



## AFSC West Region News – March 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](mailto:WestNews@afsc.org).*



*Photo: Pedro Rios*

*US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego*

### **Affirming human rights, assisting people seeking asylum**

As recent policy changes fuel uncertainty at the border, AFSC staff joined other human rights advocates in a monitoring brigade to assist migrants seeking asylum. Pedro Rios [writes](#) that AFSC will continue to work with the monitoring brigade on the ground to support migrants as they navigate through difficult circumstance. We will keep up our call for the administration to affirm the human right to seek asylum freely and treat migrants with the respect and dignity we all deserve.

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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.*



KTVU

*Healing Justice Program, Oakland*

## Work to demilitarize the police moves forward in Oakland

AFSC has joined with several other organizations in pushing for the demilitarization of the Oakland Police. "The streets of Oakland are not a combat field," the group is quoted in this [TV report](#). "Use of a military-style truck is not a proportional response to residential emergencies. The BearCat's presence strikes fear in the hearts of adults and children who experience it in operation. It triggers trauma for Black and brown folks who live in the neighborhoods where it is most frequently used."



*67 Sueños, Oakland*

## Promoting safe and healthy living

From [Instagram](#): Healthy Living for Life Challenge! Promote healthy eating practices 🍓🍌🍎, drink water 💧💧, staying active 🏃🏃🏃🏃🏃🏃🏃🏃, food is Medicine ❤️❤️, healthy juice/food recipes 🍉🥥🥑, or ways to keep you safe from the Rona 🦠😷. You can create a TikTok, flyer, video, poem, art/writer piece, or even a speech on ways to keep the block safe and healthy 🤝🤝🤝🤝🤝. Health is something we 💪 believe, and it's a practice that has been in the 67 culture from the jump 🏆



Fidel Gonzalez (Photo: Sayrah Namaste)

*People of the Land Program, Albuquerque*

## Learning circle looks at eco-friendly farming practices

In February, AFSC New Mexico hosted its second virtual Peer-to-Peer Learning Circle for New Mexico growers. The topic was “Nurturing Soil for a Healthy Climate,” led by two farmers who have worked with AFSC-NM for many years. Fidel Gonzalez and Matthew Draper shared strategies to steward soil health for farm production and climate health. Read [more](#) from co-directors Patrick Jaramillo and Sayrah Namaste.



*Celebrating Int'l Women's Day in Fresno, 2018. Photo by Eduardo Stanley*

*Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno*

## Continuing the struggle for rights for immigrant women

“There is a public perception that immigrant and refugee women become liberated in the United States by learning from American women and their family structure,” [writes](#) Myrna Martinez Nateras of PVI in marking International Women’s Day on March 8. “This stereotyped view is an expression of unawareness of the skills and resilience of these women, and of the talents, skills and cultural indigenous knowledge they bring with them.”



*Arizona Program, Tucson*

### **Advocacy effort for justice reaches 28 lawmakers**

This [video](#) tells the story of ReFraming Justice Day, an annual event organized by AFSC in which people who have been personally impacted by Arizona's punishment system can speak directly to legislators about the unjust laws and policies that have personally impacted them. In 2021, we went virtual and reached 28 legislators! Join our [mailing list for legislative updates](#).



*Immigrant Rights Program, Denver*

### **Take action to close immigrant detention centers**

AFSC is working with Detention Watch Network to support the “First Ten to Communities Not Cages” campaign, demanding the shutdown of 10 immigration detention centers during the first year of the Biden administration. Visit our [#FirstTen action toolkit](#) for ways you can plug into the campaign today. Biden has yet to address ICE’s deadly immigration detention system, despite immigration being a priority issue for the administration. COVID-19 outbreaks in detention are ongoing, and 2020 was the deadliest fiscal year in ICE custody since 2005. Take action [here](#).



*Economic Activism Program, Oakland*

## **Facebook: We need to talk about Palestinian rights**

AFSC recently joined with partners to deliver a petition with over 50,000 signatures in support of [Palestinian rights](#) to 18 Facebook offices around the world. Dov Baum of AFSC joined the action at Facebook’s main headquarters in Menlo Park. “It’s outrageous that corporations such as Facebook control what we can and can’t talk about,” Dov [said](#). “It goes both ways, both in allowing hate speech and in limiting the speech that governments or big power doesn’t like. Whenever a corporation makes those decisions, you can be sure that money will make those decisions for us.”



*Policarpo Chaj, center, with Pedro Sosa, far right*

*Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington*

## **Policarpo Chaj, Rest in Power**

On [Facebook](#), Pedro Sosa writes: “RIP our friend Policarpo Chaj, with whom we worked together to advocate on issues of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations Headquarters at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.” Policarpo, a K’iche’ interpreter who came to the US from Guatemala in the 1990s, is included in this [New York Times](#) article about immigration courts and indigenous languages.



*Dov Baum (top left) and Pedro Rios (bottom left) on AFSC Facebook Live*

## Short takes

A new [report](#) shows Joe Biden received more than \$5 million from the border security industry; Pedro Rios and Dov Baum join colleagues to explain it further in this [Facebook Live](#).... Check out this [description of workshops](#) from AFSC staff available for your monthly meeting, church or yearly meeting.... Join us Thursday, March 11 at 5 pm PT to explore how [restorative justice has helped communities address harms and create safety for all their members](#). This is an important step toward a future where we rely less on police and prisons....March 14 is the application deadline for a [Lead Gift Officer](#) with AFSC.

## Your support matters

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