

AFSC Midwest Digest

Some Highlights of Work from Around the Region — July 7, 2017

Tackling Islamophobia

“Anti-Muslim narratives aren’t present only in the crude rhetoric of white nationalists, but also in progressive and liberal messages, where they often go unnoticed,” [writes](#) Mary Zerkel of AFSC’s Chicago Office. Mary and colleagues recently launched [AFSC’s new Communities Against Islamophobia \(CAI\) project](#) to help people understand anti-Muslimism within an anti-racist framework, gain tools to interrupt individual and state violence against Muslims, and connect with Muslim-led community efforts. Check out this new [poster](#) and AFSC’s statements in solidarity with Muslims against [hate marches](#) and in response to the [Muslim Ban](#).



Participants do some role-playing at a recent Communities Against Islamophobia workshop at a coffeehouse in Chicago. Photo by Mary Zerkel

5 ways to undo racism

Dominique Diaddigo-Cash from the Twin Cities Office and Jelani Brown from the St. Louis office created this list of [5 ways to undo racism](#) for their workshop "Youth Undoing Institutional Racism Freedom School" at AFSC's 2017 [Centennial summit](#). More photos from their workshop are [here](#). The next AFSC Freedom School in the [Twin Cities](#) is set for August 1-5; two youth leaders [write](#) about the verdict in the police killing of Philando Castille. Timara, a St. Louis YUIR leader, [shares](#) about her experiences working against racism in school.



Jelani Brown, left, and Dominique Diaddigo-Cash of AFSC lead a workshop on “5 Ways to Undo Racism” at AFSC’s Centennial Summit. Photo by Bryan Vana.

Iowans announce Sanctuary effort

Eleven Iowa congregations, including two Friends Meetings, recently [announced](#) the formation of the [Iowa Sanctuary Movement](#), a network of faith communities which are the first in the state’s recent history to publicly offer Sanctuary and support to immigrant families who are targeted under the Trump administration’s expanded detention operation. The announcement came at a Father’s Day [event](#) which drew attention to immigrant dads in detention and families in crisis.

AFSC welcomes [Maria Alcivar](#) as a Lang Intern working on immigrant detention. She recently received the [Student Change Agent Award](#) at Iowa State and is a Ph.D. student in Human Development and Family Studies. We also welcome Alan Bedell, a Drake Law student, as a summer intern with AFSC’s Immigration Legal Services Program, directed by Jody Mashek.

And AFSC’s Immigrant Youth Video contest for 2017 recently [announced](#) the top three finishers. Sandra Sanchez of AFSC wrote this [recap](#) of the winning entries, noting the challenges and hopes of the young people involved.



Rev. Ryan Arnold, pastor of First Christian Church in Des Moines, announces that his church will provide Sanctuary for immigrants facing the risk of deportation.

Briefing highlights Israeli abuse of Palestinian Children

For the past two years, AFSC, led by [Jennifer Bing](#) in the Chicago Office, has partnered with Defense for Children International–Palestine on the [No Way to Treat a Child](#) campaign to challenge Israel’s prolonged military occupation of Palestinians by exposing the widespread and systematic ill treatment of Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces. In June, the campaign co-sponsored its second standing-room-only [Congressional briefing featuring human rights experts and a Palestinian youth](#) directly impacted by the occupation. Check out [photos](#) and coverage of the briefing by [WAFA](#) and [Forward](#), as well as Jennifer’s advance piece on [Common Dreams](#).



At a packed Congressional briefing in June, Yazan Meqbil shared how Palestinian child detention has affected his life and those of his family members and friends in the West Bank. Photo by Carl Roose.

Dayton celebrates World Refugee Day

AFSC Ohio co-sponsored the 2017 World Refugee Day [celebrations](#) on June 17 in solidarity with refugees who are victims of conflict minerals and political and religious persecutions around the world. The United Nations established this special day to celebrate and honor the courage, strength, and the resilience of refugees everywhere. This year’s event attracted over 200 African refugees, largely from the African Great Lakes Region



Migwe Kimemia, second from right, joins other participants at the World Refugee Day 2017 in Dayton. (Photo: AFSC/Dayton)

Michigan program looks at mental illness in prisons

The latest [newsletter](#) from the AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice Program includes quotations from the Good Neighbor Project, an AFSC Centennial event planned for September 15, and director Natalie Holbrook’s [testimony](#) to lawmakers on people with mental illness in Michigan’s prisons.

