committee also met with elected city officials, city managers and gained their support for ideas to make Greensboro more inclusive and welcoming.

While the Greensboro Resolution is the outcome of a collaborative effort between many groups, it is just the beginning of the work we initially set out to accomplish. The next step is for the stakeholders to work with the Greensboro Human Relations Commission’s International Advisory Committee to address the identified challenges and push for humane solutions that will alleviate the plight of immigrants. Already, community leaders including city staff have signaled their intentions to be more active as we move forward in the process.

I could not be more proud of the efforts put in by all members of the WGI committee and am proud of being part of this initiative.

- Adamou Mohamed, AFSC Intern

Greensboro Youth Present at DC Peace Film Festival

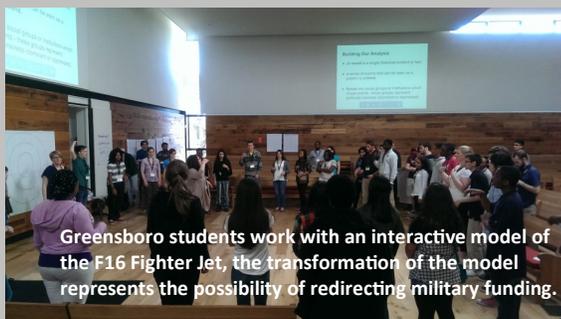
This past Spring, AFSC staff and interns collaborated with Elimu Empowerment Services, a refugee services center in Greensboro, to create a short film for submission to the fourth annual If I Had a Trillion Dollars (IHTD) Film Festival.

This film festival, held in Washington, DC on the Tax Day weekend, highlighted what young people would do with money currently spent on war and the military in the US. In addition, they learned techniques for advocacy and lobbying that will help them create the change they wish to see in the world.

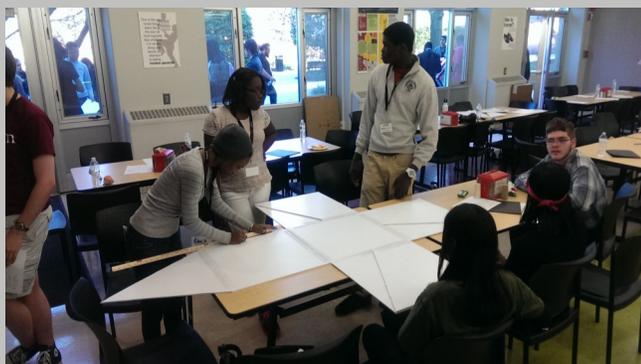
Elimu students had a very successful trip and we encourage all to view the IHTD submissions on Youtube (<http://tinyurl.com/owap6q7>). Below are some reflections from the trip mentors:

“...The transformation [exercise] helped the students to visualize everything the government could be spending money on instead of jets and military equipment. That and being able to visit a representative of the House of Representatives further instilled in the students that they have a voice.” — Amy Hinton, Elimu Mentor

“I enjoyed the trip to the Capitol; the students received the chance to talk with House Representative Coble’s staff, and they addressed issues that they see and face in North Carolina today. Overall the trip was very successful.” —Zachary Lindsey, Elimu Mentor



Greensboro students work with an interactive model of the F16 Fighter Jet, the transformation of the model represents the possibility of redirecting military funding.



Quilts for Immigration Justice

On April 30, AFSC visited the Oakwood Forest Community in Greensboro to work on a quilt for immigration justice. Using felt and other materials, the women in attendance designed quilt squares that reflect their values, their frustration with the broken immigration system, and their visions for change.

Moises Serrano, an undocumented activist from Yadkin County, participated in the activity with his mother. They shared their stories with the other participants, fostering dialogue about the common challenges that undocumented immigrants face in NC, how activism can alleviate depression, the recognition of immigrant voices and contributions, and pathways to citizenship for immigrants without papers.

The stories and quilt squares reveal the fear, uncertainty, and isolation that many immigrants experience in our country due to unjust immigration policies and pathways toward deportation. We hope that the quilt will serve as a profound statement for why humane immigration reform is needed in the United States.

— McKenzie Mann, AFSC Intern



Moises Serrano and his mother create quilt squares featuring their unique stories.

No More Deaths Trip

For the past several years, students from Guilford College have participated in an alternative spring break trip to the Sonoran Desert on the US/Mexico border with an organization called No More Deaths/No Mas Muertes. Far from any beach retreat, these students spend their days hiking trails that migrants walk placing food and water in strategic locations where they will be helpful to those who may be suffering in the desert.

Each year, dozens of people die while seeking a better life for their families. Many more are detained in mostly private prisons in the US and deported after a mass sentencing in a courtroom under a program called Operation Streamline. Students witness these proceedings and learn ways to advocate for reform and justice in immigration policy.

AFSC Intern Moira O’Neill participated in the trip this year and created a very powerful video detailing her story. Please check it out, as it conveys more than these words ever could: <http://tinyurl.com/lqtsy7q>.

—Tim Leisman, AFSC Intern

Meet new AFSC Summer Interns



Tim Leisman is a graduate of Guilford College with degrees in Political Science and Peace and Conflict Studies. He has worked with several social change organizations in Greensboro such as the Center for Creative Leadership and NCCJ of the Piedmont Triad.

