

American Friends Service Committee -- New Hampshire Program

36 Years of Nonviolent Social Change

Highlights

1975 - New Hampshire Quakers ask AFSC to open a New Hampshire Office. Linda Leclair is hired as first Program Coordinator.

1976 - 1977 - Nonviolence training for Clamshell Alliance demonstrations at the Seabrook nuclear plant construction site.

1978 - Eric Wolfe, known for puppet shows to raise awareness about nuclear power and nuclear weapons, becomes Program Coordinator.

1979 - After Three Mile Island meltdown, AFSC collects more than ten thousand signatures on petitions to end nuclear power and weapons.

1980 - Protests against draft registration, education about conscientious objection, and training of draft counselors.

1981 - NH Campaign for US-USSR Nuclear Arms Freeze is launched. Arnie Alpert becomes Program Coordinator.

1982 - Town Meetings in dozens of communities call for a US-USSR freeze on nuclear weapons production, testing, and deployment.

1983 - AFSC spins off NH Freeze Campaign as an independent organization, now known as NH Peace Action. Protests against US invasion of Grenada.

1984 - Statewide programs calling for an end to US military aid to El Salvador, and lectures about the dangers of militarizing space.



1985 - Demonstrations against US involvement in “contra” war against Nicaragua, and programs marking 40th anniversary of Hiroshima/Nagasaki bombings.

1986 - Education about US-USSR relations.

1987 - Protests against NH National Guard exercises in Central America.

1988 - AFSC helps form the Martin Luther King Day Committee to campaign for a state King Day; Arnie

Alpert will serve as communications coordinator for eleven years until the campaign succeeds. African anti-apartheid leaders tour state. Assistance for refugees from S. Africa-sponsored violence.



1989 - First “Gimme Shelter” sleep-out to protest homelessness, and participation in national “Housing Now” march on Washington. Support for Exeter groups responding to KKK activity.

1990 - 1991 - Attempts to prevent Persian Gulf War; humanitarian aid collected for refugees and war victims.



1991 - Speakers tour state to talk about Martin Luther King, Jr. Legislature creates “Civil Rights Day.” Julian Bond addresses 125 high school students from 4 high schools at conference on racism.

1992 - Conferences on prison conditions and criminal justice reform.

1993 - Challenge to merger of Shawmut and New Dartmouth Banks; launch of Granite State Community Reinvestment Association. Martha Yager joins staff to coordinate work on banks, community reinvestment, and affordable housing. Legislation introduced to add Dr. King’s name to Civil Rights Day.

1994 - Banks learn how to reinvest effectively in state’s urban and rural areas. Support for Guatemalan refugees.

1995 - Focus on workers in Guatemalan sweatshops, and on civil rights of NH immigrants and sexual minorities.

1996 - Workshops on preventing lending discrimination and community development planning. Anti-sweatshop leafleters ejected from Mall of NH for the first time.



Gimme Shelter is an annual sleep-out at the State House to dramatize and protest homelessness. Most participants are students.



1997 - Research puts pressure on big banks to improve practices. Support for Manchester Listening Project on Jobs, which gathers testimony from dozens of low income workers. MLK Day falls one vote short. Anti-sweatshop petitioners ejected from Mall of NH.

1998 - Eight people arrested at Mall of NH while passing out anti-sweatshop leaflets. NH Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty formed.

1999 - Legislature adopts Martin Luther King holiday, and nearly abolishes death penalty. AFSC takes on leadership of NH Housing Forum, an

affordable housing advocacy coalition.



2000 - Legislature abolishes death penalty, only to have it vetoed by Gov. Shaheen. *Feeling the Pinch*, a report on the state's housing crisis is released. Alison Booth is first AFSC Youth Organizer, beginning a one-year full-time internship program which continues through 2009.

2001 –Reality Tour caps off months of grassroots education about proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas. AFSC works with peace groups to respond to September 11 attacks and build-up to war. Riva Pearson takes over as

Youth Organizer. AFSC youth travel to Fort Benning to protest the Army's School of the Americas.

2002 – Seventy-five high school and college students attend "Strides Toward Peace" conference. First delegation to Nicaragua. AFSC supports Save Our Groundwater. Luc Davidson Schuster is Youth Organizer.



2003 – AFSC youth lead protests against Iraq war. Presidential Primary Project trains activists to "bird-dog" candidates. Liana Foxvog is Youth Organizer. AFSC supports emergency homeless shelter in Concord church on cold winter nights.

2004 – Presidential candidates make commitments on affordable housing, fair trade, and nuclear weapons in response to AFSC "bird-dogs." Funds for Section 8 housing rescued. Cold weather shelter expands. Links made between New England and Nicaraguan water activists. Homeless people registered to vote. Nicki Gaines is Youth Organizer.



2005 – DMV pressed to end discriminatory treatment of immigrants. Youth, parents, and teachers learn about realities of military recruitment. Cold weather shelter reaches capacity

and overflows into second church. "Human Rights Caravan" challenges unconstitutional arrests of immigrants in New Ipswich and Hudson. Hannah El-Silimy hired as new Youth Organizer.

2006 – Project with immigrant and refugee youth launched in Manchester; it will later name itself "Young Organizers United." Anti-immigrant legislation defeated at State House. AFSC resumes "bird-dogging" as parade of presidential candidates begins. Delegation learns about immigration at Arizona-Texas border. Erin Placey becomes Youth Organizer.

2007 – NH legislature raises minimum wage. AFSC trains more “bird-dogs” and



begins focus on cost of Iraq war. Martha Yager leaves to take position at AFSC office in Providence; Maggie Fogarty hired as her successor. Emina Zlotrg takes over as Youth Organizer while Erin Placey stays on to work on Presidential Primary, cost of war,

and nuclear weapons issues. NH Citizens Trade Policy Commission formed after 7 years of AFSC campaigning; Arnie Alpert appointed Vice Chair.

2008 – Presidential candidates address cost of Iraq war just before NH Primary. 23 teenagers from 9 schools hold peace activist retreat at World Fellowship. National Housing Trust Fund established by Congress. Cold weather shelter spins off day resource center at Concord church. Delegation visits Texas and northern Mexico to learn about immigration and visit *maquiladora* assembly factory workers.



Molly Messenger becomes Youth Organizer.

2009 – Young Organizers United attracts more than 20 Manchester youth, mostly from Africa. 80 youth from a dozen schools participate in conference on nonviolence then lead anti-war rally. NH Housing Forum transforms into Housing Action NH. NH House votes to abolish death penalty.

2010 – Arnie Alpert receives Martin Luther King Award. AFSC co-sponsors workshops on workers’ rights for immigrants, refugees, and low-wage workers. Youth organize rallies, workshops, and retreats in final year of Youth Empowerment Project.

2011 – Despite conservative takeover of the legislature, AFSC and allies succeed at defeating anti-immigrant measures and preserving funding for essential homeless services. AFSC supports Occupy Wall Street movement in New Hampshire. Conference on bedbugs follows 2 years of work with tenants, city officials, property owners, legislators, and pest eradicators.

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE – NEW HAMPSHIRE PROGRAM

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