



AFSC West Region News – January 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.



Photo: Core Visual

People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Gender justice and the response to COVID-19

Sayrah Namaste of AFSC **says** we need a “broader perspective about the importance of bringing a gender justice lens to pandemic recovery efforts” and that “investing in gender justice is key to any long-term social change.” A creator of AFSC’s innovative Farm to Food Bank effort, she adds, “I am grateful to the many women around the world who are responding to COVID 19 with their hearts and hands, creating these networks of care for each other.”

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.



Roots for Peace (R4P) Program, Los Angeles

Building local, sustainable food systems for BIPOC communities

From [Instagram](#): During these times of great uncertainty, the power of community has been present this year at R4P's South LA Community Farm. We harvested hundreds of pounds of fresh, organic produce, learned to compost, built more raised beds, and welcomed new members. Now more than ever the need for local, sustainable regional food systems is vital for our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) communities.

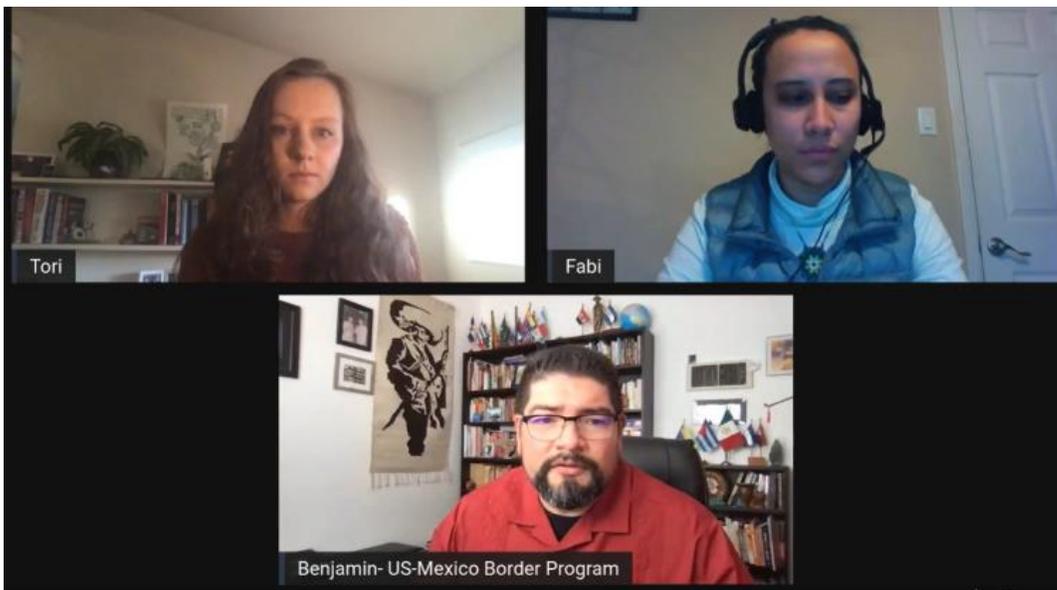


Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signs the driver's license for all bill in 2019.

Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Driver's licenses for all now a reality in Oregon

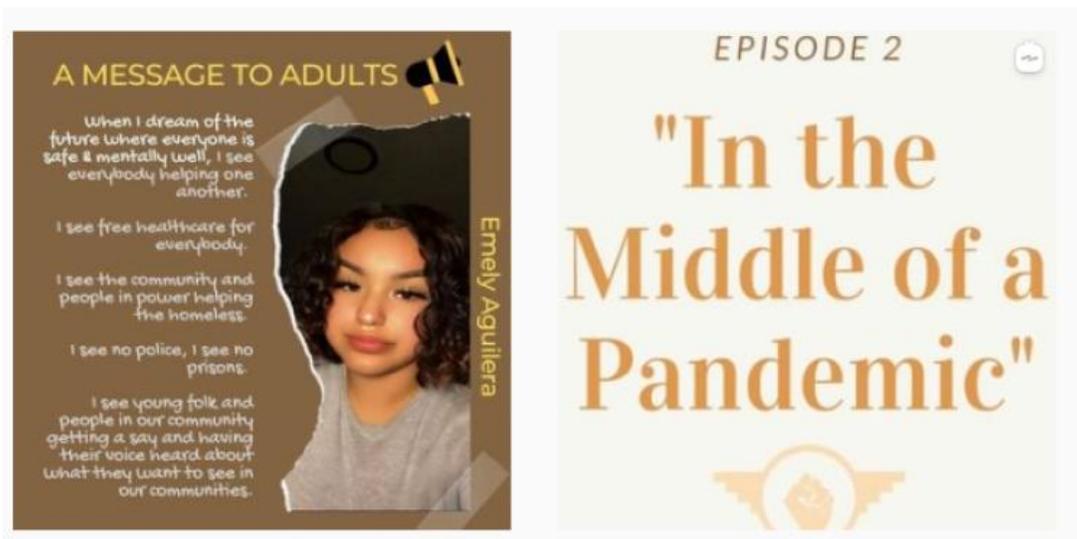
Pedro Sosa of AFSC passes along [good news](#) from Causa Oregon about the recent implementation of driver's licenses for all people following an advocacy campaign and 10-year hiatus. Check out this [Univision interview](#) in Spanish with Pedro about AFSC's work in support of immigrant communities in Oregon and Washington.