And from Ann Arbor, AFSC Midwest Executive Committee member John Deikis reports that the [Ann Arbor Friends Meeting](#) is currently thrashing issues and concerns about Sanctuary.

Kansas Citians bid a fond farewell to Ira Harritt

This August, Ira Harritt will retire from AFSC after nearly 31 years of creative, inspiring [work](#) for peace. (The AFSC KC office will close, as well.) Friends and community members gathered recently for a [party](#) to honor Ira and celebrate his peace-making career — and to commit to carry on the work.

Margaret Jackson, Associate Regional Director, joined Ira for the final week of the 2017 Social Change Institute. Young people involved shared these [reflections](#). As RaKayla puts it, “If you continue to accept the norm, then the norm won’t change.”



Ira Harritt, above, and Margaret Jackson, left, speak at Ira’s retirement party.

Indy intern calls for justice for Aaron Bailey

Aaron Bailey was an unarmed black man gunned down by the Indianapolis police on June 29. “We have been put in the unfortunate position to become an example to prove that Black Lives truly do Matter,” [writes](#) an AFSC intern. “Show us that the color of a person’s skin is not a reason to be killed.” AFSC Indiana’s [Book Club](#) is currently reading [Freedom is a Constant Struggle](#) by Angela Davis.



Calling all mosaic-makers in Chicago!

Darlene Gramigna of AFSC works with immigrant youth in Chicago. She writes: “Help us complete a pro-immigrant outdoor mosaic, which we hope will go up in Albany Park. We have lots of the butterflies made but we just need that big one in the center. [Let us know](#) if you have time in the next few weeks to come help.” Darlene has also shared this [video](#) about the racist history of Chicago’s housing policies.



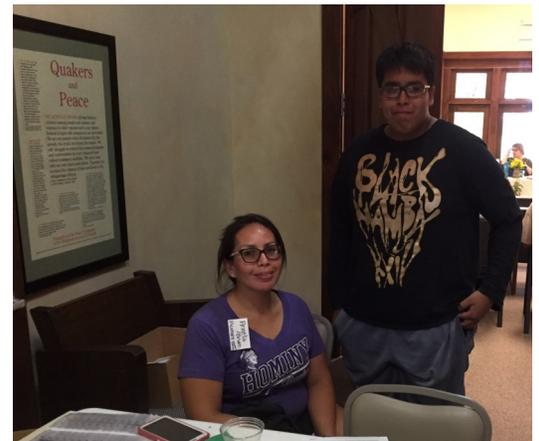
Butterflies in Chicago remind us that migration is beautiful.

Cop Watch Training Manual available

Debbie Southorn of AFSC adds, “Our Cop Watch 101 Training Manual has been translated into Spanish, with relevant resources and handouts also available en español. It’s free and available for download [in both languages] on the People’s Response Team [website](#).”

It’s Yearly Meeting season

AFSC staff are again connecting with Friends at their annual gatherings across the Midwest. Here’s Regional Director Brant Rosen’s [letter](#) to Friends, and here are some [photos](#) from Great Plains Yearly Meeting in Wichita. Tom Roberts of the Midwest Executive Committee hopes to attend six YMs!



Bits and Peaces

Paul Ricketts, a Midwest EC member from Ft. Wayne, writes that Friends there are fully engaged in this [effort](#) to support refugees and immigrants....Margaret Jackson wrote this [farewell](#) to former Northeast Ohio staff Greg Coleridge and Leah Davis....AFSC wishes Iowa/Indiana Friend [Jeff Kisling](#) all the best in what’s sure to be an active retirement....Here’s a [Q&A](#) with incoming AFSC General Secretary Joyce Ajlouny....and learn more about Sanctuary on this [July 13 call](#).

Thanks as always for your support

Your gifts of time and money help AFSC shine a bright light of hope. Go [here](#) to give. 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!*



Oklahoma Friends Angela and Isaac Brown, above, and Gail and John Fletcher at Great Plains Yearly Meeting in Wichita.