

QuakerAction

From harm to healing:
Changing the system,
changing ourselves

Healing after violence

PAGE 3

Former prisoners bring love
to Baltimore

PAGE 6

What if prisons were set up
to heal?

PAGE 10



**American Friends
Service Committee**

www.afsc.org

*Friend of a Friend's
Dominique Stevenson and
Wahid Shakur in Baltimore*

From harm to healing

“We are healed and healing others. After the Healing and Rebuilding our Communities workshop, I felt I can tell the truth to others in conflict, some of our enemies are now friends. Some are surprised by our change. Our change changes them, if they are behaving badly, I can help them. We are doctors.”

—JANINE IN A PEACE VILLAGE IN BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI

At the Friends Women’s Association Clinic, a partner of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the doctors and nurses serve women with AIDS in Kamenge, Burundi, a community deeply affected by the Hutu and Tutsi violence of 1972 and 1993.

Dr. Alexia, longtime director of the clinic, tells a story of a woman who was in her home when Hutus came and killed her children. Because it wasn’t safe to leave her house, she stayed inside with her murdered children for a week. If she had remained isolated, without support for healing, Dr. Alexia believes that the woman would still be preparing for revenge. But through group counseling at the clinic, this mother stopped feeling so alone. Listening to the stories of other women, she knew that the problem wasn’t just hers. Telling her own story, she had a chance to share her grief with those who could truly understand. The women continue to meet weekly and provide long-term support for one another.

Behind the back garden there is a cornfield Dr. Alexia hopes one day can become a hospital. When the fence there was excavated for repairs, the volunteers digging into the ground found bones from the killings. The clinic, offering healing for Kamenge women, is literally built on the bones of those lost in the conflict.

In peace villages throughout Bujumbura, AFSC works with another partner, Friends Peace Teams, to offer trauma healing and reconciliation workshops like those in which Janine (quoted above) participated. Over the three days of a Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC) workshop, perpetrators and victims come together. On the first day they learn about trauma. On the second day they tell the stories of their experiences, examine anger, and grieve and mourn. On the third day the participants reflect on how

to build trust in communities with such a history of betrayal.

Perpetrators and victims can’t undo what has happened, can’t erase what they have experienced. It may seem surprising, then, that people who experienced the horrors of that violence and have begun to heal are more committed to establishing a lasting peace than people who haven’t known such suffering.

Like the Friends Women’s Association Clinic, ordinary Burundians are building a place of healing on a foundation that fully reckons with the pain inflicted by the terrifying genocide. It isn’t easy; it takes courage and commitment to build a space capable of holding anger and forgiveness, grief and hope, a devastating past and a resurrected future. But through truth-telling and reconciliation, Burundi is rebuilding communities in which cooperation and even friendship is possible among those who once were enemies.

Violence—whether in Bujumbura or Boston—rips apart the fabric of a community. The trauma only ends, for perpetrator and victim, when those devastated lives can find enough healing to offer a shared promise of peace to future generations.

AFSC works in many communities to move from harm to healing. This issue of Quaker Action includes stories of the restorative work we do with those facing violence, poverty, victimization, and persecution. I hope you will be as heartened as I am “to see what love can do” when a narrative built on punishment and retribution is replaced with one built on transformation and wholeness.



In peace,

Shan Cretin
General Secretary

Risky truth-telling

Maine and Burundi communities begin to heal through storytelling

“There is no agony like bearing an untold story inside you.”

—Zora Neale Hurston

Telling one’s story, and having it deeply heard, can be the difference between carrying the burden of trauma, violence, and guilt, and building trust and reconnection.

When people who have experienced trauma hold their stories, become isolated, and have no safe place for their telling, the trauma can fester and emerge in acts of retribution and future violence. Where harm is caused by violent conflict, genocide, and the systematic destruction of cultures, trauma is often passed from one generation to the next.

Telling stories and having them heard, received, and understood lays the groundwork for the kind of healing that can make way for peace—for moving from harm to healing.

Healing from civil war in Burundi

Burundi suffered through two periods of intense conflict and killings between Hutus and Tutsis in the early 1970s and early 90s. Quakers have seen and responded to the great need in the country for healing.

Through peace committees, HIV clinics for women, and creating spaces for people to tell their stories, Quaker ministers and churches have had a deep influence on healing from the deep hurts from this time.

One Quaker group, Friends Peace Teams, developed a trauma-healing curriculum in 2003 called Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC). The initial workshop lasts three days and takes participants through a process that can result in healing and reconnection.

