

AFSC Midwest Digest – January 25, 2018

Highlights of work from around the region

Dear Friends,

It's not too late to mark the new year by recommitting ourselves to work for peace and justice. Please join me today in supporting AFSC's work in the Midwest by making a [donation or becoming a monthly donor](#).

With thanks as always,

Jon Krieg

AFSC Midwest Region Communications Specialist



Twin Cities Healing Justice Program Director Shanene Herbert (first row, right) helps facilitate an AFSC Strategic Planning community consultation in St. Louis with local staff Joshua Saleem and Jonathan Pulphus (second row, left).

AFSC enters next phase of Strategic Planning

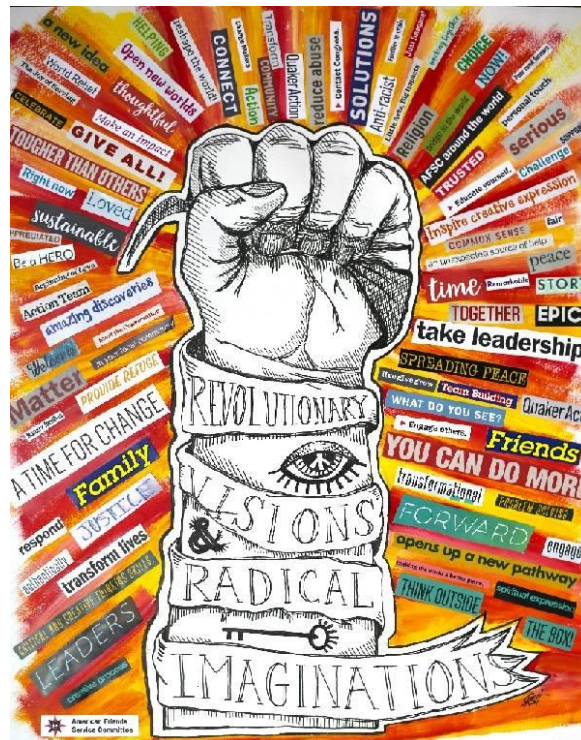
“What’s the role of a 102-year old Quaker organization in advancing radical, sustainable and equitable change in a world that’s rapidly shifting? To answer that question, AFSC began a strategic planning process a few months ago with the charge of re-envisioning the organization’s goals utilizing the motto ‘moving forward with unity for maximum impact.’” So [writes](#) Sharon Goens-Bradley, Midwest Associate Regional Director, about AFSC’s move into the second phase of Strategic Planning in which a working group will make sense of all the valuable input we’ve received. Stay tuned!



Young people of color proclaim “We are not at risk.”
 (Image from [St. Louis YUIR on Instagram.](#))

“Stop playing games with our youth’s lives and future”

In this compelling opinion piece, Jonathan Pulphus, St. Louis Program Associate, [writes](#) about the well-received public testimony of Dominic, a young person involved with AFSC’s peer mediation and conflict resolution work. “Dominic called for the institutionalization of more programs like peer mediation while condemning the mistreatment of black youth in schools,” Jonathan writes, adding that our youth “need increased levels of resources, support, care, alternatives to suspensions and a restorative, culturally sensitive learning environment.” Jonathan also wrote this [letter-to-the-editor](#) about rejecting racism in schools.



Indy call for real inclusion

AFSC Indiana joined with eight other groups in issuing this [call](#) for organizers and white attendees of the Women’s March to be truly inclusive: “When women of color, including our Indigenous community, our trans sisters, non-binary folks, and community affected by disabilities, are constantly left out of the conversation, our intentions do just as much harm as our oppressors.” Indiana will host an evening of “[Revolutionary Visions & Radical Imaginations: Celebrating Solidarity & Courage](#)” on March 1 and AFSC General Secretary [Joyce Ajlouny](#) on March 20.

Good Neighbor Project announces additional trainings

AFSC Michigan’s Criminal Justice Program will hold its next Good Neighbor Project training on February 7. Check out our Good Neighbor Project [here](#) for a brief overview. The GNP is a “co-mentorship program designed to match up free-world individuals with Michigan prisoners who are serving Life or Long Indeterminate sentences. Many of these prisoners have been incarcerated for so long that they have lost their network of social support from family, friends, and the community.” Contact [Demetrius Titus](#) of AFSC to learn more.



From left, Migwe Kimemia, AFSC Dayton Program Director and Somtochukwu Henrietta Okafor, AFSC Civic Engagement Intern

From Nigeria to Dayton, AFSC intern shares her story

Somtochukwu Okafor has survived a number of challenges in her life. She writes [here](#) about her adjustment to life in the US and her excitement about her work. “AFSC’s current program in Ohio is growing, and, with each passing day, we are getting closer to our goal of creating a Pan-African youth caucus,” says Somto. “I see a lot of learning and growing potential for me and AFSC in the future, and I cannot wait to share all the progress with you.”



Iowans speak with a state legislator in 2018 during an AFSC training on immigrant advocacy.

Iowa on the airwaves

Iowa Immigrant Rights Program Director Erica Johnson talks in this [radio interview](#) about the arrival of people from Central America seeking asylum in the US and the work that AFSC does to support them in Iowa and beyond. She also provides suggestions for how local people can get involved. In early February, Jody Mashek, who directs the Legal Services Program, will give an “Immigration 101” presentation for school counselors and talk with church members about the situation at the US/Mexico border. On February 4, AFSC Iowa will host its annual [Immigrant Advocacy Day](#) at the State Capitol.

Marking the tenth anniversary of “Operation Cast Lead”

January marks 10 years since Israel’s attack on Gaza, a brutal assault that killed more than 1400 people – more than 300 of them children – and injured another 5500. AFSC staffer Jennifer Bing recommends this [article](#), and Jehad Abusalim suggests this trailer on “[Gaza](#),” a new documentary. AFSC is currently organizing a national speaking tour for poet and journalist [Ahmed Abu Artema](#), a key organizer of the Great March of Return in Gaza. Stay [tuned](#) for more details.

Bits and Peaces

Jesus Palafox of AFSC Chicago is quoted in this [article](#) about military recruitment....Check out this #NoCopAcademy [interview](#) with coalition member Grassroots Collaborative....AFSC today [denounced](#) a new policy of forcing asylum seekers to remain in Mexico, and we encourage you to take action [here](#) to oppose more funding for the Wall, ICE and Border Patrol.....Matt Leber [writes](#) about what one night in Border Patrol custody taught him about how migrants are treated....AFSC has issued this [call to action](#) on felony voting rights.

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