



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

## **AFSC Midwest Digest – October 2023**

*Stories of work from around the region*



AFSC Michigan staff and family (from left) Pete Martel; Natalie Holbrook-Combs; her daughter, Willa; a cutout of Natalie's wife, Tashiena Combs; Adalia Kirby; and Claudia McLean. Not pictured: Staffers Lawanda Hollister and Cozine Welch

### **In Michigan, advocating for second chances for all people**

Everyone deserves a second chance. We all should have the opportunity to rebuild our lives, reconnect with our families, and strengthen our communities. For people serving life and long sentences, however, that second chance almost never comes. AFSC is working to change that.

Our Michigan Criminal Justice Program is led by people inside prison, their loved ones, and people who were formerly incarcerated. The program is also the lead advocate for “Second Look” legislation in the state, which would give many more people the chance to come home. [Read more.](#)



Photo: Samantha LeeAnn

### **Minnesota youth focus on ending gun violence, creating opportunities**

All young people should have the chance to live their lives fully and pursue their dreams. But far too often, systems of racial injustice, gun violence, and poverty limit their opportunities. In Minnesota, AFSC’s Healing Justice Program is working with youth to transform these systems and explore possibilities. “Young people witness a lot of their peers being gone before they even see the slightest of their dreams manifest—we want to change that,” says Brynne Crockett of AFSC. [Read more.](#)



### **AFSC alum to direct grants for St. Louis resources group**

AFSC St. Louis alum Jonathan Pulphus, Jr. recently joined Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS) as director of grant initiatives. He has a BA in African American Studies from Saint Louis University and brings experience from AFSC, CURE Violence, and Freedom Community Center. ARCHS funds and strategically enhances initiatives that improve the lives of children and families facing disparities and disadvantages in St. Louis’ most resource-deprived communities. [Read more.](#)



### **Exposing a corporation that profits from immigrant detention**

In Chicago, AFSC is working to [shine a light](#) on the horrific human rights record of GardaWorld. The company was hired by the city to set up and operate camps for asylum seekers. Earlier this year, AFSC advocated to stop the city of Denver from contracting with GardaWorld. The company has shown "a lack of transparency and human rights abuses across all of their business operations," said Jennifer Piper of AFSC.



Bishop Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai at the Iowa Hiroshima-Nagasaki commemoration

### **Iowa news**

The bishop of the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church, Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai, [keynoted](#) the annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki commemoration in Des Moines. (See more [photos](#).) AFSC alum Kathleen McQuillen, who now directs Catholic Peace Ministry, was the lead organizer of the event.... Check out the October [newsletter](#) from AFSC alums with Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice.... And another alum, Kenia Calderon, is featured in this [article](#) about women who went back to school while working.

## Short takes

Rick Wilson of AFSC writes about why we all should back [unions and striking workers](#)....A new national poll shows support for a [just and equitable Farm Bill](#)....Here's a story about the [Dayton NAACP's new home](#) in AFSC's former office....Rabbi Brant Rosen, an AFSC alum, writes that [solidarity with Palestinians](#) is a sacred act....Register now for the next [AFSC Friends liaison call](#) on Thursday, October 26 at 6 pm CT....And listen to the latest [Quakers Today podcast](#), sponsored in part by AFSC.

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