The first exercises create a sense of safety in the group. These are followed by learning about the dynamics of trauma and creating space for remembrance and

mourning. The participants learn a road map toward healing from trauma and connecting with faith in that process. They learn about the process of reconciliation and building trust. They also learn about helping others, working with healing companions, the recovery process, and the power of listening.

Deep listening creates the foundation for the healing. As participants learn to listen to one another, they also tell and sometimes are freed from their difficult stories of experiences of violence as perpetrators or victims. Leaders don’t talk

about forgiveness in the workshops; they have come to understand that forgiveness can be a powerful result of the process, but it is a spiritual gift and cannot be assumed or required.

But sometimes it is a result. Apollinaire, who lives in a peace village on the outskirts of Bujumbura, Burundi, told about his experience after the workshop:

“One day I was not at home, my wife was pregnant and I received a phone call that she had been beaten nearly to death. The man who did it had been my friend. We spent many years without talking with



Residents from Peace Village in Cibitoke Province, Burundi. Photo: AFSC/T.W. Moore



Denise Altvater in Maine.
Photo: BBC

each other. One day he asked for my forgiveness. I said, 'Yes,' but it wasn't true. After the HROC workshop, I went to him, shared food with him. I asked him to forgive me for not forgiving him. Now he is my best friend, we take care of one another."

People who participate in the process talk about how they have changed. Jean-Marie, a neighbor of Apollinaire's, said of her experience, "The one who killed my father, I used to see him, he was a soldier. When I saw him before the HROC workshop, my wound would re-open; I wanted to kill him, but now I have forgiven him, I've seen him since and I knew I was healed."

From "to kill the Indian" to reconciliation in Maine

Denise Altvater, a member of the Passamaquoddy tribe of the Wabanaki, has worked for AFSC for 18 years. She has worked in Maine with Wabanaki and state childcare workers to establish a truth and reconciliation commission—the first between a sovereign tribal nation and a U.S. state, and the first in which victims and perpetrators have proceeded in unity. The commission was seated in Hermon, Maine, on Feb. 12.

Preceding the seating ceremony was a day of reflection and prayer for the telling of the hard stories of children who had been taken from their homes, their people, and their ways, and placed into foster homes with white families. The foster care system was a tactic to eradicate the culture

of the few Wabanaki who had survived physical genocide. The intention was, as Richard Henry Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania said, "to kill the Indian, but save the man."

Denise says, "When the boarding school era became unpopular, and people started turning against it, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Child Welfare League of America implemented the Indian Adoption Act. This was a 10-year experiment that they conducted during the late 1950s through the late 1960s. The act was implemented primarily in the New England states."

Many of the children are now adults and still suffer from the trauma of being taken. Denise says, "Across the board, however you were taken, in a real good way or a real bad way, whether you were taken from a good home or a bad home, whether you were placed in a good or bad foster home, the people taken didn't feel like they knew where they belonged. The trauma that had the deepest impact was the trauma of being taken. It was a real strong and real life-long traumatic event."

Denise is clear that the harm done was part of the system: "During the boarding-school era, the foster-care era, child welfare workers were doing their jobs and they thought they were doing the right thing. It's not an issue of them being good or bad, right or wrong."

The focus of the truth and reconciliation process will be the healing of the

Wabanaki through the telling and receiving of their stories, the healing of the child care workers, and changes in policy and practice.

Child welfare workers and tribal members have worked together on developing the declaration of intent; they were mistrustful at first, but when they told each other stories about who they are as people, their hearts opened to one another, and they have moved together to make the commission a reality.

As the tender, difficult stories are told and really heard, the healing can begin, the reclamation of the birthright of all people: to one's own culture, to one's own heart, to a sense of belonging.

Denise says, "People can be transformed by being open and human. We believe that people have a need to be heard, but how they are heard really matters—if they take the risk of telling their story, it needs to make a difference."

Telling stories of violence and trauma in a context in which those stories will be believed, listened to, and deeply held by the community lays the foundation for healing and for reconciliation between perpetrators and victims. It also allows new ways of interacting and commitments to end the practices and conflicts that have caused the trauma.

Hearing such stories can ignite movements; movements of the heart that can lay the foundation for peace.

LUCY DUNCAN

Turning to love, learning to live

One man's story of transformation through love, family, knowledge

Peter Martel spent 10 years in solitary confinement following armed robbery charges when he was 20 years old. His life changed during those years as the love of his family and human compassion helped him find a spark within himself. Today, as program associate with AFSC's Michigan Criminal Justice Program and an aspiring lawyer, he's leading others to find that spark in themselves.

