

AFSC Midwest Digest—the Olympics Edition

Award-Winning Work from Around the Region — August 19, 2016

Gold: Filmmakers explore resistance to oppression, militarism

Young people from around the nation travelled to Baltimore and Washington, DC this July as part of AFSC's [Humanize Not Militarize](#) Film Festival. Debbie Southorn of AFSC's Chicago office writes [here](#) about the things they learned about people power, and Elle Roberts of AFSC's Indiana office shares the [perspectives](#) of a trio of youth from Indy.



Keira Stewart, Priscilla Kendall and Tyana Flagg of Indianapolis on the National Mall in DC.

Silver: Dreamer in Iowa recognized for her vision and courage

Kenia Calderon is among the more remarkable people you'll ever meet. A Dreamer and organizer with the wits to persuade college presidents and the guts to face down the most hostile of politicians, she will be honored by the Iowa International Center with its [Passport to Prosperity Award](#) on September 24. A senior at Drake University, Kenia will soon be moving on after three years of service as bilingual administrative assistant with the AFSC Iowa Immigration Legal Services Program. We wish her the very best!



Kenia Calderon

Bronze: People's convention pushes peace and justice planks

Greg Coleridge in AFSC's Northeast Ohio office played a key role in organizing the [People's Peace and Justice Convention](#) in advance of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. The People's Convention made quite a splash in several media [outlets](#) and produced a [peace and justice platform](#) shared with both major political parties. A Move to Amend update is [here](#).



The People's Convention opened with a keynote address at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church.

YUIR in St. Louis focuses on school reforms

AFSC's Youth Undoing Institutional Racism (YUIR) program in St. Louis was recently highlighted in this [article](#). According to Program Director Joshua Saleem, YUIR demands of schools include "changing the handbook, ending suspensions and expulsions, and making their curriculum more Africa-centered."

AFSC Twin Cities Freedom School and restorative justice circles

The Twin Cities Friends Meeting House was the site of the August 2-6 AFSC Freedom School, where young people gathered to "speak truth to power." Earlier this week, AFSC's Twin Cities Healing Justice Program began a six-week service-learning project. The purpose of this applied learning is to teach youth the restorative justice circle process, and allow them ample time to practice the process on their own as circle-keepers. Program Associate Dominique Diaddigo-Cash began the training with a focus on the circle process basic principles and skills.



Young people learn how to dismantle institutional racism at the AFSC Freedom School in the Twin Cities.

No break in summer work for justice in Chicago

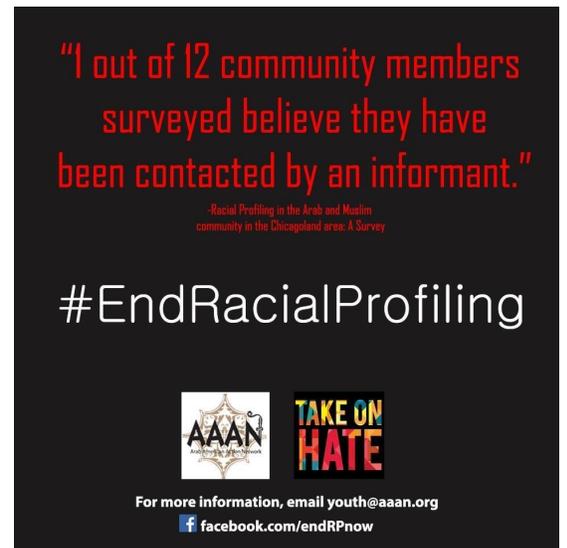
Debbie Southorn writes: “Over six weeks this summer, several young people – ages 14 to 19 – completed a service learning project with the Chicago peace-building program. These four incredible young people committed to 15 hours per week of political education, media/arts creation and activism with us. In a short time, they produced some solid work and left a strong impact on all of us here at AFSC Chicago – here’s a quick [recap](#).”



Chicago peace-building interns and friends attend an action against Homan Square black site and for freedom square.

Tackling racial profiling

Mary Zerkel writes [here](#) about “an important effort, lead by [Arab youth](#), to stop racial profiling and law enforcement violence in Chicago.... We believe it's imperative that these well-funded, widespread forms of racial profiling need to end, especially at a time when targeted attacks against individual Arabs and Muslims are on the rise around the country. If you aren't familiar with the ways that FBI surveillance and profiling in particular have been impacting Arab communities in Chicago, check out [this video](#) produced by AAAN youth, which was included in our [#HumanizeNotMilitarize](#) film fest earlier this summer.”



Dreamers Making It Real #NotJustADream

Darlene Graminga notes: “A new organization has formed out of the [Immigration Activist Training program](#) held in July 2016 from the Chicago Immigrant Youth Program. Sixteen students from nine Dreamers Clubs in Chicago Public Schools gathered this summer to take their organizing to the next step. Over the course of the training students looked at the intersectionality with Palestinian youth, Black Lives Matter, and Islamophobia and related organizing campaigns. Future monthly organizer trainings are scheduled.”



