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.

“The New Story” mural by 2018 R4P Farmternship youth

Roots for Peace Program, Los Angeles

A love across borders

“I like to think that my grandma is proud of the person I am becoming,” writes Brenda Verano, an intern and program facilitator with AFSC’s Roots For Peace (R4P) program in Los Angeles. “I’ve dreamed of a borderless world, where my family and I are able to grow old together.” Read more as Brenda shares her dreams and explores youth leadership, food sovereignty and finding a place of belonging.

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.
People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Making sure kids win

“Some students had never tasted a carrot before,” a Head Start cook told AFSC recently. Her school participated in the Great Carrot Crunch Campaign in October, an idea director Sayrah Namaste created after being inspired by the Great Lakes Apple Crunch in the Midwest. The campaign connects small scale organic farmers with preschools, mostly Head Start programs, as well as elementary schools like the Native American Community Academy. Our motto is *Kids Win When Farmers and Schools Work Together*. Read more.

Arizona Program, Tucson

You still think voting doesn’t matter?

Tell that to Joe Watson of AFSC-AZ, whose vote for president in 2008 as a pretrial detainee from inside a Phoenix jail meant everything to him. Read his latest blog, published on Election Day, November 5. And check out Episode 10 of AFSC-AZ’s ReFraming Justice Podcast featuring AFSC’s director of Economic Activism Dalit Baum and Alex Friedmann, an activist shareholder and associate director of the Human Rights Defense Center. They discuss big banks divesting from private prisons. Hear the podcast on Spotify, Apple Music, or by clicking here.
US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Border Patrol denies delivery of flu vaccines to detained migrants

AFSC staff from San Diego joined nurses and health professionals who attempted to deliver flu vaccines recently to the Border Patrol station in San Ysidro. Pedro Rios explains that CBP continues to spend millions on bullets and that we should take action for an immediate end to the funding of ICE and CBP’s abuses. Pedro’s colleague, Adriana Jasso, is featured in this AFSC Changemaker video.

67 Sueños, Oakland

Marking Indigenous People’s Day

67 Sueños folks held a sunrise ceremony to mark Indigenous People’s Day and the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Alcatraz. For their #DiaDeLxsMuertxs altar, people made a paper mâché coffin and oak tree, which represents Oakland and all its native life. Follow 67 Sueños on Instagram to catch more of their creative work.
Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Community forum on immigration issues

Pedro Sosa (above, third from right), who directs AFSC’s Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program in Oregon and Washington, served on a panel at a community forum on Immigration issues with US Senator Jeff Merkley (standing). The forum was organized by UNITE and the community of Medford. Follow Pedro’s inspiring work on Instagram.

Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Wins for Healing Justice in California

California Gov. Gavin Newsom recently signed two bills into law that AFSC lobbied for. SB 136 (Weiner) repeals a mandatory one-year sentence enhancement added for each prior prison or jail sentence. AB 965 (Stone) allows incarcerated people who were under the age of 26 when they were incarcerated to benefit from educational programs and good behavior credit to earn the opportunity to move their parole hearing date sooner. Read more.
Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Supporting people in deportation and detention
AFSC’s new Crossing South resource was profiled recently in the Boulder Weekly and Latino Rebels. Click here to donate in support of updating and distributing this valuable resource for people facing deportation. AFSC and Coloradoans for Immigrant Rights continue to hold monthly vigils at the for-profit GEO Detention Center. This month, people called upon “our ancestors to guide us as we continue to cast light on and end expanding for-profit detention.” And Renato Fierro, a leader in AFSC’s Not1More Table, has written this op-ed on DACA.

Economic Activism Program, Oakland

“Investigate” database adds companies
Check out the latest companies added to the Investigate database: Cisco and Microsoft for their involvement in the Israeli occupation, and Target Hospitality, which specializes in setting up temporary workforce housing camps for fossil fuel companies and also owns ICE’s largest youth and family detention center. AFSC staff Dalit Baum (shown above with colleague Noam Perry) was recently quoted in this article about GEO Group’s efforts at “net widening.”
Pan Valley Institute, Fresno

Panelists share stories of migration and belonging at national event

“Like my father I have a dual sense of belonging,” said Minerva Mendoza of PVI at Imagining America’s 20th annual gathering. “I have love, concerns, hopes and care for the wellbeing of my communities on both sides of the border. I am equally invested in what happens here, where I have lived for more than half of my life, and in the land where I was born and raised.” Read more.

Bits and Peaces

Religious leaders who took part in last December’s Love Knows No Borders action found not guilty!....The fall issue of Quaker Action includes AFSC Changemakers from Arizona and Colorado….December 3 is Giving Tuesday; please share your AFSC story and check out AFSC’s updated Alumni page….Incorporate spiritual practice into your social change work by checking out AFSC’s Quaker Social Change Ministry….Take action to cut Pentagon spending and end felony disenfranchisement.

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 AFSC by donating today. Please share this subscription link for this newsletter with others. Thank you!