Personal transformation is not easy when the system is structured to keep people in prison rather than make a life on the outside. Michigan incarcerates 43,000 people, at a cost of \$1.9 billion annually—most of which goes to personnel costs, with just minimal funding for services and programming for people in prison.

Peter was lucky. His family didn't give up on him. They sent him books to read, wrote to him, and visited him throughout his incarceration. Once he was released from solitary confinement, they paid for the college correspondence courses he was allowed to complete in prison.

Telling his own story to people who are where he once was, he now helps prisoners (and their loved ones) see the steps they can take while in prison to help them get out and stay out, while using their experiences to push the system to change.

Stealing time

My friends and I had been stealing things for a while. We started off stealing car stereo equipment, then progressed to stealing cars and breaking into homes. Eventually we began committing armed robberies. We intended to rob banks.

Before we got to that point, we were arrested. We had just robbed a convenience store, and a police officer ran across us as we were fleeing the scene. When he turned on his lights to pull us over, I started shooting at the cruiser. The chase continued with more police and more shots. In the end, we were arrested, and no one was injured.

I was sent to prison, tried and failed to escape, and was then sent to Michigan's super-max prison, where I would begin serving a 10-year stretch in "administrative segregation," i.e., solitary confinement.

I knew I had dug a very deep hole because of my poor decisions, which I traced back, at least in part, to high school: I graduated with a 1.05 GPA and knew that

I had not learned much of what I was supposed to have learned. When I thought about going to college, I feared the unlearned lessons and unattended days from high school would prevent me from being able to succeed.

What love can do

So, early on in my incarceration and in segregation, I decided to start reading all of the books I was supposed to have read in high school. I started with "The Brothers Karamazov" and then spent years reading literature and philosophy. As I read, I began to think about my relationships with others and the world, and how my decisions and actions might have affected others in my past. I realized how I had harmed others by stealing from them or shooting at them, or by disappointing those who loved me.

I realized how fortunate I was to still have people in my life who had not given up on me.



Top: Peter Martel in 1992, when he was 18.
Bottom: Peter today. Photo: AFSC/Jon Krieg

Love and support of those people, and the lessons I continue to learn from writers, have done more than anything else to help me get myself straightened around.

Love, support, and knowledge are more effective in creating a better world than punitive, retributive actions will ever be.

Being able to provide a little bit of that love, support, and knowledge back to all of those who are still inside our prisons is my work for AFSC and my blessing.

PETER MARTEL

Hear more from Peter—including his transition into college and his current work with AFSC—at afsc.org/michigan-prisons.

Mike Perry (left) and
Russell Green (right).
Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana

Friend of a friend

Mentorship leads
incarcerated men to
leave violence behind

As a teenager in the 1990s, Russell Green wanted to be at the center of the action. He used violence to get attention, but had to watch his back all day, every day. Before long, the lifestyle caught up with him; at age 18, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for second-degree murder.

Russell watched his reflection in the mirror as he got older. He realized that he was not the same person any more, but

no one else could see the transformation. He was doing the time by himself.

He was isolated, but not really alone, though he didn't know it at the time. He had a lot of company—entire generations of black men siphoned out of Baltimore neighborhoods into the prison system as part of the so-called “war on drugs.”

From prisoners to peace builders

Marshall “Eddie” Conway, who has been locked up since 1971, has watched these generations pour in during his years in prison. “It makes me think of

those stories of the young African children who were reputed to have been lured onto the slave ships with red cloths,” he says. “The drug game has become the new lure, and it is quickly reeling them into the hold of this new vessel: the criminal justice system.”

By the time he got involved with AFSC in 2002, Eddie was disgusted with seeing this. Along with other prisoners in the Maryland Correctional Training Center (a state prison), he wanted to offer mentoring and guidance to younger prisoners, to help them

find a sense of purpose.

Borrowing the phrase “a friend of a friend” from the Underground Railroad—it was a password used to indicate that an enslaved person would receive safe conduct—they started a program that, 10 years later, is sending transformed men back into Baltimore neighborhoods as leaders. The name also sums up participants’ desires to be free and the relationship to AFSC, a Quaker organization.

Friend of a Friend uses a curriculum developed by men who have frequently

experienced chaos and violence, but have chosen to encourage unity and love moving forward. Participants develop conflict resolution skills and mentoring relationships to support them in finding useful alternatives to conflict and violence in

prison and upon returning to their communities. Today, the program works in five prisons, reaching an average of 150 men every year.

