



**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

AFSC West Region News – August 2021

Highlights of work from around the region

Welcome to the American Friends Service Committee’s West Region monthly newsletter. We look forward to connecting with you regarding our shared work for peace and justice. Thanks for your interest and support; please send feedback to WestNews@afsc.org.



US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Working to end immigrant detention

“I was so scared for my life, I thought I was going to die in there,” says Leticia Sierra about the Otay Mesa Detention Center in San Diego. During AFSC’s recent webinar [Breaking Open Cages from the Ground Up: Spotlighting Local Campaigns to End Immigrant Detention](#), Leticia describes the woefully inadequate medical care for people at the start of the pandemic and immigrants’ efforts to enlist the help of outside organizations such as AFSC for help. “I hope that this message goes to everyone, to let them know how important it is to free our people from these places,” she adds. “They don’t deserve this.”



Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Addressing the lack of Queer safe spaces in the Central Valley

From [Central Valley Scholars](#): Created in partnership with PVI's ArteVism fellowship and led by Michael Piña, this Learning Group aims to address the lack of Queer safe spaces and community centers in the Central Valley. The group will consist of five BIPOC who identify within the LGBTQIA+ community. Participants will meet via Zoom bi-weekly through January 2022 and collectively develop an art project sponsored by PVI.



East 27th Street between Stanford Avenue and San Pedro Street remains closed to cars and has a police presence after homes and property were damaged by the LAPD's fireworks detonation shortly before the Fourth of July. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

Roots for Peace (R4P) Program, Los Angeles

Support for families impacted by police explosion

On July 30, the Los Angeles Police Department detonated fireworks in a densely populated neighborhood in South Los Angeles causing a large explosion which severely impacted an entire city block. Several families affected are members of AFSC's Roots for Peace program. Staff organized to provide direct resources to the families displaced by the explosion and joined community members in calling for transparency, police accountability, and reparations for losses incurred. Roots for Peace continues to support families to navigate recovery from the explosion. Read this [update](#), and check out this [page](#) for ways you can help, too.



Farmer Marcia Fernandez speaks at an AFSC event. (Photo: AFSC NM)

People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Water is not for selling. Water is for defending.

AFSC New Mexico co-directors Sayrah Namaste and Patrick Jaramillo [describe](#) AFSC's efforts in coalition to stop Santolina, a huge development planned for south of Albuquerque that would be the second largest community in the state. "It is estimated that Santolina would demand over 14 million gallons of water per day," they write. "This is water that is not available, and water that could only come from the traditional communities. If Santolina is built, it would mean the death of those communities."



67 Sueños, Oakland

New mural focuses on healing

From [Instagram](#): On July 31, youth participants with 67 Sueños unveiled their new mural, [Heal Your People Heal Yourself](#). Shoutout to our families, friends, femtors & mentors for supporting our work & vision. None of this would have been possible without y'all's love & guidance. ❤️❤️ Hella love to the powerful youth for sharing their stories, their poetry, and art....



Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Pushing for Citizenship for All and an end to immigrant detention

AFSC's member groups, Not1More Deportation Table and Coloradoans For Immigrant Rights (CFIR), are deeply engaging in [Citizenship for All](#) efforts during the first half of the August Congressional recess, pushing members of Congress hard to reduce ICE and Border Patrol budgets, especially for detention. An August 30 vigil at the GEO Detention Center in Aurora will include reports back on this work and some exciting visuals on [#DefundHate](#) and how we would reinvest the millions GEO receives.



Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Confronting policing and white supremacy

"I've suffered police abuse and intimidation," says Nathaniel Philipps, AFSC Ristad Fellow who facilitated a recent AFSC Community Safety Beyond Policing (CSBP) webinar on [Policing and White Supremacy](#). "I'm of the belief that when the police target poor, racialized, queer and disabled individuals, which are all identities that I carry, then the system is working exactly as intended." Check out AFSC's [CSBP page](#) for more about past and upcoming webinars.



The vaccine is our only hope

We invite you to download this folder that includes: 1 small workshop on how to use the comics and how to decode the information that is in them, also you will find one comic about the effects of getting vaccinated. You will also find a power point presentation made to analyze the implications of the vaccine and the inequalities in the public Health System.

Please be aware that all of the documents are written **ONLY IN SPANISH**.

[Download Folder](#)

Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Popular education materials available

Pedro Sosa of AFSC is pleased to share these [Popular Education Liberates](#) materials for people’s use, including information in Spanish about the COVID-19 vaccine. This [bio](#) of Pedro describes his work with AFSC to strengthen leadership and voices of immigrant communities and build a strong national immigrant and refugee rights agenda. He is also active in advocating for the rights of indigenous peoples at the UN.



Economic Activism Program, Oakland

Pillsbury should follow Ben and Jerry’s lead

After years of grassroots campaigning, Ben and Jerry’s announced it would stop selling its ice cream in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. General Mills should follow suit and stop manufacturing Pillsbury products on stolen land. Join AFSC’s campaign to [boycott Pillsbury](#). Check out AFSC’s [Investigate website](#) for more information on General Mills, Pillsbury’s parent company.



Arizona Program, Tucson

Pushing for real community safety and an end to private prisons

With Arizona's prison population at its lowest since 2006, having dropped by 5000 people in 2020 alone, [AFSC Arizona](#) asks: Why are we paying private companies for more prison beds? AFSC is encouraging people to contact Gov. Doug Ducey and Director Andy Tobin and tell them to invest in real community safety instead. AFSC and partners have also organized a [Free Imam Jamil Press Conference and Protest](#) on August 15 to demand justice and his freedom.

Short takes

Read [AFSC's statement](#) on the recent Israeli raid on our partner Defense for Children International-Palestine.... Check out the [summer issue](#) of AFSC's engaging alumni newsletter....Read more about accelerating [racial justice work among Friends](#).... Congrats to Eisha Mason, a former AFSC West Region staffer, on receiving a [New Thought Walden Award](#)... Meet [AFSC's Gift Planning Team](#)...Join AFSC's August 18 [webinar/phone zap](#) on ending Selective Service...If you're curious about AFSC's work east of the Rockies, check out the latest [Midwest Digest](#).

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Founded in 1917, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is an international Quaker organization that works on many social justice issues, including immigration, mass incarceration, youth civic engagement, and human rights in Palestine/Israel. With programs in 24 states and 15 countries, AFSC engages communities experiencing marginalization in the pursuit of shared security, based not on arms or coercion, but rather on creative nonviolence, sustainable economics and respect for all peoples.