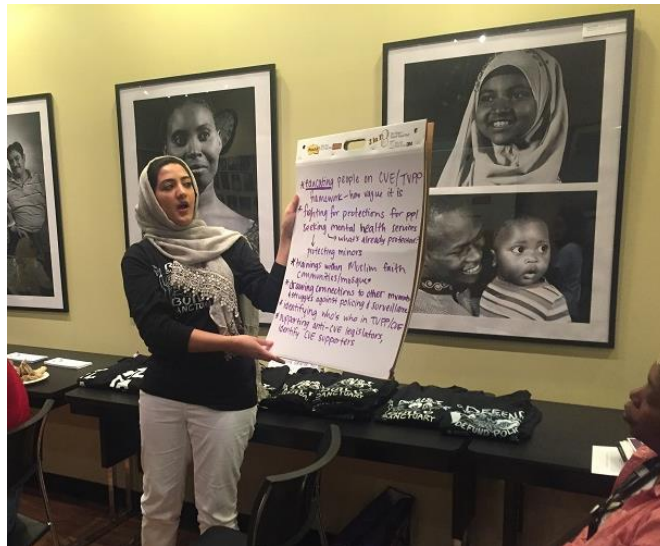


AFSC Midwest Digest – March 29, 2019

Highlights of work from around the region



New report shines critical light on so-called “anti-extremism”

Do so-called “anti-extremism” tactics harm Muslim and Arab communities? WBEZ takes a critical [look](#) at a federal program known as Countering Violent Extremism that's reinforcing government surveillance of Muslims. The interview is based on a new [report](#), co-authored by Debbie Southorn of AFSC. More in this [blog](#) from Mary Zerkel.

What do you do when you witness anti-Muslim harassment? Check out AFSC's [resources](#) on bystander intervention, including printable posters in English and Spanish. Please spread the word about AFSC's Countering Anti-Muslim Racism in Classrooms [webinars](#) set for April 2 and 11. Registration is at afsc.org/counteringwebinar.



Ahmed Abu Artama, left, and Jihad Abusalim

Standing with the people of Gaza

“Do you know what else is painful regarding what’s going on in Gaza, besides violence and what our families go through?” asks Jihad Abusalim of AFSC Chicago. “Repetition. Repetition can be brutal. Every time we have to make the case for why we shouldn’t be killed en masse and why bombs shouldn’t be falling on our heads and homes.” Check out Jihad’s [interview](#) with Amy Goodman on Democracy Now!, and read Jennifer Bing’s moving [story](#).

Ahmed Abu Artema recently [completed](#) his nationwide speaking [tour](#) about Gaza. Learn more about the [March 30 Day of Action](#) in solidarity with Gaza and a [film showing](#) on April 17, Palestinian Prisoners Day. Take action [here](#) to end the blockade and support AFSC’s [relief effort](#) for elders in Gaza.



Hugo Bolaños and America Duran Oropeza on the Hill

Young Iowans travel to DC to lobby for immigrant rights

America Duran Oropeza and Hugo Bolaños joined hundreds of other young people from around the U.S. at a [Spring Lobby](#) weekend organized by [FCNL](#) and supported by AFSC. On Monday, April 1 at 11:00 CT, America and Hugo will talk ([online](#) and [FB Live](#)) about new legislation supporting Dreamers and people with TPS, as well as work to defund ICE and CBP.

On March 31, Erica Johnson, who directs the Iowa Immigrant Rights Program, will receive a “Continuing the Legacy of Cesar Chavez Award” at a community event hosted by Des Moines University. Jody Mashek, who directs the Legal Services Program, remains in high demand for talks on Immigration 101 and her experiences at the border. [Subscribe](#) today to AFSC Iowa’s monthly e-newsletter to learn more and take action.



Tackling systemic racism

"It feels good to be in an environment where nobody hates anybody and everybody loves everybody," said a participant in AFSC St. Louis Freedom School/ Alternative Spring Break. "You could just feel the good vibe when you walked in." Youth ages 15-23 are analyzing systematic racism and taking practical steps to organize against it, building relationships and practicing healing from the oppressive systems at work in St. Louis and across America.