Despite the size of the program, the experience is very intimate for each individual.

WAR ON DRUGS

More than 500,000 people—nearly a quarter of all those incarcerated in the U.S.—are incarcerated as the result of a drug conviction. Three-fourths of all persons in prison for drug offenses are people of color. Learn more about mass incarceration at afsc.org/new-jim-crow.



Vacant row homes await demolition in Baltimore's Middle East neighborhood next to the expanding Johns Hopkins Medical Campus. Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana

Getting a grip

Recognizing where his violent front had gotten him, Russell was open to something new. When a mentor with Friend of a Friend began to talk to him about becoming a better man, he was ready to listen.

Russell joined Friend of a Friend as a mentee, and he met Mike Perry, a program mentor. At that point, Mike had already spent over 25 years behind bars for two different robbery charges—but he had also already transformed himself. It was appealing to Russell to think that he might be able to learn “how to think and function reasonably,” he says. “Actually getting a grip was persuasive. Violence should not always be the first option.”

At weekly meetings the men focused on anger management, conflict, and coping skills. They started at the beginning—identifying their own influences, values, and attitudes. They discussed frustrating scenarios, brainstormed al-

VOICES OF A MOVEMENT

Russell and Mike joined other participants in a conversation with AFSC's Friends Relations Fellow Madeline Schaefer, discussing how Friend of a Friend is building a movement by using the power of love to change hearts and transform communities. Listen at afsc.org/movement-voices.

ternative solutions, and analyzed a healthy course of action.

But Russell was not accustomed to always having someone else deeply involved in the choices he was making. At first, he thought his mentors were too pushy. Over time, he realized why: “That is the role of the big brother—they are on your back because they have the experience.”

That's why the mentor relationship has been a part of the program from the start.

Fathers, brothers, friends

The men who first formed Friend of a Friend realized that a lot of people who ended up in prison because of the Baltimore drug conflict had grown up without

the guidance they needed: Men enter in their late teens and early 20s, spending formative years behind bars. In turn, Baltimore neighborhoods have fewer male role models and many men find themselves in a system where they are isolated and deprived of family.

As Russell started to get comfortable with his “big brothers,” he responded well to the strength of Mike and his other mentors. “Eventually I saw that they had my best interest in their hearts,” he says.

He began to address problems not with violence, but with conflict resolution skills, finding peaceful solutions.

Eddie talks about the “magic” that happens when young men, initially skeptical or ambivalent, become focused and committed to change.

“It not only helps them better navigate conflict but makes them think in a more critical way about issues that affect their communities,” he says. “Our goal has been to equip these young men to

“WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LOVE?”

At afsc.org/what-love-means, AFSC's Friends Liaison Lucy Duncan reflects on an afternoon she spent with Friend of a Friend program director Dominique Stevenson in the Maryland Correctional Training Center, including a conversation with program participants about what “love” means:

One man said, “Look, we can only grow in our time. There's no time to waste. But that's why patience is so critical.”

Across the room, one of the younger participants said, “How do we define family? If your brother's been oppressed, help him. If your brother's been an oppressor, help him by helping him to stop the oppression.”

leave prison in a better position emotionally and intellectually than when they came in. Our great hope is that they will contribute to the uplift of the communities that they come from.”

Eddie has frequently filled the role of father figure, because he knows that for many young men a healthy relationship with a father or grandfather has been lacking. “I have a godson who found his first positive role model only once he was incarcerated,” he says.

One of the magical moments for Russell came when they talked about self-discovery. “When we did that, we had the chance to express the things that were lying and waiting inside of us,” he says. “The way the brothers had it formatted—it was like emotions and experiences were ready to jump out of you.”

Mike encouraged Russell to help uplift the community he had harmed in the past. Russell started with forming genuine relationships with his brother, mother, and two daughters, but this healing also included giving back to the wider Baltimore community—to help make it whole again.

While Russell was learning about himself, so was Mike. “As a mentor, I learned so many things from the young guys who came into the program and I grew in the process,” Mike says. “When you are in this program you know it is significant.”

Russell says that he is a different person now—and he is happy.

“I am not the smallest guy, and my face is not one that looks soft as cotton balls. But my mentors taught me that I can have that look but my actions can be

different,” he says. “They taught me that my inner appearance will outshine my outer appearance.”

