

# AFSC Midwest Digest

Some Highlights of Work from Around the Region — February 2, 2017

## Resisting repression, near and far

You could say it's been a busy couple weeks, with actions across the country and around the world in resistance to the new administration's repressive executive orders. Mary Zerkel in AFSC's Chicago office has compiled this [snapshot](#) of actions throughout the US in response to the Muslim Ban and has shared this [call to action](#). AFSC is pleased to offer these beautiful [posters](#) for resisting racism and bigotry, this [K-12 discussion guide](#) for teachers, and this [video](#) and [handout](#) for how we all can resist public acts of harassment. Dina El-Rifai of AFSC's DC office offers these helpful [tips](#) for how to talk about the Muslim Ban.

## Hoosiers gather to promote hospitality

"The United States of America was established as a beacon of light for those escaping persecution in their own homes, and we will not stand for intolerance in our country," said Rima Shahid, Executive Director of the Muslim Alliance of Indiana at a recent [gathering](#) in Indy, also co-sponsored by Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) and AFSC. Elle Roberts of AFSC shares this [story](#). AFSC is also pleased to welcome Umaymah Mohammad as the new Jane Brown McLeod Intern. A junior at IUPUI, she is working on the [No Way to Treat a Child](#) campaign and AFSC's [Communities Against Islamophobia](#) project.

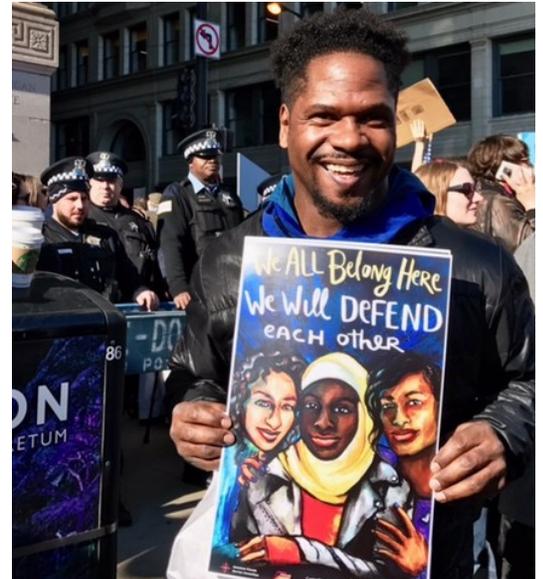
Erin Polley, Indiana Program Director, is also busy recruiting Earlham College students for a Youth Undoing Institutional Racism program with AFSC people in [St. Louis](#) over spring break, March 19-24.

## Ohioans say no to possible Muslim Registry

"We will not be divided and conquered," said Greg Coleridge of AFSC's Northeast Ohio office in this [article](#). "We will come together and do what has been a tradition in this country for a very long time, and that is people coming together to oppose political elites to say we have much more in common than in difference." The office also recently released an extensive [report](#) on Ohio's democratic infrastructure.

## Dave Chappelle encourages Dayton's welcome of refugees

Migwe Kimemia, who directs AFSC's work in Dayton, has shared this [video](#) of comedian Dave Chappelle's impromptu speech at a rally in Dayton against the Muslim Ban. "It was great to have his voice to energize the Dayton community," Migwe says. "It adds community voices to Mayor Nan Whaley's [Welcome Dayton policy statement](#)."



*A participant in the Women's March in Chicago holds AFSC's new poster.*



*Guadalupe Pimentel of the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance addresses the solidarity gathering in Indianapolis.*



*From left: Indiana staff Hadeel Said, Umaymah Mohammad, Elle Roberts and Erin Polley*

### **Michigan program welcomes former intern back as staff**

Korbin Felder has returned to AFSC as the new Criminal Justice Program Associate in the Ypsilanti, Michigan office. Originally from South Orange, New Jersey, Korbin earned a degree in History and Afro-American/African Studies from the University of Michigan in 2014. He served as an intern with AFSC while he was a student at Michigan.