AFSC staff Joshua Saleem and Jonathan Pulphus gave a "shout out to the young people, co-facilitators, panelists, catering services, and deaconess for coming together around an excellent workshop!" Read Jonathan's [reflections](#) on his first year with AFSC and check out this challenging game of [Black Jeopardy](#).



Advocating for justice in Indy

AFSC Indiana is pleased to welcome Abdullah Olson as the Cary Fellowship Intern. Abdullah is also an organizer with [Muslim Youth Collective](#), which shares his vision of creating inclusive and empowering spaces for Muslims to lead movements against all manifestations of injustice. He is currently studying Islamic Psychology and cares deeply to further the field of Muslim mental health, while also advocating for his community through justice-oriented interfaith work.

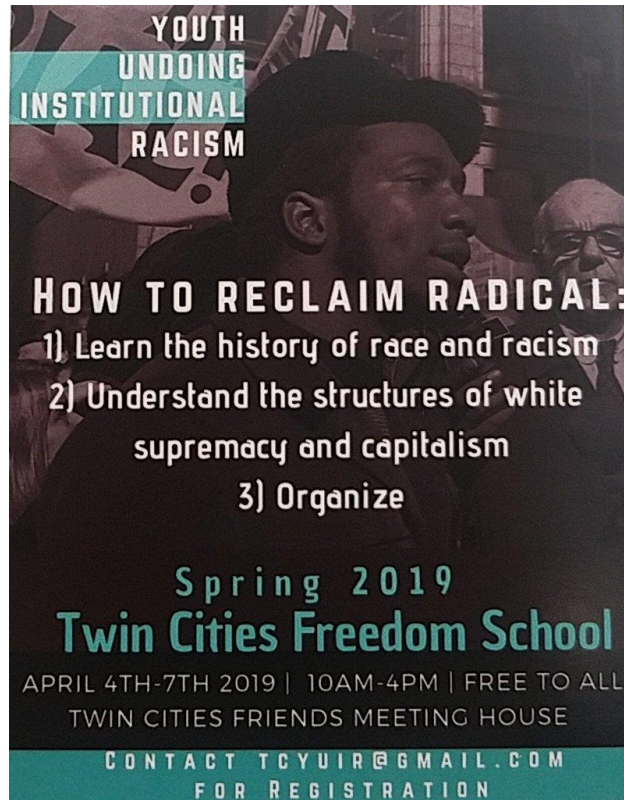
Upcoming events in Indy include a March 31 rally for [Peace in Venezuela](#), an April 26 [Passover for All](#) and a May 4 [Communities Against Islamophobia training](#). Some great photos from a March event, “Celebrating Solidarity and Courage,” are [here](#).



*AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice staff (from left)
Korbin Felder, Natalie Holbrook and Demetrius Titus*

Working for change in Michigan

The AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice Program was mentioned in an article about much-needed [bail reform](#) and a piece about an innovative [prisoner doula](#) effort. In early March, AFSC co-sponsored a “Day of Empathy” focusing on “promoting three important pieces of legislation: Dignity for Incarcerated Women, Clean Slate, and Raise the Age.” Stay tuned for more information about lifers and people serving long sentences – and how we can work to bring them home.



How to reclaim radical

The Twin Cities Friends Meeting House will host the next [AFSC Freedom School](#) April 4-7. People from ages 14-23 will learn about the history of race in the U.S. and how to organize for change. Learn more by following Youth Undoing Institutional Racism-Twin Cities on [Twitter](#).

A story by Sharon Goens-Bradley, Midwest Associate Regional Director in St. Paul, is included in this Women's History Month [collection](#) about inspiring women.

Bits and Peaces

Learn more about how we can [#DefundHate](#) and take [action](#) to end ICE and [support](#) people with DACA, TPS and DED.... Check out this [piece](#) on why criticism of Israeli policy is not the same thing as anti-Semitism.... Des Moines Valley Friends sent a letter to Iowa legislators opposing the reinstatement of the death penalty. Friends have a new [website](#), too....Have you heard about AFSC's new alumni network? You can join [here](#) or [via the Facebook group](#); invite your AFSC friends to join, too! And come to the alumni [dinner](#) at the AFSC Corporation meeting.

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