



**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

NH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 2021 TO NOVEMBER 2022

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Maggie Fogarty,
NH Program Director*

“Hope is essential to any political struggle for radical change when the overall social climate promotes disillusionment and despair.” - bell hooks

Dear friends and supporters of AFSC,

At the end of another busy year, I write to you from a place of deep and determined hope for our movements and our world, with a heart full of gratitude for the blessings of meaningful work, wonderful companions and daily lessons on love and courage.

At our annual celebration in October, our Healing Justice Organizer, Ophelia Burnett, sang a song – “Hero” by Mariah Carey. She introduced the song by explaining that when she was incarcerated and it was difficult to get to sleep at night, the women in her unit would ask her to sing to them. Her voice offered comfort in a very difficult time. On the stage at our event, her voice touched all of us; it was a moving testament to her journey of hope and renewal.

There have been many moments like this over the past year, when a new leader stepped forward to share their story, taking risks and being vulnerable so that the truth that they carry could be brought into the light. It can take your breath away, the simple beauty of people who tell the truth and step into their purpose. We also treasured the moments when a seasoned activist would remind us that stories, song, and art kept weary people moving forward when the world seemed like it was falling apart.

The work we get to do together - at the State House, at vigils and demonstrations, in communities, in the jails, and even in meetings – keeps us strong and connected amidst the temptations of disillusionment and despair. We nurture each other with our passion for a better world, and we inspire each other by sharing our Light.

As long as we set our eyes on the prize, our hands to the struggle, and our hearts on each other, we will be uplifted by an irresistible hope.

Thank you, friends, for being in community with us, and for bringing hope in challenging times.



Photo Credit: Augustine Nyonzima



Photo Credit: Lindsay Dearborn

THANK YOU, LINDSAY DEARBORN!

Our deepest thanks to Lindsay Dearborn from Hanover Friends Meeting who served as clerk for the AFSC-NH Support Committee for many years. We finally allowed her to 'retire' in July. Her encouragement, common sense, good humor, and wisdom have been gifts to us during important transitions. She will continue to be a trusted and treasured partner and friend. We wish her all the very best.

We welcome our new co-clerks, Nan Beiter of Monadnock Quaker Meeting and Candace Cole McCrea of Gonic Friends Meeting.



Courtesy Photo

HEALING JUSTICE

Ophelia Burnett joined our team in January 2022 as our Healing Justice Organizer Intern. A New Hampshire resident for more than 20 years, Ophelia brings her life experiences to this role, as well as her passion for helping people and supporting them to raise their own voices for positive change. She hit the ground running, co-organizing two actions - on Valentine's Day at the Valley Street jail, and on Mother's Day at the State Prison for Women - to send messages of love and solidarity to incarcerated people as part of AFSC's national Free Them All campaign which works for a future without jails and prisons.

Ophelia testified at the State House for humane policies such as bail reform, advocated for improved conditions at the Valley Street jail, and led a campaign to ensure that formerly incarcerated people know their voting rights. She is grateful to be learning about restorative justice practices and community alternatives to policing, and preparing to create a re-entry program for women coming out of jail and prison. *This exciting work is funded by a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation.*



Photo by: Lindsay Dearborn

BIPOC HEALING RETREAT

The weekend of September 16-18, AFSC-NH hosted our first (and hopefully first of many!) healing retreat for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) activists, emerging leaders, and community members, with a focus on self-care and nurturing collective liberation. Eighteen people participated in the 3-day retreat, which centered Black and Brown people's safety, joy and healing through storytelling, reflection, movement, art and fellowship. Creative Praxis, an art-based, healing-centered training organization based in Philadelphia, provided amazing facilitation for this transformative experience. *Many thanks to the Endowment for Health and NH Charitable Foundation for the grants which funded this retreat.*



Photo by: Grace Kindeke



Photo by: Grace Kindeke



Photo by: Grace Kindeke



Photo by: Grace Kindeke

STATE HOUSE WATCH

The 2022 legislative session was marked by multiple crises that energized and tested our growing intersectional justice movement. We celebrated the defeat of anti-immigrant bills and multiple attempts to roll back bail reform, harm public education and discriminate against LGBTQ+ people.

We celebrate the creation of a new adult dental benefit for Medicaid recipients, a prohibition on shackling of pregnant prisoners, a narrowing of the ultrasound requirement for pregnant people, and the expansion of the components of an adequate education to include Holocaust and genocide education as well as personal financial literacy, among other subjects.

We are grateful to Anne Saunders for her extraordinary work during this busy 2022 session. Her research and tracking were essential contributions each week. Bookmark www.AFSC.org/NHStateHouseWatch to read past and upcoming issues of our State House Watch newsletter.



