

# Interview with Ebelin Morales Delgado

## AFSC Twin Cities Healing Justice Social Media Intern

October 22, 2020

Please tell us about yourself.



I'm 22 years old and started with AFSC last year. I run all our social media for Youth Undoing Institutional Racism (YUIR) Twin Cities (see [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)). I do the graphics, posts, and write all the captions. I go online and try to keep up with our Twitter to see what other organizations are doing and keep up with their work.

I'm a senior at Augsburg University in Minneapolis, right in the center of the city near the University of Minnesota.

I'm majoring in Sociology and minoring in Graphic Design. I really love combining both of my passions – social justice and learning, of course, and also art.

**What's the work been like with the young people in the Twin Cities? What concerns do young people have? What's AFSC's role?**

The work has been challenging ever since May, of course. So many things develop so quickly. The good part about that is we're at ground zero of the uprising that's still happening. We keep up to date; we're among the first people to know if anything is going down in Minneapolis or even the surrounding cities, because it directly relates to social justice and everything having to do with police brutality and George Floyd.



AFSC in the Twin Cities has just hired a new Program Associate, Brynne Crockett, and so we've just completed our team. At the same time, you have all these things thrown at you, and it's hard to keep a consistent work time.

For example, if there's a rally happening, and then we're like, "Oh shoot! We've got to show up! We've got to move things around." We have to meet about it and see what we can do to further support young people who are involved. If the rally is about a certain topic, we have to figure out, "OK, we know this conversation is happening. How do we show up into it?"



We're all human, so the state of the coronavirus, self-isolation, etc, make it really hard to stay motivated. But we're also learning that just because we're physically distanced doesn't mean we have to be socially distanced. If you use the phrase "social distancing" in front of a sociologist, they'll say, "That's not the correct term! It's physical distancing!"

It's been rough, but we're still finding new ways to be resilient. I think the hard part with the young people right now, especially with me being a young person and still being in college, everyone is just so tired. You know you have a bunch of work to do, and there are so many battles to fight.

I just [posted on our social media accounts](#) about taking care of yourself because there are still so many battles ahead to fight, and you're the best armor that you have to go into those battles.

The conversation with young people right now is definitely revolving around school and remote learning. I was talking with my supervisor, Shenene Herbert, about this. How it's been hard for me to

*Now is the time to*  
**LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELF.**  
*Now is the time to*  
**TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.**

YUIR- LITTLE PUSH MONDAYS

be in school, and I can't even imagine what it's like for kids in high school or middle school who don't have access to Wi-Fi, or have to share a laptop with a sibling.

That's where the conversation is. We've had a couple virtual town halls over Zoom with young people, trying to voice their concerns in front of authority figures or decision makers. We invite both young people and adults to the conversation, but the conversation is focused around youth. So youth have the opportunity to tell decision makers, "This is what we're struggling with. This is what we need from you." So that's been really cool and helpful.

We haven't had as many opportunities as we'd like. Right now, we're just trying to make connections with young people. We've done events like a nature walk a couple weeks ago. We're planning a movie night closer to Halloween. Right now, we need as many reminders as we can get about normalcy, what youth like to do and are interested in. What motivates them?

Because you can't just throw all these educational things about systemic racism because that conversation is already happening. It's hard to balance having serious conversations while also acknowledging the human part and the cooling down part, the resting part while you're trying to fight this huge system.

**Have the youth town halls been school focused? Or city council? Who's been on the adult side listening to the young people? And what have the young people told them?**

We've tried to get city council members and the mayor of Minneapolis, Jacob Frey, to come, but of course they've not shown up. It's mostly been members of school boards and teachers, a lot of teachers, and social workers, as well. And youth who are coming into those types of professions. We have people who are young but on the cusp of being decision makers.



A lot of youth are struggling with getting materials for school. We had one young man come to our town hall saying that the teachers aren't communicating with them and aren't giving them the proper resources to do their work. He was saying, "I need a laptop, I need textbooks. I need support from my teachers, but they're not giving me what I need to be able to learn."

There's a lot of frustration. Youth are feeling like

they're being tossed into this new circumstance, and they are. The conversation is intended to get those students and teachers to see each other. So far, that has worked. The response from adults has been overwhelmingly positive. They really do understand where students are coming from, too.

The two town halls we've hosted have been very productive and positive because young people have the opportunity to be seen by those decision makers. Hopefully we'll do more in the future.

**So you do both virtual and in-person events. I'm thinking of the Summer Intensive Training (S.I.T.) for young people. Any reflections from that training? It looked like you had a lot of fun, too.**

We had 18-20 young people there, and we did have fun. I'm really glad that we did that event. The thing that stood out the most from it for me is, we had a piece about entrepreneurship. We had youth present a business idea they had. We had youth write down their ideas. For example, one youth had the idea to have a place for youth to hang out and chill, do homework, where they have access to Wi-Fi, with access to snacks.



We had another youth with an idea for a business to do nails, and another idea was for athletic equipment. That was a really cool piece because what we wanted to communicate in that Summer Intensive Training was a way you can rebuild your own community with your own ideas. That was really cool for youth to actually put that into action.

By sharing their ideas for businesses, it was a way to get them thinking about how they can actually accomplish their ideas. We as adults can give them the resources to do that. Rebuilding through entrepreneurship in your community was one of the cool things about the SIT.

**It's been over five months now since the police murder of George Floyd. What's the current feeling in the Twin Cities around that? I know there's been contention around the intersection where he was murdered and what will become of that. Can you give an update?**

My impression is things have calmed down a bit. For a while, there was a ton of contention among people in the community around reopening that intersection, making it a roundabout—there was a lot of conversation around what would happen with that intersection. So far, to my knowledge, the intersection is closed to traffic. I know Cub Foods is still running there business there; I don't know how many people are supporting that business.

People are still fighting for it to be some sort of official memorial. I know the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board put out a sign that read: "George Floyd Square." So there may be plans to make it an official landmark.



**There was a lot of effort around the Minneapolis Police Department. What's your understanding of where all that is these days?**

They are still in talks. I did hear something about MPD getting a \$1.5 million budget cut, which, compared to their full budget, if that even makes a dent in it. That's as far as I know regarding defunding the police.

**What's on the horizon for AFSC work?**

We are going to keep trying to make connections with our youth through "humanizing events," events where youth of color can show up and be and find those connections. Again, in times of social distancing, you don't have to be socially distanced to be separated and keeping each other safe. That's our main focus right now, building our base.

We are also working on building a youth board. Our idea behind that is it's always better to have youth on board when you're making events for youth. We want this youth board to inform our work rather than us informing their work. Them leading us is always the best way to go. We're putting that together right now.

**How about for yourself? You're a senior, graduating in May, I assume. What do you see coming up for you?**

I'm working on a Sociology Honors Project following up on a summer research project I did on how farmers markets and the Minneapolis uprising after the murder of George Floyd create community. I'm turning that into a writing sample for graduate school because I want to eventually get a Ph.D. in Sociology.

After I graduate, I want to move on to the design field before I go on to school again.

**What motivates you to keep going? This is hard work. In these times, as you've said, it's especially challenging.**

Just knowing that I really want to do this work. As a sociologist, I see the patterns of history repeating themselves. It's doable. This vision you can see that, if we just did these specific things, you could make so much change. So it's the possibility of making change that motivates me.

**Thank you so much. Your energy motivates me.**



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