On December 2nd, the Immigrant Rights Working Group of Guilford County (IRWG) sponsored a talk about immigrant detention in conjunction with an exhibit at the Greensboro International Civil Rights Museum. Prior to the presentation given by IRWG member Krista Craven, guests toured the exhibit titled “States of Incarceration” which included an exhibition on immigrant detention that was curated by student historians at the museum.

The tour displayed the conditions of incarceration and the driving forces behind many of the detention centers in the United States. Along with recorded interviews and personal accounts, the tour allowed visitors to obtain more information about mass incarceration, including children in private prisons and through government contracts in immigrant detention centers. The tour shared stories and the history of the prison complex system that disproportionately affect people of color.

Following the tour, Krista Craven, Assistant Professor at Guilford College, provided key findings about immigrant detention in North Carolina’s Triad region. Through the IRWG, 62 people completed surveys who had either been held in detention and/or knew a close relative or friend who had been deported or detained. From this report, the effects of detention on families, individuals, and our community were gathered, as well as the types of offenses that led to the individuals’ detention, many of whom were detained due to driving without a license on their way to work and other minor offenses. Additionally, many family members and children suffered economic and psychological impacts.

During the presentation, the audience also heard a personal account of someone who was detained. You can watch the video yourself at www.tinyurl.com/StoryofJorge.

Craven spoke about the 34,000 immigrant detention quota that the government has in place, and the issues that immigrants are facing when it comes to trusting law enforcement and the concern for safety for their families.

Importantly, the IRWG presented recommendations on how to solve these issues in our community from the research conducted and advice given by local attorneys, community members, and those directly affected by federal and local policies.

Below are recommendations presented and suggested by the IRWG in the report:

-End the federal detention quota, mandating that 34,000 immigrants be held in detention at all times (www.afsc.org/endthequota)
-Ensure due process for all immigrants and provide representation to all immigrants.
-End collaboration between ICE and local law enforcement.

Read the full report here: http://www.tinyurl.com/ImmDetReport

-Citlaly Mora, AFSC Intern
Mountain View Friends Meeting in Denver, Colorado has taken Ingrid Encalada Latorre into Sanctuary. Ingrid, who has lived in the United States for the majority of her life, is facing deportation and separation from her children. Ingrid has a “stay of deportation” application pending with Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) and has been awaiting a response, after many appeals and attempts to stay with her family.

David Poundstone of Mountain View Friends Meeting made the following statement in their press release: “We welcome Ingrid, Bryant, Anibal and Eliseo with open arms. Since we joined in supporting the work of the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition two years ago, we have learned much in accompanying our immigrant brothers and sisters in their struggle to keep their families together. We cannot stand idly by and let our government threaten the integrity of families. We feel called upon to engage in civil initiatives to invoke the tradition of sanctuary to protect those under threat of harm. We publicly demand discretion and humane treatment by our government to protect the basic human right to keep families together, where they have lived and worked among us. We have come to know them and love them as our friends and neighbors”.

ICE has considered churches as “sensitive places” and has not yet entered houses of worship to make arrests, except under extreme circumstances. By opening their doors to Ingrid, the Denver Friends Meeting has allowed her an opportunity to find refuge until a decision is made on her deportation. Ingrid Latorre was arrested for misrepresenting her immigration status and paid $12,000 in back taxes and served four years of probation. Nonetheless, deportation still looms because she is being charged with a felony, which makes her a priority for ICE.

AFSC staff in Denver has been instrumental in supporting this, as well as other, Sanctuary efforts.

-Citlaly Mora, AFSC Intern

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A group of concerned residents has given the Greensboro City Council an ultimatum in which they demanded that the city release all information regarding the incident involving Greensboro Police Officer Cole. This past summer, the officer brutalized an African-American man by the name of Dejuan Yourse while he was sitting on his mother’s porch. While the officer has now resigned, very few details were provided on what action was taken and why there seems to be a lapse in the timeline of action.

Consequently, this incident has raised questions about the closed-door meetings that took place and the City Council investigation that was withheld from the public. Due to the lack of transparency, the group would like the City Council to present all the documents that involve the investigation to ensure public safety in the future so these type of incidents do not happen again and the police is accountable if they do. The group hopes that with the release of these documents, trust will begin to be restored between the city administration and the residents of Greensboro.

This group of intergenerational, multicultural residents that call this “Operation Transparency” held a press conference in the Greensboro Municipal Building this past Tuesday announcing their concerns and their demands to have access to public records and the personnel file of the Officer involved by January 11th. The request was formally given and delivered to each City Council member.

The group plans to hold a “Truth on Blast” action in the City Council Meeting that will take place on December 20th and start holding trainings for citizens to participate in a “People’s Document Search” if City Council does not respond to their request by January 11th.

-Citlaly Mora, AFSC Intern

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Ingrid Encalada Latorre speaks to supporters as she announces taking sanctuary to avoid deportation. Photo from Denverite.
ELECTION REFLECTION 2016

Note: AFSC is a strictly non-partisan organization. The following articles were written by interns & volunteers, and any opinions expressed reflect their own views and those observed on campus, not those of the organization.

On Guilford College’s campus the night of the 2016 presidential election, there was tension and excitement in the air. Students on campus, who tend to be liberal Democrats, watched as results rolled in, seeming optimistic that Clinton would win. After all, the polls gave her a favorable chance of winning. So when the results began to sway toward Trump, the excitement in the room turned to dread. Since the election, many students questioned why and how this victory, contradictory to the poll predictions, occurred. Some speculation is that Democrats assumed Clinton would win, and thus didn’t turn out to vote. There was also evidence of voter suppression laws affecting the outcome, as states that often go blue went red had higher situations of voter suppression laws or limited access to polls.