NH BIPOC activists speak out for intersectional justice at a reproductive justice rally on the 4th of July at the State House.
Photo by: Josie Pinto

ORGANIZING FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE



In April, activists greeted Senator Hassan in Portsmouth to urge her to support the human rights of asylum seekers. *Photo by: Clifton West*



Outside Congressman Pappas' Dover office in May, immigrants and allies called for an end to inhumane border policies. *Photo by: Gaby Lozado*



Undaunted by the rain and a cancelled parade, activists gathered in Milford on Labor Day in September to stand in solidarity with immigrants and call for permanent protections for immigrant communities. *Photo by: Grace Kindeke*

This year we strengthened our movement in NH and partnered with allies across the country to call for permanent protections for immigrants living in the U.S., including a pathway to citizenship for all and an end to detention and deportation. We convened the monthly **NH Immigrant Rights Network** to share information and policy analysis, and to collaborate in strategic advocacy for humane policies.

In response to our Congressional delegation's support for (or silence in the face of) harmful measures that would deny the rights of asylum seekers, and discriminate against Black and Brown immigrants, we convened a direct action coalition, **Stronger Together**, to hold them publicly accountable. We held creative actions in Portsmouth, Concord, Dover and Milford to draw attention to their actions and to demand humane policies.

After two years, the **NH Immigrant Visitation Program** returned to the Strafford County jail in May 2022 and welcomed three new volunteers. We are grateful to be meeting weekly with detained immigrant community members, providing support and encouragement. We do this important work in partnership with the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ.



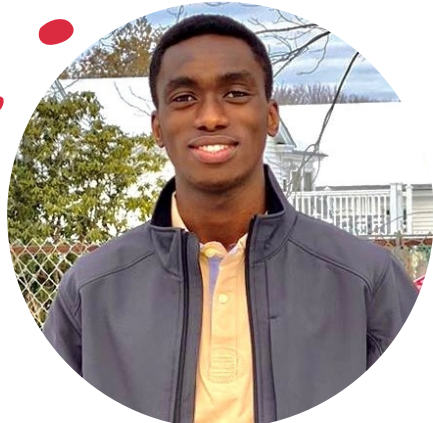
In July 2022, Grace convened the first meeting of **Umokuumani, Black and African Immigrants Circle**. The group's name combines three Swahili words - Umoja/Unity, Kuumba/Creativity, and Imani/Faith - to form a new word to express values many Black and African Immigrants rely on to navigate painful circumstances in a difficult country while staying connected to their dreams, goals and loved ones back home and in the US. The group meets weekly to grow connections, share immigration news, updates, and collaborate on shared projects. *Photo by: Becky Field*



Join Grace Kindeke, Eva Castillo, Sebastian Fuentes and Oscar Villacis for a new radio show, **Finding Home**, a conversation by immigrants, for immigrants in NH. The show airs every other week on Saturdays at 10am on Concord WNHN 94.7FM. *Courtesy Photo*

CHANGE FOR CONCORD

In October, we welcomed our newest Grassroots Organizer Intern, Fisto Ndayishimiye, and we are thrilled to be working with him. The position is now full-time! Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Fisto arrived in the U.S. - and New Hampshire - in December of 2016. In that time, he has found a passion for engaging with young people, supporting their leadership, and bringing people together to build understanding and address shared concerns. As Lead Organizer for Change for Concord (C4C), Fisto has already met with many elected officials and other community leaders, testified for more inclusive community decision-making, and organized his C4C group members to set priorities for the coming year. Concord will surely benefit from Fisto's leadership and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. *This internship is funded by a grant from the You Have Our Trust fund and matching donors.*



Courtesy Photo

AFSC NH SUPPORT COMMITTEE



Top row (left to right): Emelyne Adios, Margaret Hawthorn, Lina Shayo, Anthony Payton, Sebastian Fuentes, Ginny Cole
Bottom row (left to right): Kesaya Noda, Candace Cole-McCrea (co-clerk), Lidia Yen, Nan Beiter (co-clerk), Anne Saunders

THANK YOU FROM OUR SUPPORT COMMITTEE!

The Support Committee and staff of the NH Program want to thank all of the donors, funders and volunteers who made our work possible this past year.

Our funders include the NH Charitable Foundation, the Clowes Fund, Endowment for Health, Anne Slade Frey Charitable Trust, NH Listens, and the "You Have Our Trust" fund.

Please visit our website at www.AFSC.org/NH for more information, and to make a donation.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

The NH Program does most of our work in collaboration with others through coalitions and informal networks, and this year was no exception. We are thankful for our longstanding partnerships as well as new relationships, and the many opportunities to work together for the greater good.

AFSC-NH convenes the NH Immigrant Rights Network, the Campaign for a People's Budget, the Abolition Network, and Change for Concord. We coordinate NH Voices of Faith; we co-lead the NH Immigrant Visitation Program; and we are active in the NH Host Home Network, NH Alliance for a Moral Economy, the Immigrant Solidarity Network, the Faith & Labor Coalition, the RENEWS Coalition, and the Martin Luther King Coalition. We also host Umokuumani, a group for Black and African immigrants.

Our "State House Watch" radio show is produced by Fred Portnoy and broadcast from WNHN-LP, 94.7 FM in Concord.

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SUPPORT MAKES OUR
WORK POSSIBLE!**

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