A loving culture in the streets

Mike and Russell were both recently released from prison. They both continue their group work on the outside—working to support each other, still emphasizing healing and personal development.

They're fulfilling the vision of Friend of a Friend's founders, including Eddie, who believed that bringing people together and giving them a way to see new options is the way to start a “new community” that is steeped in a loving culture.

“For anyone who ever bought into the myth that the ‘bad guys’ are behind those bars, let this give them pause,” says Eddie, who is still in prison. “I am surrounded by men who, had it not been for a drug addiction, might otherwise be upstanding members of their communities.”

On the outside, Mike, Russell, and other Friend of a Friend participants have organized speaking engagements, conducted advocacy campaigns at the state level, and explored opportunities to mentor young people in Baltimore.

“The same thing that Friend of a Friend does in prison, it has the potential to do it in the street,” says Mike. “We have an opportunity to decrease violence and spread love. An opportunity to change the streets.”

BROOKE FRITZ

Brooke is associate director of AFSC's South region.



Friend of a Friend staff and former participants share experiences and concerns with Maryland's prison system. From top: Demetrius Jones; Program Director Dominique Stevenson with Benjamin Woods; Deandre Daniels. Photos: AFSC/Bryan Vana

BE A MENTOR

Anyone can develop a relationship with a person in prison—through writing or visiting, you can mentor someone inside, and simultaneously be mentored by that person. Go to afsc.org/prison-concerns to learn more.



Illustration: AFSC/Emily Cohane-Mann

Preventing harm

Why now is the time to change the U.S. prison system

Punishment has been popular in Anglo-European cultures, as in many others, since before biblical times. Perhaps it's not surprising then that our culture justifies virtually any amount of violence toward those perceived as "perpetrators."

In U.S. prisons, what begins with a relatively benign mandate to separate convicted people from the rest of us quickly spirals into harsher and harsher forms of isolation, deprivation, and cruelty. What's more, this cruelty is not administered evenly; at every level of the system, from arrest to trial to sentencing, racism results in much longer and harsher sentences for people of color.

The problem is not only that "justice" is administered unjustly. It's that people cannot become kinder and gentler, more capable of holding down a job and maintaining family relationships, when they are not offered meaningful education or job training and are isolated, exposed to further violence, and deprived of self-respect for years at a time.

Structured to heal

In AFSC's comprehensive analysis of prison issues, "Beyond Prisons: A New

Interfaith Paradigm of Our Failed Prison System," that I co-wrote with Harmon L. Wray, we quote the philosopher Kathleen Deane Moore, who points out that meeting evil with evil simply makes us evil-doers ourselves. It is a myth, she writes, that revenge is the only natural response to violence. Look at how a forest recovers from a traumatic forest fire—or how a stream heals from toxics that have been poured into it. Nature is organized to heal itself.

When we organize ourselves for healing justice, we stop focusing on legally defined wrongs and punishments that often contribute to recidivism, and instead look for ways to facilitate healing and transformation for all involved.

It's a new paradigm, and one that AFSC is successfully modeling in partnerships like those in Maryland (see page 6), Maine, and Burundi (see page 3).

Another example is "Women Healing from Violence," the classes we host in the federal women's prison and the Santa Cruz County jail in California. Because those who have been convicted of crimes also carry their own histories as survivors of abuse and neglect, the program weaves these realities together. (Learn more about

these women in a recent blog post at afsc.org/women-healing.)

True justice

Momentum is growing for change. Courageous prisoners who have gone on hunger strike to protest the cruelty of long-term isolation have caught the attention of mainstream media. Racial disparities in the system are being exposed. In 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court required California to reduce its prison population in order to provide constitutional levels of health care and mental health care. Eight other states have reduced their prison population, and more jurisdictions are abolishing the death penalty.

AFSC has been central to these struggles for decades. We celebrate this progress and at the same time know that it is not enough.

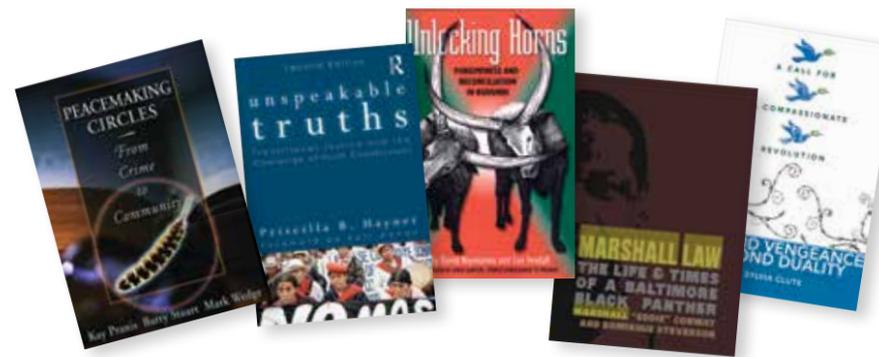
Now is the time to push for a real overhaul of the system; not only because humane approaches are less expensive and more effective, but because justice is best served by helping people heal and preventing further harm.