As Donald Trump’s inauguration nears, we will continue to see the unfolding of our new federal government and the anticipation of what the next administration will bring. After announcements of many controversial cabinet nominees, anxiety is growing on how these appointees will affect civil rights and our country. Despite the rhetoric, and regardless of who is in power, AFSC remains committed to the stance of working for social justice.

-Joy Stokes, AFSC Intern

RESISTING HATE

For many people, the past six weeks have been extremely difficult. The unexpected victory of a presidential candidate who promises to deport 2 million undocumented immigrants and forcing all Muslims on a registry (among the long list of hateful and dangerous threats to the vast majority of people in this country) left many of us feeling fearful, depressed, and disoriented. But people’s resiliency and hope always overcomes, and we have seen many examples of what resistance looks like.

On December 3, thousands of people from across North Carolina organized rallies and counter-protests across the state in response to the KKK’s plans to parade in celebration of Trump’s victory. In Greensboro, community members invoked the painful history of the 1979 Massacre as they marched and rallied along the same route. The message was clear: we will not tolerate racism, hate, and violence. Greatly outnumbered and out organized, Klan leaders canceled their parade confirming, yet again, that protest and nonviolent resistance works.

While shutting down the Klan is only a small victory in comparison to the tasks ahead, it demonstrates how people, many who have become politicized for the first time in their lives, have the power to unify in solidarity and organize themselves when it is most needed. Most importantly, it demonstrates that a multiracial movement can not only survive the next four years, but maybe even win them.

-Juan Miranda, Community Organizer

VOTING RIGHTS MATTER

Reflecting on the non-partisan work AFSC did in registering voters and voter education, AFSC had accomplishments and recognizes there is work left to do. Organizations like AFSC work to register people to vote and collaborate with other organizations to provide access to the polls. AFSC registered more than 200 voters, and joined the Moral Monday marches protesting restrictive voter id laws. AFSC hopes to continue this vital work to ensure voting that is as accessible as possible for as many eligible voters as possible.

It is important to recognize that with a new governor and the order of a new redistricted map by March 2017 that will be redrawn by the NC General Assembly and the special elections that will follow, we will continue to support voting access and elimination of suppression for voters and laws that hurt civil and human rights.

-Joy Stokes, AFSC Intern

UPCOMING EVENTS

“No Room at the Inn”
December 24, 2016, 10am, Raleigh NC Community Admin. Bldg, 200 W. Jones St. Event sponsored by NC NAACP and Adelante Education Coalition to call for equal access to higher education for all NC students, regardless of immigration status.

“Sanctuary Everywhere”
January 12, 2017, 8:30pm National AFSC Conference Call Join a national AFSC “Call for Spirited Action” to learn more about a new initiative, #SanctuaryEverywhere, exploring ways to resist oppression at individual, congregational and city levels. Visit www.afsc.org/calls-spirited-action for details.
THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY DINNERS CELEBRATE IMMIGRANTS

Last month, as many of us celebrated Thanksgiving, so did AFSC and many other community organizations in Guilford County. Placing focus and bringing attention on welcoming our immigrant neighbors and getting to know them was at the center of several community events.

FaithAction International hosted their annual Thanksgiving dinner celebrating our fellow neighbors and communities. With fellowship and plenty of international dishes brought by community residents, they conversed with one another and got to know their neighbors from different backgrounds.

In High Point, AFSC along with other organizations that are part of the Social Justice Committee, hosted their first annual Multicultural Thanksgiving dinner. With food and an a packed house, community members were able to enjoy food and each other’s company while recognizing the contributions of immigrants and refugees go beyond food and culture.

-Citlaly Mora, AFSC Intern

WUNC HOSTS LIVE SHOW DISCUSSING REFUGEES & INCARCERATION

On December 13th, WUNC hosted a live show at the Greensboro Triad Stage featuring two top stories: the wrongful incarceration of a UNCG Masters’ student and the Guilford College-based movement to “make every campus a refuge”. Both stories were focused on topics that AFSC cares deeply about.

Sherill Roland shared his experience of being a wrongly convicted African American man who was jailed until he was exonerated recently. He spoke about the horrid conditions in the jails and how his experience led to his creation of “The Jumpsuit Project”. Through this visual of an orange jumpsuit, Roland raises awareness about the state of incarceration and the effects of the system on his life, his work, and how it affects millions of people in the country, especially African-Americans. His treatment and the faults in our legal systems are just one of the many examples of the systematic racism in our institutions.

As a whole, this is just a reflection of the state of things for people of color and what needs reform. This discussion comes at a heated time, days after the officer who killed Keith Lamont Scott was freed of charges for the killing of a Black man that incited what was known as the “Charlotte Uprising” and several national protests that were centered in Charlotte, NC. The legal system shows us how it is flawed in so many aspects, affecting people of color most, whether guilty or innocent; incarcerated or free.

The second portion of the radio show focused on the efforts of Guilford College to help refugees feeling violence in the Middle East. The host discussed the role of Quaker values and providing refuge that has been integrated into Guilford College throughout history. Guilford College initiated a program that has spread to other universities in which they partner with local resettlement agencies and host refugee families. Guilford College has now hosted three families and plans on moving forward and helping other schools develop something similar. As we move forward and face adversaries, especially immigrant and refugees, we have to note that we as a community have a say and an impact in what happens and how we react to protect our communities that need it most.

-Citlaly Mora, AFSC Intern

Join a national AFSC “Call for Spirited Action” to learn more about a new initiative, #SanctuaryEverywhere. Thursday, January 12, 2017, 8:30pm EST. Visit www.afsc.org/calls-spirited-action for more details.