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**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

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The **American Friends Service Committee** is a practical expression of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Committed to the principles of nonviolence and justice, it seeks in its work and witness to draw on the transforming power of love, human and divine.

We recognize that the leadings of the Spirit and the principles of truth found through Friends' experience and practice are not the exclusive possession of any group. Thus, the AFSC draws into its work people of many faiths and backgrounds who share the values that animate its life and who bring to it a rich variety of experiences and spiritual insights.

This AFSC community works to transform conditions and relationships both in the world and in ourselves that threaten to overwhelm what is precious in human beings. We nurture the faith that conflicts can be resolved nonviolently, that enmity can be transformed into friendship, strife into cooperation, poverty into well-being, and injustice into dignity and participation. We believe that ultimately goodness can prevail over evil, and oppression in all its many forms can give way.

AFSC Values

The AFSC community is guided by the values, principles and practices of the Religious Society of Friends, and is strengthened and renewed by the corresponding spiritual insights of people from many backgrounds who participate in its work.

We cherish the belief that there is that of God in each person, leading us to respect the worth and dignity of all. We are guided and empowered by the Spirit in following the radical thrust of the early Christian witness. From these beliefs flow the core understandings that form the spiritual framework of our organization and guide its work.

- We regard no person as our enemy. While we often oppose specific actions and abuses of power, we seek to address the goodness and truth in each individual.



Seeking to transform the institutions of society, we are ourselves transformed in the process. As we work in the world around us, our awareness grows that the AFSC's own organizational life must change to reflect the same goals we urge others to achieve.

We find in our life of service a great adventure. We are committed to this Spirit-led journey, undertaken "to see what love can do," and we are ever renewed by it.

- We assert the transforming power of love and nonviolence as a challenge to injustice and violence and as a force for reconciliation.
- We seek and trust the power of the Spirit to guide the individual and collective search for truth and practical action.
- We accept our understandings of truth as incomplete, and have faith that new perceptions of truth will continue to be revealed both to us and to others.

The Work of the AFSC

- We seek to understand and address the root causes of poverty, injustice, and war. We hope to act with courage and vision in taking initiatives which may not be popular.
- We are called to confront, nonviolently, powerful institutions of violence, evil, oppression and injustice. Such actions may engage us in creative tumult and tension in the process of basic change
- We seek opportunities to help reconcile enemies and to facilitate a peaceful and just resolution of conflict.
- We work to relieve and prevent suffering through both immediate aid and long term development and seek to serve the needs of people on all sides of violent strife.
- We ground our work at the community level both at home and abroad in partnership with those who suffer the conditions we seek to change and informed by their strength and vision.
- We work with all people, the poor and the materially comfortable, the disenfranchised and the powerful in pursuit of justice. We encourage collaboration in social transformation towards a society which recognizes the dignity of each person. We believe that the Spirit can move among all these groups, making great change possible.



The eight-pointed red and black star was adopted by the AFSC on Nov. 13, 1917, as its symbol. The star was first worn by British Quakers during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Quaker relief workers at the time wanted an identification to differentiate themselves and their supplies from other groups who were carrying out similar efforts. The star was in use by the London Daily News Fund on its shipments "for the relief of the French peasantry." Until the star was adopted, the Quaker workers had used the British Union Jack as well as the Red Cross flag.

This combination caused some confusion among the Prussian soldiers and made it easy for French civilians to mistake the Quakers for Red Cross workers. Neither group desired this confusion of identity.

The decision to use the star symbol of the Daily News was made with the newspaper's approval. This enabled Quaker relief supplies to be given the same reduction of duty fees and ease of passage by customs authorities as those shipments made by the Daily News.

It is not known who originally designed the star, although several stories have been told to explain the source. The most common story-with no apparent basis in fact-is that Quakers helped the French city of Nancy during the Franco-Prussian War, and authorities there asked the Quakers to use the symbol of their city as a token of appreciation for the help they had received.

The star is not unique to the American Friends Service Committee; it is used by other Quaker groups as their symbol. There are variations in the design of the star, but most spring from shared Quaker roots and represent a common commitment to service and the spirit in which it is provided.





Mary Ellen McNish was appointed the general secretary of the American Friends Service Committee by its Board of Directors in June of 2000. In this position, she is responsible for the administration of programs and projects in more than 22 countries and nine regions in the United States.

“AFSC’s domestic and international sites are the bedrock of our mission and the centerpiece of our vision of hope and sustained organizational growth,” she said.