LAURA MAGNANI

Laura is director of AFSC's Bay Area Healing Justice Program in California.

Dig deeper

Read, watch, and get involved



We hope you've been inspired by this issue to look further into healing justice work and perhaps to get personally involved in one of the issues. Here are some suggestions for learning more.

The power of truth and reconciliation

The over-arching theme in this issue is the belief that when people who have been in conflict tell their truths, share their pain, and seek reconciliation, real healing can take place. Much of this healing work, both in the U.S. and internationally, uses some form of circle process.

In "Peacemaking Circles: From Crime to Community," a 2003 book from Living Justice Press, Kay Pranis, Mark Wedge, and Barry Stuart provide a valuable guide to the deep origins of circles and to their power.

Truth and reconciliation commissions are also an important vehicle for bringing forth healing truths. To follow the progress of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, visit www.mainetribaltrc.org.

For an insightful review of 60 truth commissions and their impacts, see Priscilla Hayner's "Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions," published by Routledge in 2011.

For a personal view of trauma-healing work in Burundi and its roots in traditional healing practices, read David Niyonzima's "Unlocking Horns," published in 2001 by Barclay Press. An interview

with David was recently featured on AFSC's Acting in Faith blog; find it at afsc.org/niyonzima-interview.

For in-depth information on the Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) program, visit the African Great Lakes Initiative website at www.aglifpt.org.

Experiences of prisoners

For stories of healing from men in prison and those returning to the community, visit AFSC's Friend of a Friend web page at afsc.org/fof. The memoir of Friend of a Friend co-founder Eddie "Marshall" Conway, "Marshall Law," written with AFSC's Dominique Stevenson and published in 2011 by AK Press, recounts his commitment to organizing for peace and justice—both on the streets as a Black Panther and during his more than 40 years of incarceration.

Another valuable source for exploring Quaker peacemaking with prisoners is the Alternatives to Violence (AVP) website at www.avpusa.org. AVP, initiated by Quakers, was founded in and developed from the lived experiences of prisoners. It has grown into an international movement both inside and outside of prisons.

A new justice paradigm

"Beyond Prisons," published by Fortress Press in 2006 and co-authored by Laura Magnani and Harmon Wray, makes a convincing argument for why we need to start from scratch to envision a more just alternative to the justice system in the U.S.

HOST A FILM SCREENING

Screening one of these excellent new documentary films is a great way to share your concern about prisons with friends and colleagues:

- Lawyer Matthew Pillischer's "Broken on All Sides" grew from an exploration of prison overcrowding in Philadelphia to a sweeping examination of race and mass incarceration in the U.S. Visit www.brokenonallsides.com.



- Eugene Jarecki's "The House I Live In" is a heart-wrenching account of the "war on drugs" and its impact on poor communities. Learn more at www.thehouseilivein.org.
- Angad Bhalla's "Herman's House" reveals both the injustice of solitary confinement and the transformative power of art. Screening details are at www.hermanshousethefilm.com.

Sylvia Clute's 2010 book "Beyond Vengeance, Beyond Duality: A Call for a Compassionate Revolution," published by Hampton Roads, challenges the punitive approach to justice and offers a "unitive" approach that recognizes the oneness of all life.

Restorative justice

Finally, for an excellent clearing-house of information and resources on restorative justice around the world, visit Restorative Justice Online at www.restorativejustice.org.

TONY HERIZA

Find this article online at afsc.org/deeper.



Left: Cornelius Steelink in 1948 picketing against WWII.
Right: Cornelius Steelink today.

Join us online for a panel discussion

Connect with AFSC experts in real time as they talk about profiteering on prisons

Moderated by Alexis Moore, media director

Ask the panel your questions live on Wednesday, July 17, at 3 p.m. Eastern time.

Or go online to watch the recorded conversation at any time.