US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

AFSC named “Community Organization of the Year”

The San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium has honored AFSC for its “work and campaign to highlight various issues immigrants face, including the situation at the Otay Mesa Detention Facility.” In this recent [Facebook Live](#), Benjamin Prado joins AFSC colleagues to discuss work to Abolish ICE and end its white nationalist agenda of terrorizing immigrant workers and their families.



67 Sueños, Oakland

Podcast looks at the impact of COVID-19 on immigrant communities

From [Instagram](#) in honor of International Migrants Day 2020: In this 67 Sueños [#IMD2020](#) podcast, [@metwesthighschool](#) and [@rudsdalehigh](#) youth present skits, poetry, and interviews on how immigrant communities have been impacted by COVID-19. The podcast was produced through our distance-learning spaces in observance of [#InternationalMigrantsDay](#).



Carmen Moreno Photo: Myrna Martinez Natera

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Fellows connect creative expression and active citizenship

Myrna Martinez Nateras of AFSC **writes**: “Our first webinar of the 2021 featured ArteVism Fellow Cecilia Moreno and her mother, Carmen Moreno, on the struggles their Native American tribe has faced in keeping their cultural traditions alive. Carmen is descended from the Central Valley’s Tachi and Wuckchumni Yokut tribes and is devoted to preserving her native culture and language.” The Fellows’ video project **More than a Bread Basket** will premiere Monday, January 25 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. PT.



Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Working to close all prisons in California

AFSC is one of 70 organizations involved with CURB – Californians United for a Responsible Budget. “Governor Gavin Newsom has announced that his administration will be closing two state-owned prisons by 2023,” writes CURB. “We believe that California CAN and MUST close ALL prisons in the state, starting with a much larger number than two.” **Register by January 25** to join CURB’s meeting on January 30.



Social Media Image distributed by Arizona Government



Social Media Image distributed by AFSC-Arizona

Arizona Program, Tucson

Annual report looks at work to care for *all* people in Arizona

“In the midst of a deadly pandemic, we demonstrated our communities’ capacity for care,” writes Caroline Isaacs in [AFSC Arizona’s 2020 Annual Report](#). “When faced with the stark reality of systemic racism in policing and other systems, we stood in solidarity with worldwide uprisings that affirmed the preciousness of Black lives. In a year of divisive politics, we saw voters turn out in record numbers to call for change to our drug laws.” Check out this [video](#) from AFSC’s ReFraming Justice project on the urgent need for sentencing reform.



Economic Activism Program, Oakland

Supporting divestment and Palestinian human rights

Over the course of a year, AFSC’s Economic Activism Program supported 15 active corporate campaigns, ten student divestment campaigns and five church divestment campaigns. AFSC is part of [Cities for Palestine](#) and, following a recent conference, staff worked with campaigns in six cities. Two church campaigns succeeded – the Episcopal Church and the Unitarian Universalists. Three student campaigns won – at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Butler University and Columbia University. Check out [AFSC’s Investigate website](#) to learn more.



Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Looking back at accomplishments, ahead to transformative change

In [looking back at 2020 and ahead to 2021](#), AFSC Colorado staff write: “We will insist on nothing less than the transformation of our immigration system, the repurposing of our local and national budgets away from militarization and towards the environmental justice and the health of ourselves and our communities, and the growth and sustenance of mutual aid and support.” If you missed AFSC’s recent #FreeThemAll concert and teach-in, [check it out](#). The concert culminated in a call to submit your own art – visual, written or recorded – to jpiper@afsc.org by January 20, 2021.

Short takes

AFSC has released this statement on [Making Real the Promise of Democracy in the Face of Armed Insurrection](#)....Read more about AFSC’s work to [Defund Hate](#) in 2020 and our [delivery of over 44,000 signatures on a petition to abolish ICE](#)....Register today for AFSC’s [Under the Mask online event](#) to learn more about how communities around the world are resisting authoritarianism during COVID-19 and beyond.

Your support matters

Your gifts of time and money make a real difference. Please be in touch with any West Region program by visiting afsc.org, and support the AFSC West Region by [donating](#) today. Please share this subscription [link](#) for this newsletter with others. Thank you!