Palestine Activism Program looks back at 2020, ahead to 2021
In this slideshow, Chicago staffers Jennifer Bing and Jehad Abusalim review highlights of AFSC’s remarkable, largely online work in 2020 on behalf of people in Gaza and Palestinian children detained by the Israeli military. Plans for 2021 include work with Palestinian writers on a new anthology, Gaza: Reimagining the Boundaries of Possibility, and raising Palestinian rights via the No Way to Treat a Child campaign. Watch the most recent NWTC webinar, mark your calendar for the next one on January 12, and learn more about how you can talk with your members of Congress.

AFSC in Michigan calls for commutations
Courtesy of AFSC, the BBC recently featured the voices of three women in prison in Michigan, including Chelsea Roundhouse, who describes the death of her cellmate from COVID-19. As the state begins vaccinating health care staff in prisons and expands testing for incarcerated people, Natalie Holbrook of AFSC says the governor can do much more to stem the spread by ensuring more people are considered for release. Demetrius Titus talks about AFSC’s work to #FreeThemAll in this Facebook Live.
Providing information for first-time DACA applicants
Following a recent court victory, US Citizenship and Immigration Services will now consider first-time DACA applications. In this video, Jody Mashek, Legal Services Director for AFSC Iowa, explains what people should expect as a first-time DACA applicant and what they will need to complete the process. In other news, Alejandro Murguia-Ortiz, a community organizer with AFSC and Iowa JFON, shares his thoughts on the importance of meatpacking workers being able to stand up for their rights.

When will the system “honor a Black person’s humanity?”
In this article about the recent Minneapolis Police killing of Dolal Idd, Shanene Herbert of AFSC says that mistrust in the community is only deepened after incidents in which police manage to take armed white suspects into custody without shooting them. When, she asked, will the system "honor a Black person's humanity?" In other news, applications are now closed for the Twin Cities YUIR Youth Board, a space for youth to organize around issues they care about. Learn more on Facebook.
Striving to create Real Student Safety in St. Louis
In their December newsletter, AFSC staff in St. Louis – Joshua Saleem, Jonathan Pulphus and Sarah Nash – describe their work with young people and community partners to achieve #RealStudentSafety. They look at Community Safety Beyond Policing and #FreeThemAll holiday card making. Along with previewing what’s in store for 2021, staff share what drew them to this work, lessons learned from the past year, and their favorite dishes and albums.

Working to #FreeThemAll
Mary Zerkel of AFSC shares this recording of Carving Out Rights from Inside the Prison Industrial Complex, a Chicago webinar that kicked off AFSC’s #FreeThemAll days of action in December. The event included very powerful performances by poets Tara Betts, Eric Blackmon, Tongo Eisen-Martin, Martín Espada, and musician Damon Locks. Debbie Southorn of AFSC co-hosted this FB Live on AFSC’s #FreeThemAll work.
Short takes, part 1
The Midwest Region holds former Regional Director Brant Rosen and family in the Light following the passing of his mother, Ruth. A virtual memorial service will be held Thursday, January 7….Friends throughout the Midwest are encouraged to sign up as AFSC Meeting/Church liaisons….Lucy Duncan of AFSC Friends Relations and Noah White will be leading a multi-part anti-racism retreat with the Madison Monthly Meeting in January and February.

Short takes, part 2
AFSC joined 16 other faith organizations in signing on to this letter to the Biden-Harris transition team regarding working for human rights and equality in Palestine-Israel….Check out this Love to Black Immigrants Teach-in & Letter Writing webinar and this video about Temporary Protected Status (TPS)….Sign up now for What to do instead of calling 911, an AFSC webinar set for Thursday, January 14 at 7 pm CT.

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