



AFSC Northeast Regional Director Keith Harvey
Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana

Dear Friends,

When I think about our world today and the information overload that we deal with daily, I find myself having fewer face-to-face interactions with folks and more exchanges by emails and text messages. Then I think of how our friends play a vital part of our lives. We laugh, have fun, work with, and often worship with friends, and it's those friends who will honestly let you know when we've done well and when we haven't. It is this type of strong relationship that helps us make it through the good and difficult times. As we gather this year with family and friends for the holidays, it is a time to nurture those valued relationships and perhaps establish new ones.

The AFSC does the same within the communities where we work. Our goal has always been to establish and nurture real, lasting relationships. Much like the holiday meal and gathering, we find time to break bread together, learn from each other, sometimes challenge each other; but always show our love for the people we work with, and hopefully bring more justice and peace to their community and to the world.

Often people speak about the AFSC's convening power. With more than 100 years of experience, we have made successful efforts to come in right relationship with many communities across the globe. We do this by finding creative ways to work toward a more just and peaceful world. By bringing folks together to address their concerns and struggles, we are able to learn from history and apply the wisdom and knowledge we all have. It is this witness that guides our work and efforts. Community and fellowship are embedded in AFSC's mission and values, consistent with our commitment to Quaker principles:

Mission

- ... Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

Values

- ... We work in partnership with people in communities around the world, respecting their wisdom about how to change their circumstances and offering our own insights with humility.
- ... We trust the power of the Spirit to guide the individual and collective search for truth and practical action.

Adopted by the Board of Directors, November 11, 2012

In these times, so much of the world is divided, but the AFSC is committed to bringing people together. Our efforts in the Northeast exemplify this spirit in all the work that we do. Here are a few examples of the community and friendship being built for positive change:

A large part of our work centers around immigrant rights. Our immigrant neighbors and allies help us find humane ways forward to allow families to live a life without fear. Our work in New Jersey, New Hampshire and Massachusetts provides education and spaces for the many different immigrant communities to tell their stories. Link: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/11/a-young-woman-campaigns-to-keep-dreamers-like-her-in-america/>



Our legal services work in New Jersey is an important link to the many families trying to navigate the ever-changing immigration policies in our country. We provide legal services in our offices in Newark and Red Bank, helping families remain together by focusing on immigrants who are facing deportation, including those who are in detention. The AFSC offers crucial high-quality and cutting-edge legal representation for families in crisis, ensuring that immigrants are able to present their cases fully and be treated with dignity. Link: <https://www.nj.com/politics/2019/11/jersey-dreamers-make-plea-for-daca-as-supreme-court-debates-their-future.html>



Also, as part of our [immigrant rights work](#), our offices in Cambridge, MA; Concord, NH; Red Bank and Newark, NJ bring coalitions and allies together to advocate for the rights of immigrants and more just immigration policies. These projects include our organizing for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), our organizing with the young immigrants from NJ who attended a DACA action in Washington D.C., and our work in New Jersey and New Hampshire against detaining immigrants and highlighting the conditions in detention centers. Link: <https://www.redbankgreen.com/2019/11/red-bank-daca-recipients-in-limbo/>

The region also focuses on the effects of jails and prisons on those incarcerated, their families and their communities, and works to help them return as whole a person as possible.

Our [Prison Watch Program](#) in New Jersey has reached out to Essex County College, the Women’s Leadership Institute at Rutgers, Montclair University, and the STEP Program (formerly imprisoned in college) at Rutgers, Newark, offering AFSC Prison Watch as a potential field placement for their students. Follow this link to an article written by one of our 2018 student interns, who continues to volunteer: <https://spaa.newark.rutgers.edu/newsroom/spaa-internship-profile-anna-agbotse>

Right: Prison Watch staff and volunteers answer letters giving information and guidance to prisoners, prison family and community members.

In our [Healing Justice Program](#) in New York, we have developed *Hope Lives for Lifers*, a program to assist prisoners serving long sentences. Participants meet for weekly group sessions on adjusting to the challenges of prison life and mapping out long-term goals related to spiritual growth, personal relationships, and educational and professional development—achievements that can also help them prepare for parole hearings. Our staff regularly speak and educate the public on the disproportionate effects on communities of color.

In the summer, we host the Liberation Summer Advocacy Camp for adolescents who have a parent or



family member in prison. This “camp” allows the young people to develop skills and show creativity to express their feelings regarding the prison situation in their lives.



In [Maine](#), we strive to change policies and laws for a more humane justice system, especially as it impacts Native American communities in the state of Maine. We do this through offering regular leadership trainings and workshops, as well as building relationships, coalitions and partnerships with the next

generation of community leaders.

Finally, a long-standing component of the work of the AFSC is our peace work, exemplified by our efforts in Cambridge and New Hampshire. The [New Hampshire program](#) partners with the Nuclear Weapons Working Group and the Union of Concerned Scientists, which are trying to get presidential candidates to address the threats posed by the existence of nuclear weapons.

The Northeast Regional Committees and Staff are grateful for your support and for your friendship. May the end of 2019 find you in joyful fellowship with your family and friends.

Happy holidays from the Northeast Region! [Please consider a tax-deductible gift, which will help fund our important work to help bring down the walls of oppression, creating a space for peace, justice and human dignity.](#)

Please also check out the [AFSC Alumni Page](#) online at www.afsc.org/alumni or via our [Facebook group](#) at www.facebook.com/groups/234049520577404 to engage with current and former AFSC staff, volunteers, interns and fellows.



Sincerely yours for peace and justice,

Keith B. Harvey
Northeast Regional Director

AFSC values are grounded in Quaker experience and universal truths that are upheld by many faiths and that honor the light of the divine in each person ... We cherish the belief that there is that of God in each person, leading us to respect the worth, dignity, and equality of all.

Join the Movement

Time: April 24-26, 2020 | Place: Riverside Church, 490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY

[Register here](#)

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