Since graduating in 2014, Korbin has worked in Alabama as a Justice Fellow at the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) (EJI). He worked extensively investigating prison conditions and assisting in litigation challenging the high rates of violence, sexual assaults, as well as staff abuse and neglect in Alabama's prisons. Korbin also worked closely with clients re-entering society after long periods of incarceration, or returning home after decades of wrongful incarceration on Alabama's death row. *(Thanks to Caitlin Ozga of AFSC.)*



*Korbin Felder as intern, above, and as staff today*

### **MLK, Jr. Forum in Kansas City addresses hate, community**

[AFSC in Kansas City](#) joined again this year with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to host a community forum on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Community radio station KKF1 provided this [coverage](#) of the event, and Ira Harritt of AFSC [writes](#) about why Dr. King's message of peace and justice is just as relevant today.

### **Petition stands against ill-treatment of Palestinian Children**

In cooperation with DCI-Palestine, AFSC staff and volunteers today delivered a [petition](#) with nearly 11,000 signatures to the US State Department calling on the new administration to "prioritize human rights of Palestinian children and hold Israeli authorities accountable for widespread and systematic ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian child detainees." Jennifer Bing of AFSC's Chicago office writes that, "Joyce Cassel, a great volunteer with our program, is joining me in DC for visits on the Hill about the [No Way to Treat a Child Campaign](#)."



*Jennifer Bing, at right, joins other advocates for Palestinian children in delivering petitions to the US State Department. (Photo: DCI-P)*

### **St. Louis students call for humane treatment**

Joshua Saleem and Jelani Brown, AFSC staff in St. Louis, have been working for several years with students from Northwest Academy of Law as they strive to undo institutional racism and build a school and community that supports everyone. The students recently released this [video](#) that calls on the new mayor to end gun violence and make a difference in their lives. The students ask, "Am I valued? Am I important? Am I loved? Don't we deserve a safe neighborhood and police who treat us with kindness? Don't we deserve a childhood?"



*Students at Northwest Academy of Law in St. Louis*

## **Women's Marches across the land**

Roughly 250,000 people marched in Chicago, with millions more in cities across the region, the nation and the globe, all in solidarity with the Women's March on Washington on January 21. Nearly 26,000 people took over the Iowa State Capitol grounds, where AFSC's Sandra Sanchez offered this powerful [speech](#) from the heart. (See more [video](#) and [photos](#).) Carol Gilbert, a Friend from Omaha, posted this [video](#), and Sharon Goens-Bradley, the director of AFSC's Minnesota program, shared the photo (below right) from the Minnesota State Capitol.



*Sandra Sanchez of AFSC, at right above, joins other Latina activists at the Women's March at the Iowa State Capitol. Below is a scene from Minnesota.*



## **Iowans welcome new director, assistant, to immigration work**

Talk about hitting the ground running! Experienced organizer (and runner) Erica Johnson began her new role as director of AFSC's immigration program on January 23. On the 25th, she issued this [statement](#) about immigration executive orders minutes before a [reception](#) in her honor. In two short weeks, Erica's proven to be a great complement to Sandra Sanchez's [organizing](#) and [Know Your Rights](#) work with the community and Jody Mashek's immigration legal services. Completing the team is Berenice Nava Romero, who began this week as part-time administrative assistant.

## **A few final links**

Check out AFSC's statement on the [executive orders](#) and the [Muslim Ban](#). Des Moines Friend and psychiatrist David Drake offers these [thoughts](#) on resistance.

## **Support Syrian refugees now**

Please join me in responding now to [AFSC's call](#) for donations in support of emergency assistance for Syrian refugees.

And please share this new [subscription link](#) for the Midwest Digest with anyone you think might like to be involved with AFSC's creative work in the Midwest. *Thank you!*



*AFSC staff Mary Zerkel and Jennifer Bing join 250,000 of their closest friends for the Women's March in Chicago.*



*Erica Johnson, left, with her daughter, Juniper, at a reception welcoming Erica to her new role with AFSC in Iowa.*