Details: afsc.org/hangout



Arnie Alpert
New Hampshire



Caroline Isaacs
Arizona



Natalie Holbrook
Michigan



In good conscience

An AFSC partner for peace and justice

Before Cornelius Steelink ever heard of AFSC, the seeds of his interest in the organization's work were planted by a harsh event when he was a child: His father was arrested in 1920 during the Palmer Raids and spent three years in San Quentin prison for union organizing activities.

"That's when I got some idea of what it was like in there," Cornelius says.

And once he crossed AFSC's orbit, Cornelius stayed engaged in part because of the organization's ongoing efforts to reform the criminal justice system, as well as its support of the Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s and immigrants' rights.

Cornelius, a retired chemist who was born and raised in Los Angeles, first came

into contact with AFSC when he was drafted in World War II. He was a conscientious objector (CO) and sent to a service camp for COs run by AFSC in the mountains of Northern California.

"Then one of most important things I did in my life was meet my first wife Jean in 1948 on a picket line," he says. "We were picketing against World War Three, if you can imagine that."

He had lost touch with the Service Committee, but after he and Jean moved to Tucson, Ariz., in 1957, Cornelius reconnected with AFSC when Jean volunteered with—and later became a staff member of—the organization.

"There were AFSC staff there, but no official office," he says. "A number of us, includ-

ing Jean and myself, gave and raised money to get AFSC's Arizona office started. I've given ever since—albeit a bit sporadically."

"I also had a personal interest in that office," Cornelius says, half-joking. "I put myself through college as an electrician's assistant and I rewired the AFSC office since the wiring was maybe 60 years old. I guess you could say it was an in-kind contribution!"

In addition to his annual giving, Cornelius also established a gift annuity with the organization and has included the Service Committee in his estate plans.

"I give for general work," he says. "You guys are the experts. You know what you need most."

WILLIE COLON

Secure AFSC's future—and yours—with a charitable gift annuity

AFSC has offered charitable gift annuities for over four decades, and they remain an attractive option for many supporters. In exchange for your gift of cash or appreciated stock, AFSC agrees to pay you a guaranteed, tax-advantaged income for life.

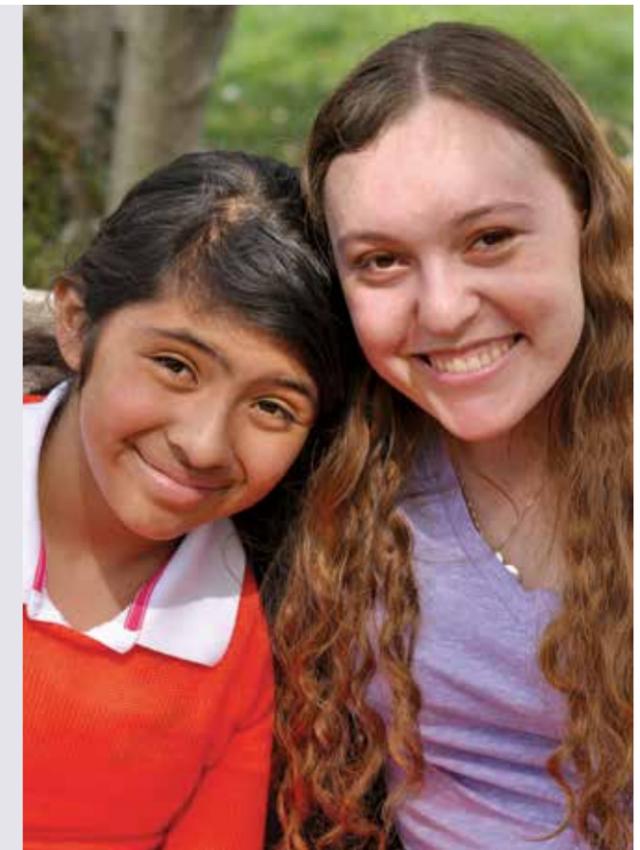
Best of all, your gift will help ensure AFSC's work for peace and justice continues for years to come.

Charitable gift annuity rates

Information is based on a one-life annuity. For two-lives or rates for deferred gift annuities, please contact us.

