



**Quarterly Program Report
American Friends Service Committee
West Region**

Program Title: CA Healing Justice
Period Covered by Report: Oct – Dec. 2017

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1. Program Description: The criminalization of poor people and people of color occurs throughout the law enforcement continuum. Policing practices, reliance on money bail, and sentencing and parole policies, are all places we see economic disadvantages and racism manifest. To make a dent in mass incarceration, criminalization and racial profiling must be addressed at multiple levels, simultaneously. The California Healing Justice program asks: Where police resources are being used, which communities are targeted, and which communities are filling up our jails? The program addresses police training and advocates, works with prisoners and family members to document and challenge prison conditions, advocates legislative and administrative improvements, and assists family members and allies to become effective advocates. Finally, the program works to replace the current system with a system that is based on restorative justice principles and practices allowing communities to heal.

2. How did this program progress toward each of its intended results/expected changes during this period?

Reduction of prison population are accompanied by durable mechanisms for keeping the population down:

On October 11, 2017 Governor Brown signed the RISE Act, SB280 as well as SB620, which will significantly impact the use of sentencing enhancements, which drive up the length of sentences. These are durable, structural changes in sentencing practices. It will be awhile before we have actual numbers of reductions to report, but this is an important first step. Another significant bill that was signed by the governor allows people convicted of crimes before they were 25 years old to have their sentences re-considered based on their age. This is



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the third time the legislature has recognized the significance of age in the commission of crimes and created a pathway for this to be considered in continuing to incarcerate someone. The first bill said persons under 20; the second bill said persons under 23; the most recent bill said persons 25 years old and under (SB 261).

Use of long term isolation is reduced by half, down to 2,650 from 5,300 for both SHU and Ad Seg; no significant changes in these numbers for this period, but we continue to monitor some ways the numbers could increase. For example, following an incident in Pelican Bay May 2017, in which guards were attacked, 140 prisoners were charged with attempted murder and are still being held in isolation pending investigation. So far, the District attorney has not charged them with anything. In addition, Laura submitted a comprehensive article on the changes in solitary confinement policy to Western Friend and it was published in their January 2018 issue.

Coalitions in CA and AFSC staff are broadly representative of those directly affected by the issues:

50% of staff and interns be from directly affected communities served by the work we do:

We completed our intern recruitment in the Fall and found a formerly incarcerated person to serve as our Ristad intern for the year. This completed our staff compliment and gives us 50% of staff and interns on our team who are directly affected.

Three counties reexamine the role of Urban Shield in police and first responder trainings. AFSC research documents the nature of racial impact and the cost of trainings. Three counties reexamine plans for building or expanding jails:

It has not been possible to work on these issues in three counties so we are concentrating in Alameda County with some presence in San Francisco. Some issues we work on illustrate and give us the opportunity to enter dialogue on a broader set of problems in policing and the justice system, and Urban Shield is one of those issues. The campaign to stop Urban Shield – the annual SWAT team training and military equipment vendor show for police and other agencies in the Bay Area and beyond – has reached a new phase. The Alameda County Task Force on Urban Shield on which we participated concluded its sessions, but county staff have still not issued the task force's report, necessary for county supervisors to make a decision on its future. Similarly, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors have taken a step back from committing the City to fully withdraw from the SWAT programs. We have responded by organizing increased grassroots education in San Francisco to build the base of awareness and support, while continuing advocacy with Board staff.

At the same time, despite what appeared to be a setback last June, the Berkeley mayor and city council have demonstrated renewed commitment to withdrawing Berkeley's participation in



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Urban Shield. The mayor specifically asked Healing Justice staff to meet in December. At the meeting, we both brought our coalition partners to the table and also learned about the city government's struggle with the police union, which is using contract negotiations to forward a narrative of shackled policing that requires more resources, despite the growing police budget in Berkeley. We also learned that other cities are considering withdrawing from Urban Shield, and could follow Berkeley's lead. John subsequently published a column on policing budgets and salaries, city resources, and crime rates in Berkeley (here). As the Stop Urban Shield campaign may shift into a new phase, we are working with other partners on a campaign to audit the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, especially its jail operations (over \$200 million a year) and state and federal grants (which support Urban Shield). AFSC's research is being used in this campaign, which will serve as a basis to question the maintenance of one of the largest jails in the country, despite a falling local jail population.

Medium term or long term intended results: People involved in AFSC Restorative Justice work become advocates for systematic change. Fatimeh sits on both the Oakland RJ council and the Beloved Oakland RJ coalition. Through these networks, we



are exposed to great opportunities. One of the most recent opportunities we were connected with through our RJ coalition is a 2-day Kingian Nonviolence training that will serve to be most helpful for our healing justice practices. While working in coalition, we also held an event for Restorative Justice Day in Oakland in which we fed the community, created talking pieces and sat in circle together, experiencing the profound effect that Restorative Justice can have on us when practiced. The event was held outside, at Lake Merritt. This allowed community members walking the lake, or shopping at the nearby farmers market to come see what we were doing, giving us more exposure than anticipated.

A medium result on solitary anticipated that gang validation would no longer be used to keep people in isolation. This result was achieved through the lawsuit settlement, requiring that only actual gang activity can cause a person to be placed in isolation. However we are seeing the



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Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation continue to use gang validation to make classification decisions, disciplinary write-ups, and parole decisions. Often validation is based on informants who provide "information" in order to prove that they themselves are no longer part of a gang. This "evidence" is considered "confidential information", meaning the prisoner named cannot challenge its content, or even know what he/she are being accused of. AFSC has taken the lead on drafting legislation to curb the use of such information.

3. What work was done during the period that did not fit under the current goals?

The centennial celebration took up quite a bit of time this quarter. In addition to our workshops we helped with the "Hall of Fame", the program planning, and especially the final plenary session with a panel of three Regional Directors from the San Francisco Bay Area representing the 1970s, 1990s, and present day. Many former staff and committee members participated – close to 200 people.

The other big activity that wasn't in our program plan was the move from San Francisco back to Oakland in early December. Healing Justice culled through boxes of files going back to the 1950s and sent many boxes back to the Philadelphia archives, and six boxes to the Freedom Archives in San Francisco for anyone who is researching the prison movement in California.

4. Please include stories of the human impact of your work.



During the Healing Justice workshop at the centennial celebration, we explained what Restorative Justice is, and facilitated a values round in order to create space where participants can actually feel what it is like to be in a Restorative Justice circle. To our pleasant surprise, both workshops had reached capacity with over a total of 60

participants. During one of the workshops, a participant shared a moving story with us. His friend was riding a bike, when a car hit and dragged her under the car causing severe bodily injury. The driver was under the influence of a controlled substance and was going to be charged with a felony, until the woman stepped in and asked for a RJ process rather than going through the court system. Initially the participants did not understand why someone would choose to go through a RJ circle but after explaining how the RJ process allows the person responsible to take accountability, and gives the person harmed their power back and allows



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for healing, participants really seemed to recognize and appreciate what RJ can do. After exposing so many people to Restorative Justice and the beauty that comes from it, we moved a workshop attendee enough to contact us with the hopes of volunteering with the Healing Justice program in the near future.