

AFSC Midwest Digest – June 2021

Highlights of work from around the region



Kanandi (left) and Andwele speak to the power of youth.

Twin Cities youth speak out against violence, call for a seat at the table

In the wake of increasing violence, AFSC’s Youth Undoing Institutional Racism (YUIR) held a [press conference](#) in Minneapolis on June 7. "The proposed safety plans by city leaders like Mayor Frey do not include our voices," YUIR said. "As the youth who are being most directly impacted by violence in our communities, we need to be at every decision-making table." See coverage on [KARE11](#), [WCCO](#) and [Fox9](#). After the event, YUIR received several offers to meet with decision-makers. AFSC’s staff team includes Shanene Herbert, Brynne Crockett and Edith Kamau.



Calling for a budget that builds up young people in St. Louis

Testifying before a St. Louis budget committee ([beginning at the 27:00 mark](#)), Joshua Saleem of AFSC shared the views of several young people AFSC works with. "If we could reallocate funds, I would focus more money on counseling and restorative practices," said one 16-year-old. "If we focused more money on building up our young people, we wouldn't have to focus so much on disciplining or punishing them." Read [more](#) about AFSC’s work with youth in St. Louis from Jonathan Pulphus.



Art by Asha Edwards

Tools for young people to fund communities, defund the police

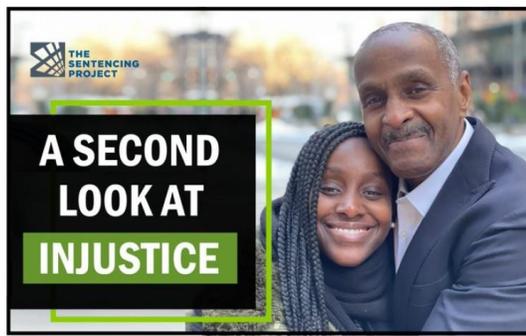
Debbie Southorn of AFSC shares that Chicago youth organizers from #NoCopAcademy recently dropped this incredible [toolkit](#) full of reflections, how-to's, ideas, worksheets and more. Please download and share with any young people interested in grassroots organizing! Former AFSC intern Destiny Harris [writes](#) about the need to abolish both policing and militarism. Mary Zerkel of AFSC is [interviewed](#) about the mainstreaming of mutual aid.



Photo: Jennifer Bing

Holding Israel accountable for its arrests, attacks on Palestinians

“We are in a new phase of Palestinian activism, whether on the ground in Palestine or the increasing support by a growing solidarity movement on a global level,” says Jihad Abusalim of AFSC in this [article](#) about Israel’s arrest of activists and writers Muna and Mohammed al-Kurd. Jihad [talks](#) about the need to hold Israel accountable for its attacks on Gaza. Colleague Jennifer Bing is interviewed [here](#) (starting at the 3:15 mark) about the plight of children in Palestine; she invites you to the next No Way To Treat a Child [webinar](#) on Tuesday, June 15 at 7 pm CT.



Working towards a “second look” in Michigan

On [Twitter](#), the Michigan Criminal Justice Program recently touted [A Second Look at Injustice](#), a valuable report from The Sentencing Project on ways to end mass incarceration and end racial disparities. Legislation has been introduced in 25 states to authorize a reevaluation of lengthy sentences. AFSC in Michigan is working towards #secondlook in Michigan, adding, “It is time to reconcile the wrongs of racist ‘tough on crime’ sentences.”



Rep. Ako Abdul-Samad speaking in Des Moines

Short takes

On the first anniversary of George Floyd’s murder at the hands of Minneapolis Police, Iowans gathered for a memorial and solidarity rally (see [photos](#) and [article](#))....AFSC alum Erica Johnson is [quoted](#) regarding the Iowa governor’s politicization of immigrant children....Quakers in Indiana [reflect](#) on AFSC’s Radical Acting in Faith for White People....Dean Young from Wichita wrote this [AFSC Corporation report](#) for Great Plains Yearly Meeting....AFSC joined more than 150 other organizations in [calling](#) upon the Biden Administration to end solitary confinement.

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