



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

## **AFSC West Region News – February 2023**

*Stories 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).*



*Economic Activism Program, Oakland*

### **Powerful pressure silences commitment to Palestinian human rights**

Human rights are universal, but mention of Palestinian human rights is being silenced by powerful pressure. With input from Dov Baum and Noam Perry of AFSC, this new [exposé by Jewish Currents](#) shows how the giant financial firm Morningstar was made to abandon its commitment to reporting on human rights violations of Palestinians in their human rights products for investors.

A fringe right-wing Zionist initiative is in investing spaces “to silence speech on Palestinian human rights, block companies from providing information about Palestinian human rights to investors, and prevent investors from taking a socially responsible approach,” said Baum.



67 Sueños, Oakland

### **Soñando y Cambiando: A vision to heal our communities**

The latest [67 Sueños mural](#) was inspired by a 10-point plan led by young people from 67 Sueños and other youth organizations in the Free Our Kids (FOK) Coalition in Alameda County. This mural was born out of the recognition that the current system is not working. As young people, we have alternatives and solutions for these issues we see on the daily in our communities. The 10-Point plan format was inspired by our ancestors and leaders from the Black Panther Party of Self Defense and the Young Lords. Follow 67 on [Instagram](#).



Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

### **Vigil to declare: Love knows no borders, no walls**

AFSC and partners will host a vigil on the day before Valentine’s Day in Aurora, CO. From [Facebook](#): “We demand justice for our people in the for-profit GEO detention center. We denounce detention and deportation, which tear families apart and harm all of our communities. Join our immigrant-led efforts to advocate for fair and humane immigration policies that welcome and respect the dignity of all people. For the 14th year in a row, AFSC will deliver handmade valentines to detention center detainees. Make something beautiful for someone separated from loved ones, separated by borders and distance or by walls.”



New Mexico farmer Fidel Gonzalez. Photo: Core-Visual

*People of the Land Program, Albuquerque*

### **Advocating for a just economy at the state level**

The New Mexico state legislature has started, and AFSC NM is focused on bills that affect land, water, agriculture, climate change, fair wages for early childhood educators, and other social justice issues. New Mexico has a part time citizen legislature—meaning that it is all volunteer, unpaid positions. Located in Santa Fe, the Capitol is designed to look like the Zia sun symbol. It is common to hear Spanish, English, Navajo and Pueblo languages spoken in the halls by local people participating in democracy. Around 800 bills are introduced in our short session, with many lobbyists from oil and gas lining up against grassroots activists. [Sign up today for legislative action alerts from AFSC NM.](#)



*Healing Justice Program, Oakland*

### **AFSC files lawsuit over public records on police weapons**

Attorneys for AFSC recently [filed a lawsuit against the San Francisco Police Department](#) for unlawfully denying a California Public Records Act request for information on the purchase and deployment of militarized equipment. “We see every day the dangers that militarized police forces pose to communities, especially Black and Brown communities,” said John Lindsay-Poland of AFSC. “We hope that this lawsuit, and our efforts to increase transparency and accountability for law enforcement agencies in San Francisco and across the state, will help mitigate the harm and violence enacted by police.” Media coverage includes [Mission Local](#) and [KTVU](#).



Adriana Jasso addressed the more than a dozen demonstrators in front of the San Diego Sector, U.S. Border Patrol office on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023 in Chula Vista. The group was peacefully demonstrating that their voice has not been heard regarding Friendship Park. (Nelvin C. Cepeda/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

*US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego*

## **AFSC and partners rally to save Friendship Park**

The Biden administration recently announced it would move forward with plans to build a 30-foot border wall around Friendship Park, a historic binational meeting place at the U.S.-Mexico border. Community members and groups, including AFSC, [pledge to keep up efforts](#) to stop further militarization of the park. “We’ve been fighting this fight for many years,” says Adriana Jasso of AFSC. “We feel that we have an incredible level of support.”



Pedro Sosa leads a training workshop.

*Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington*

## **Training focuses on the power of grassroots organizing**

Pedro Sosa of AFSC recently shared photos from the first training workshop of 2023, held at the AFSC office in Salem. He facilitated a workshop with a group of leaders in Oregon organized by the Latino Network. The focus was on the importance of organizing in the community—including how to organize on street corners using popular education materials.



*Roots for Peace (R4P) Program, Los Angeles*

### **Monthly youth organizing program in LA continues through June**

Youth with Roots for Peace are learning organizing and leadership skills, building friendships, connecting with like-minded people, and working toward positive change in their communities as part of Roots for Peace monthly organizing program. Follow [R4P on Instagram](#).



*Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno*

### **Gathering inspires ArteVism Fellows**

From ArteVism Fellow Rodolfo Robles: “The ArteVism Fellowship has just returned from a restful and thought-provoking gathering in Wonder Valley, the unceded and ancestral land of the Yokut tribe. We were led in roundtable discussions by Central Valley leaders D’Aungillique Jackson, Lee Lor, and Elsa Mejia. We challenged our imagination with a Theatre Workshop hosted by Dr. Gina Sandi-Diaz. And we were inspired by Native American history as we reflected during a beading session with ArteVism alum Cecilia Moreno. These events allowed for great reflection and insight as we continued to plan our next steps with the program, including the [February 25 performance of CODESWITCH](#) by ArteVism alum Joshua Slack.”



From left: Marielle Oetjen, Matthew Leber and Sonia Tuma

### **Short takes**

West Region changes: Thanks and best wishes to Matthew Leber, former Assistant Regional Director. Congrats to Marielle Oetjen, incoming Regional Director, and to Sonia Tuma, outgoing Regional Director and AFSC's new Associate General Secretary for Global Cohesion.... AFSC is now accepting applications for the 2023 cohort of our [Emerging Leaders for Liberation](#) program to develop young organizers. Applicants must be 18 to 22 years old and affiliated with an AFSC program, a Quaker college, or a Quaker meeting. If you or someone you know is interested, [check out our application](#).

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