Before coming to the Service Committee, Mary Ellen was the executive director of development at Weil Medical College of Cornell University and New York Presbyterian Hospital and the assistant vice-president for development at Medical College of Pennsylvania and Hahnemann University in Philadelphia, PA.

Mary Ellen has over twenty years of progressive responsibility in non-profit management. She has worked for the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) of Camden County, New Jersey and the Burlington County (NJ) Community Action Agency.

A former chief operating officer of Planned Parenthood of Maryland, Mary Ellen spent thirteen years in several roles in the Friends General Conference, including assistant presiding clerk. She is an experienced public speaker and has particular strengths in strategic planning, fund-raising, team building, operations, and organizational development.

Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Mary Ellen holds a B.S. degree in education from East Stroudsburg University and a M.S. degree in business from John Hopkins University.

Mary Ellen lives in Philadelphia.

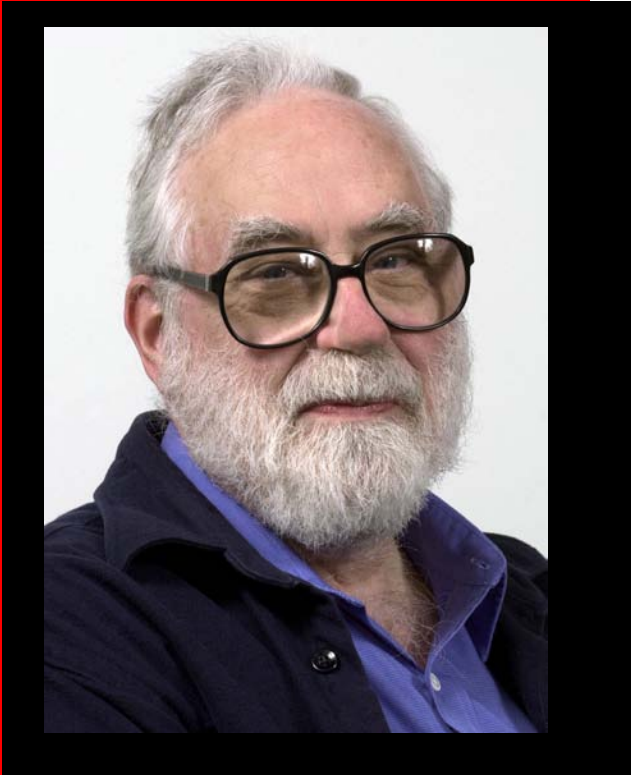


**Mary
Ellen
McNish**
General Secretary

American Friends Service Committee

1501 Cherry Street ● Philadelphia, PA 19106

Paul A. Lacey is Clerk of the Board of Directors of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker humanitarian and social justice organization. Lacey will also serve as Clerk of the Corporation from whose number the AFSC Board of Directors is chosen. He began his new duties in November 2001.



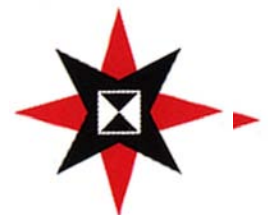
Citing his talent, patience, experience, education, skill and sense of humor, Mary Ellen McNish, AFSC general secretary, further commented: “Paul’s prior experience working with AFSC and his many other accomplishments in business consultation and academia will be valued assets.”

Born in Philadelphia and educated in the Philadelphia public schools, Lacey received his BA from the University of Pennsylvania in 1957, and obtained his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1966. Author of numerous articles and recipient of many fellowships and awards including Phi Beta Kappa, he is a Professor of English Emeritus at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. He is a member of the Clear Creek Monthly Meeting and the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). He is also on the Board of the Friends Council on Education.

Paul Lacey’s involvement with AFSC began in 1954 with service on the Conscientious Objectors Services and Rights of Conscience Committee. He worked briefly in the Information Services Department and served on the Standing Nominating Committee, the AFSC Nobel Peace Prize Nominating Committee and the AFSC National Board of Directors.

The AFSC Board of Directors is responsible for overall program, policies and administration of the AFSC. Board members are chosen from the AFSC Corporation whose approximately 160 members are appointed by yearly meetings from around the country and by the Standing Nominating Committee.

AFSC was founded in 1917 to provide conscientious objectors to war with a constructive alternative to military service and was a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize along with Friends Service Council (London) in 1947 on behalf of Quakers worldwide. With programs in nine Regional Offices around the United States and in 22 foreign countries, AFSC works for peace and reconciliation, and upholds the dignity of each individual human being.



**Paul
Lacey**

Clerk of the Board