Tim is committed sustainable and systemic social progression and this summer he will serve as the Communications Intern at AFSC.



Kelly Morales is a senior at UNCG graduating next May with degrees in Political Science, International and Global Studies, and Sociology.

Her growing passion for social justice, which partly stems from experiences abroad with human rights, continues to encourage her community work. This summer she will serve as Immigrant Rights Intern with AFSC.

Stay tuned for profiles of our other two summer interns in next month's newsletter!

Elon Students Research "Secure Communities"

This spring, students in the capstone course for Elon University's Poverty and Social Justice program worked with AFSC to conduct research on the federal deportation program Secure Communities (S-Comm).

One group developed an action plan for analyzing the financial impact of S-Comm on Guilford County. A 2nd group tracked the Guilford County Jail Roster and found that roughly 20-25 inmates per day are held on immigration detainees. A 3rd group studied resolutions passed by other cities and counties in the U.S. to prevent law enforcement from honoring ICE detainer requests. A final group conducted interviews with immigrants and community advocates to learn how S-Comm has affected the relationship between immigrants and law enforcement in Guilford County.

Overall, the researchers recognized that these policies are costly and making communities feel less safe. AFSC is excited to continue working in this area, including with a documentary and further research. We hope that these contributions will help change the way S-Comm is implemented.

—McKenzie Mann, AFSC Intern

AFSC Hosts Annual Pilgrimage for Peace in Greensboro



Students promote their message of peace by the post office as residents mail in tax returns

Every year during Holy Week, the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace walks across North Carolina spreading messages of peace throughout different cities. On Tuesday April 15th, the Pilgrimage passed through Greensboro during the 28th annual walk. Staff and interns from the American Friends Service Committee, Witness for Peace, Guilford College students, and various community members were all present.

Each day of the Pilgrimage has a different focus. On Tuesday the focus was Military Spending and immigration issues. Because May 15th is tax day, a peaceful witness was held outside of the post office. While people crowded the post office to file their taxes, the group held signs reminding them of where their tax dollars really go. The signs had messages such as "Money For Schools, Not War" and "Education not Militarization." People had different reactions to the group's presence at the post office. "I really liked it when the few people that came up to us came up and thanked us because it made me feel like I was doing something very important," said Guilford Sophomore Risa Pine.

The group continued walking to Guilford College where students presented on their work with humanitarian group No More Deaths on a Spring Break trip to the US/ Mexico border. There, participants shared about why they chose to walk on the Pilgrimage, and what issues they hold dear to their hearts. The core walkers continued to walk in other cities ending Friday in Raleigh for an "Economic Justice Way of the Cross" at the State Capitol.

—Moira O'Neill, AFSC Intern

Black & Brown Youth Share Their Videos and Stories

Over the last several months, AFSC-NC has conducted digital storytelling trainings with youth groups in Charlotte, Greensboro and Siler City. During these workshops, the youth learned how to tell their stories in their own words and put together a 2-4 minute film utilizing basic audio and video editing software.

On Sunday, May 4, we brought two of those groups together to share their videos and experiences. Youth from Elimu Empowerment Services, serving primarily African refugee youth in Greensboro, and El Vinculo Hispano (The Hispanic Liaison) in Siler City met in Greensboro and screened their videos for the first time. Unfortunately, youth from United 4 The Dream in Charlotte had another commitment. Some of the videos dealt with struggles with parents and others dealt with the journeys their families took to get to the U.S. The youth put a lot of time into their short films and their hard work paid off!

Following the video screening, the young people had an opportunity to discuss what they had seen and compare and contrast the themes. There were lots of questions about how immigrants from different countries arrive in the U.S. During the conversation, the Latino students, whose families were primarily from Mexico, learned what it was like to have to move to a refugee camp because a warlord is leading your country, and then what it was like to come to the U.S. on a plane. They also learned that refugees receive limited support from the government, but only for 3 months.

The Elimu students learned that many Mexican immigrants actually walk for many days to cross the border, and that once here, there is no way to access legal immigration papers for most people. These students had no idea that was the situation of some of their peers.

At the end, we celebrated with some delicious Mexican and African food. Then, the young people showed off different dance styles. Overall, this was an extraordinary learning opportunity on many levels, from learning how to make a short film to learning about what other young people are going through, and that common struggles and common humanity bind us together, despite different nationalities.

—Lori Khamala, AFSC Staff



Ibrahima receives a certificate for completing the Digital Storytelling workshop and creating his own short film.



Digital Storytelling workshop participants from Elimu Empowerment Services and El Vinculo Hispano celebrate together.

Upcoming Events

Moral Mondays! Each Monday beginning May 19 at the State Capitol in Raleigh.
Wednesday, June 11: Immigrant Rights Working Group meeting in Greensboro, 11:30am.

Tuesday, June 17: UndocuGraduation in Raleigh.

Thursday, June 19: Immigrant Solidarity Committee meeting in Charlotte, 6pm

Tuesday, June 24: Immigrant Rights Working Group meeting in Greensboro, 6:00pm.

For information about any of the listed events, please call AFSC:

336-854-0633