



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

## **AFSC West Region News – February 2024**

*Stories of work from around the region*

Welcome to the American Friends Service Committee’s West Region monthly newsletter. Please send feedback to [WestNews@afsc.org](mailto:WestNews@afsc.org).



At an AFSC West Region staff retreat, Pedro Sosa (right) describes his popular education work.

*Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington*

### **Lifting up the human rights and dignity of people who migrate**

In this [interview](#), Pedro Sosa and Alonso Oliveros of AFSC describe the motivations behind their immigrant rights work in the Pacific Northwest. “I do this work because I’m an immigrant,” Pedro says. “I know firsthand the suffering. For many years, I was without documentation. I was arrested by Immigration and detained. I know how it feels to be in detention.”

Alonso adds, “I grew up as the son of immigrants from Mexico. I do this work to give voice to the voiceless. To use my privilege to confront all the trauma and brutality the immigrant community has suffered. To empower them.” [Read more.](#)



*People of the Land Program, Albuquerque*

### **AFSC New Mexico alum wins Growing the Future Award**

From Sayrah Namaste of AFSC: Congratulations to Donne Gonzales for receiving the “Growing the Future” award from the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council! Donne is a graduate of the AFSC farmer training program. She is the trainer for the NM Acequia Association farmer training program, which was adapted from AFSC’s program. [Read more.](#)



*67 Sueños, Oakland*

### **67 youth keep languages alive**

From [Facebook](#): Recently we had the pleasure to share space with Henry, Olga, and student Rebecca who came into our HYPHY [Help Your People Help Yourself] space to share powerful gems with us. They had us practice some common Mam phrases and learned the Maya number system. [Mam is a Mayan language spoken in parts of Guatemala and southern Mexico.] We had a blast! Gracias por venir a compartir con nosotros and for keeping our lenguas vivas.





*Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno*

### **Learnings from PVI's Residential Gathering**

The Pan Valley Institute (PVI) Staff, ArteVism Fellowship Interns, and new Learning Group members recently held a multi-day residential gathering. “We uplifted our stories of origin that activate us, moments of resistance, and showing strength tied to one another,” writes ArteVism Fellow Tsim Nuj Vang. “It was healing to hear each other courageously express and process together. When we are in community, we support and sustain our collective fire to keep rising.” [Read more.](#)



Outside the Home Depot in Emeryville, CA (photo: Brooke Anderson)

*California Healing Justice Program, Oakland*

### **Healing Justice Program holds local Stop Cop City action**

Joined by AFSC staff with 67 Sueños and the Action Center for Corporate Accountability, the Healing Justice Program organized a local action as part of AFSC's national Stop Cop City Week of Action. People across the US are pressuring corporations like Home Depot to end their involvement with Cop City—and stay out of policing in our communities. See more [photos](#).

**Camping  
Equipment  
Drive**

1420 N. Ogden in Denver  
**Saturday,  
February 10th  
10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

REGISTER for Food!




*Immigrant Rights Program, Denver*

**AFSC to host event in support of recent arrivals**

This week, many people who recently arrived in Denver will lose their shelter housing—and the migrant camp will grow. AFSC has organized a [Camping Equipment Drive](#) to gather new and gently used camping gear—and hear from friends of the camp who are working towards a more welcoming community.



LA Freedom School participants in 2023

*Roots for Peace Program, Los Angeles*

**Launch date set for Youth Organizing Program**

Adalberto Rios of AFSC said Roots For Peace alumni enjoyed a get-together in December. At that event, RFP announced the launch of its Youth Organizing Program on February 24. Seven youth interns will learn organizing skills and take part in decarceration work, getting police out of schools, and advocating for fareless metro transportation. The goal is to create a pipeline of youth organizers in South Central ready to address any issue. Stay tuned on [Instagram](#).





Fire Rescue at Open Air Detention Site in November 2023 attending to migrant family in need of emergency assistance. Photo credit: Adriana Jasso- US-Mexico Border Program AFSC-San Diego

*US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego*

## **Another migrant has died near open-air detention sites in San Ysidro, CA**

On February 6, another migrant died along a canal near two open-air detention sites. According to local news [reporting](#), he was found and pronounced dead by San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. We don't yet know his identity or nationality. This marks the third death since October 11 when a 29-year-old woman from Guinea lost her life. A second death, a man also from Guinea, occurred in the same area on November 17. [Read more.](#)



## **Share a Valentine to Gaza**

This year, the Israeli bombardment and tens of thousands of lives lost means that Valentine's Day will be an especially difficult day in Gaza. Bombings have destroyed much of Gaza, and thousands face imminent famine. AFSC joins with many throughout the world demanding a ceasefire and continuing our advocacy to end Israeli apartheid. Now more than ever, we wish to reach Palestinians in Gaza with a message of love, as we work for a day when flowers once again can bloom in Gaza. We hope you'll join us. [Learn how to share a valentine to Gaza.](#)

## **Some more ways to engage with AFSC**

### **Emerging Leaders for Liberation (ELL) information call**

Thursday, Feb. 15, 4 p.m. PT - ELL is a program for young adults looking to deepen their social justice and leadership skills. [Our ELL application closes March 1, so apply today!](#)

### **The Bayard Rustin Legacy Forum**

Saturday, Feb. 24, 10 a.m. PT - Join the BlackQuaker Project, Swarthmore College's Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, and AFSC for a panel discussion of the 2023 biopic "[Rustin.](#)"

### **Understanding our Immigration Process**

Tuesday, Feb. 27, 4 p.m. PT - Please join AFSC for the second installment of our webinar series to learn about the U.S. migration system - and how we can protect migrant rights in these times.

### **AFSC Action Hour for a Cease-fire Now**

Every Friday at 9 a.m. PT - Join AFSC staff every Friday to hear updates from Gaza. Then, take action with us as we contact our elected officials and call for an immediate cease-fire and humanitarian access to Gaza. Our elected officials need to keep hearing from us.

## **Your support matters**

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