

AFSC West Region News – May 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.



67 Sueños, Oakland

New mural affirms ancestral wisdom and healing power of community

Ericson Amaya Bonilla of AFSC writes that in early February, the Freedom Community Clinic (FCC) invited 67 Sueños to paint an indoor mural for their brand-new Fruitvale sanctuary space in East Oakland. In collaboration with 67 Sueños staff, four 67 youth artists, and staff at FCC, we dreamt up a sketch that spoke to the community in the Fruitvale and the folks at the community clinic. We spent the month of March painting and unveiled the mural at their Grand Opening on Saturday, April 15. This mural is an affirmation of our ancestral wisdom and the power that we have to heal in community. This is for our future generations. See more photos [here](#).

Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Working against the surveillance, mistreatment of immigrants

For four years, members of AFSC's project, Coloradans for Immigrant Rights, have been tracking the use of surveillance technology on immigrant members and the mistreatment of immigrants by employees of BI and ICE. We learned recently of a worrisome pilot program rolling out in Colorado and Wyoming that expands surveillance and who's being surveilled. We oppose the use of surveillance and see it as an extension of unjust and unnecessary detention. Learn more [here](#). AFSC leaders will meet with BI and ICE officials in June to question the use of the devices.

US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Speaking out in support of people seeking asylum

With Title 42 set to end soon and new restrictions and troops expected from the Biden administration, AFSC and partners are expressing deep worry about how asylum seekers are being treated now and what their future holds. "One concern I have is that the new measures will place a ban, a five-year ban, which is not only unfair but unjust," said Pedro Rios of AFSC on a local [newscast](#). "Because many of those individuals do not have access to information. They're fleeing from very terrible situations and seeking shelter and safe harbor."

California Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Webinar series: Think Twice Before Calling the Police

Many people have an understanding that police violence targets certain communities and want to avoid calling the police but don't know what to do in case of an emergency. Watch the recording from AFSC's first webinar and join us for the rest of this 4-part series offering concrete skills and strategies to avoid calling law enforcement unless it is absolutely necessary. [Register today](#) and save these upcoming Thursdays: May 11, 18 and 25 from 5:00-6:30 pm PT.

Jennifer Tu, California Healing Justice Ristad Fellow, presented on the program's police demilitarization work at the recent AFSC Corporation meeting. [Watch the recording](#) and check out [5 Ways to Engage on Police Demilitarization!](#)

People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Planting the seeds for people and the planet

Also at the AFSC Corporation, Sayrah Namaste of AFSC-NM joined Peniel Ibe, AFSC's Policy Engagement Coordinator, in a [workshop](#) examining how our food system drives climate change and is vulnerable to climate disasters. They explored AFSC's history supporting sustainable agriculture, which is a tradition for the land-based people of New Mexico. They showed how our experience in helping to rebuild food systems and protect people's rights to their land, water, and healthy food informs our [advocacy on the Farm Bill](#).

Roots For Peace (RFP) Program, Los Angeles

Standing in solidarity with South Central residents

On April 26, 2023, Roots For Peace stood in solidarity with community residents who were impacted by LAPD's detonation of 40 pounds of explosives in the middle of a densely populated South Central Los Angeles neighborhood. The [incident](#), which took place a little less than two years ago, destroyed several homes, injured many residents, and led to the city removing and relocating almost an entire neighborhood.

Since then, various investigations have been conducted on behalf of LAPD, ATF and other governing bodies, but the names of those responsible have not been released. Recently, LAPD announced that it finally reached a decision about the officers it found to be responsible, giving the officer who detonated the explosives 10 days suspension without pay. As a response, the 27th Street residents took to protest at LAPD headquarters, demanding the names of those responsible.

Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Save the date! Virtual concert and fundraiser set for June 14

Join us to celebrate the work of AFSC Project Voice with special guest musicians Los Jornaleros del Norte on Wednesday, June 14, 7 pm PT. You'll enjoy stories, music and more! Click [here to register](#). Stay tuned for more information about three young people from the Pacific Northwest involved with AFSC's [Emerging Leaders for Liberation](#).

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Working for justice for farmworkers in California

From Rodolfo Robles Cruz: The ArteVism Fellowship has not slowed down its course—in fact, it has sped up as we tackled a major project. The Fellowship was a strong support for PVI's recent [Salt of the Earth National Encuentro](#). There, the ArteVism cohort helped as volunteers by leading a *Plática* entitled *Revitalization and Revolution: Art as a Vehicle for Social Change*.

ArteVism Fellow Rodolfo Robles Cruz presented a staged reading of his award-winning play *La Norteña*. It was an incredible culmination and display of the past three cohorts of ArteVism, as we were able to include several alumni in this project. Hana Luna Her displayed an interactive mural at the Encuentro. Cecilia Moreno, along with her mother and sister, were chefs at the Cultural Kitchen, a wonderful display of vibrant dishes as part of the Encuentro. After wrapping up the incredible weekend, we have shifted sights to the upcoming community visits and final projects of the Fellowship.

Short takes and calendar items

Dov Baum of AFSC's Economic Activism Program joins this [interview](#) with Diana Buttu on Palestine=Israel....[Speak out by May 8](#) in support of free school meals for more children....May 12 is the new deadline for [applications](#) for the Associate Regional Director position in the West Region.... The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) is [celebrating](#) its 75th anniversary on June 9 in New York City.... Read about [AFSC's work in support of Ukrainian refugees](#) in Europe....Donate to [AFSC's emergency response for Sudan](#).

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