Age	Rate
60	4.4%
70	5.1%
80	6.8%
90+	9.0%

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REMEMBERING MICHAEL MCCONNELL, 1946-2013

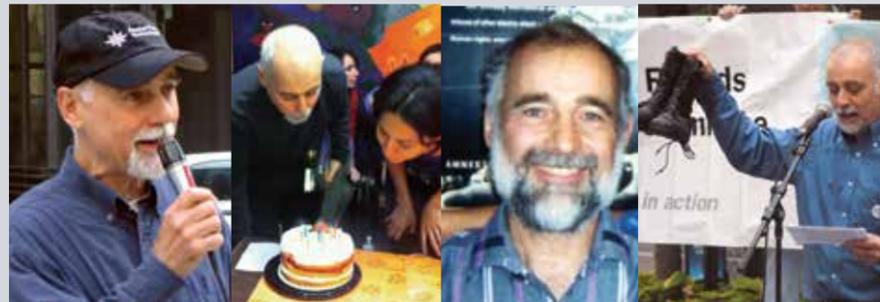
Michael McConnell, longtime regional director of AFSC's programs in the Midwest, passed away on April 7, 2013, after a long struggle with cancer.

From Chicago to Central America to Palestine, Michael dedicated his life to the fight for social justice, peace, and community empowerment. He joined AFSC in 1990 as a passionate and creative leader, partnering with many to build programs to challenge war (including the "Eyes Wide Open" exhibit of Iraq War soldiers' boots) while lifting up alternatives.

At his memorial service, General Secretary Shan Cretin remembered Michael as "a minister for peace and justice":

"Michael McConnell showed us every day what it means to 'Let one's life preach.' He knew that the work to build a just and peaceful world would not be completed in his lifetime, so he plowed the fields and planted countless seeds, the fruits of which even now inspire and equip us to continue the work, with the same joy and optimism we saw in our dear friend, Michael."

Michael's legacy is deep and enduring. Please visit AFSC's collection of videos, photos, stories, and other memories of Michael at afsc.org/michael.



Photos: left, Thor Swift for ALC Magazine; above, courtesy of friends and family

News from around AFSC

Prison privatization stopped

Last year, New Hampshire's corrections department invited for-profit corporations to submit proposals to operate the state's prisons. In response, AFSC and allies launched a statewide education campaign about for-profit prisons, which in other states are associated with high levels of violence and reduced labor standards.

The campaign was a success. In April, the state announced that it had cancelled all consideration of privatization. It found that none of the submitted proposals met standards for inmate care. The state also concluded that the low wages and benefits proposed by the corporations would lead to labor shortages—consistent with AFSC's findings in Arizona, where AFSC has studied the record of private prisons.

Though the state's decision is a clear win, AFSC will continue to work for a permanent ban on private prisons. "With the door to privatization closed, it's time to lock it and move on to development of sensible approaches to crime and corrections," says Arnie Alpert.

Construction begins on community workspace

What began as a basic training program in Hatcliffe Extension near Harare, Zimbabwe, has invigorated the community to think creatively about economic and social development. With new skills in carpentry, welding, sewing, and peanut butter making, many participants of AFSC's livelihoods training program have established small businesses that provide goods and services desperately needed in their community.

Their work was hindered, however, by limited facilities and poor equipment. For months, the community discussed plans to build a new, enclosed shelter for storage and workspace. This spring, they got good news: AFSC supporters had come through, donating funds to support the construction of the workspace.

Visit afsc.org/zimbabwe to meet some of the community's farmers, seamstresses, and leatherworkers.

Siblings Wesley and Myiya Peters stand outside the U.S. Capitol during the "If I Had a Trillion Dollars" film festival and leadership institute.

Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana



Snapshot

A look at AFSC around the world



Left to right, top to bottom:

1. Building homes in Peace Village; Cibitoke Province, Burundi
2. Palestine and Somalia connections; Nairobi, Kenya
3. Student activists at alternative spring break; Chicago, Ill.
4. Challenging racism with Angela Davis; Seattle, Wash.
5. Immigrant solidarity march; Charlotte, N.C.
6. Teachers in training session; Bopha Aram, Myanmar
7. Undocumented youth speak out; San Francisco, Calif.
8. Second line for justice; New Orleans, L.A.
9. Street performers; Banda Aceh, Indonesia
10. Refugee leader; Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya
11. Strategizing for Middle East peace; Chicago, Ill.
12. Admiring chayote in Proyecto Jardín; Los Angeles, Calif.

Photos: (Left to right, top to bottom) T.W. Moore, AFSC, Rudhian Chlissma Putra, Minh Nguyen, Lacey Williams, T.W. Moore, Lucy Duncan, SEIU 21LA, T.W. Moore, John Bongei, Jon Krieg, Crystal Gonzalez



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Students participating in AFSC's alternative spring break in Chicago in March. Photo: Rudhian Chlissma Putra

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Who we are
The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice, as a practical expression of faith in action. 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.

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