Chicago immigrant activists visit a family living in Sanctuary.

A concern for refugees

Ira Harritt of AFSC Kansas City talks about AFSC’s work and policy on the Syrian refugee crisis, the rise of ISIS and other peace and justice concerns in this [KKFI interview](#). On August 30, AFSC will join with the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council for a [program](#) entitled, “For Further Discussion: Confronting Extremist Violence, the Refugee Crisis, and Fear.” And for a recap of the work of AFSC-KC’s peace interns, click [here](#).



Michigan staffers Demetrius Titus and Natalie Holbrook, standing, lead a Good Neighbor Project training.

What’s it mean to be a good neighbor?

In this [interview](#), Demetrius Titus talks about his work with the [Good Neighbor Project](#) of AFSC Michigan’s Criminal Justice Program. The program uses a co-mentorship model to connect those serving long prison sentences with community members on the outside. It changes the lives of all involved. Click [here](#) to sign up for the program’s [newsletter](#) and get involved.

The Midwest/Mideast Digest

Jennifer Bing of AFSC Chicago shares a number of stories of Palestine-Israel peace work:

Along with other AFSC staff, she attended FGC and gave a workshop on Economic Activism; she also showed [Detaining Dreams](#) from the [No Way to Treat a Child Campaign](#).

In July, she traveled to Philadelphia to join in alternative events planned at the Democratic National Convention focused on Middle East policy.

Summer intern Yazan Meqbil gave a presentation at Darlene Graminga's summer program for high school youth about the history of Palestine and his work on the "No Way to Treat a Child" campaign.

Next week, Jennifer will be in Madison to join the AFSC Committee of the Madison Friends Meeting as they co-host a [public forum](#) with their US Rep. Mark Pocan. Rep Pocan was one of 20 members of Congress who sent the US administration a letter stating their concern for the deteriorating human rights situation for [Palestinian children](#) this summer.

Jennifer says, "We are preparing some short videos, and a speaking tour is in store for September." Stay tuned!

Iowans persistent in peace work

Kathleen McQuillen and Katie Huerter have had a busy summer, too, planning a number of events. In early August, AFSC's [Gaza Pinwheels](#) were displayed on the Friends House lawn in Des Moines to remember the 521 Palestinians killed by the Israeli army in 2014. AFSC co-sponsored a talk on Gaza by Dr. Maria Fillapone and the annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki vigil—click for [TV](#) and [photos](#). Click [here](#) for an August 8 radio interview with Maria and Kathleen. Upcoming events include a screening and panel discussion about Detaining Dreams on [Sept. 19](#), International Peace Day on [Sept. 21](#) and a Community Celebration of AFSC's partners in peacebuilding, set for [Sept. 25](#).

Bits and Peaces

The Midwest Region expresses its profound thanks to Keta Cowen of Ann Arbor for her service as co-clerk of the Midwest Executive Committee....Rabbi Brant Rosen, AFSC Midwest Regional Director, offers these final [thoughts](#) about his recent [Center for Jewish Nonviolence](#) delegation to Palestine IsraelEwuare Osayande, AFSC's Chief Diversity Officer, shares his thoughts about [Black Love for Black Lives](#)....AFSC issued this [statement](#) in response to the Department of Justice's directive to end the use of private prisons.... And AFSC invites everyone to take part in the August 22-26 [Week of Action](#) to end the immigrant detention quota.



Above, AFSC economic activism workshop participants at FGC. Below, Jennifer Bing (at right) with a NWTC supporter from New York outside the DNC.



Sara Humphrey with a Centennial Frisbee.



Jennifer Bing with her summer team of Yazan Meqbil and Nawal.



The annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki vigil at the Japanese Bell in Des Moines.

AFSC staff at yearly meetings

Here's the [link](#) to Brant Rosen's 2016 letter to Friends. It's always a highlight of my summer to visit with Friends at yearly meetings. There's something very good about slowing down and taking time with people committed to a better world. Thank you, Friends.

Your support is key

No one makes it to the medal stand without a tremendous amount of help. Your support is the reason AFSC has been working for peace and justice for nearly a century. If you would like to make a gift to support the AFSC Midwest Region or a specific program, please click [here](#).

Please share this [subscription link](#) for the Midwest Digest with anyone you think might like to keep up with AFSC's creative work in the Midwest. *Thank you!*



Sandra Sanchez of AFSC Iowa and Jeff Kisling at the Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative) at [Scattergood Friends School](#) in West Branch, Iowa. Sandra shared with Friends about immigration issues. Jeff is co-clerk of the Yearly Meeting's Peace and Social Concerns Committee and a frequent [blogger](#) on peace and justice issues.



Iowa staff and volunteers set up the Gaza Pinwheel Display on the Friends House lawn in Des Moines.