



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

## **AFSC Midwest Digest – March 2024**

*Stories of work from around the region*



### **Showing love, grace and kindness to youth in St. Louis**

Alex Jones (they/them) was recently promoted from Organizing Fellow in St. Louis to Program Coordinator. “Alex has gone above and beyond in singlehandedly keeping the program afloat for the last several months, and we are fortunate that they agreed to step into this new role,” said Sharon Goens-Bradley, Regional Director of AFSC’s Midwest Region.

In this [interview](#), Alex shares about their experience and vision for working for change with youth on a systemic level. Please share these job openings for the St. Louis [Organizing Fellow](#) and [Peacebuilding Intern](#). Applications are due March 25.



## Chicago Peacebuilding's new program director, asia smith, celebrates a win

In this [interview](#), the new director of AFSC Chicago's Peacebuilding Program, asia smith, shares about her experiences and generative vision of abolition. In this [newsletter](#), she also celebrates the upcoming cancellation of a police tech tool, ShotSpotter, that harms rather than enhances public safety. If you or someone you know who would like to join asia in this work, please encourage them to apply for the Chicago Peacebuilding [Program Associate position](#). The deadline is March 11.



AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice staff Lawanda Hollister (first row, left), Claudia McLean (second row, middle) and Cozine Welch (third row, pink shirt) join other Second Look coalition members in Detroit.

## Upcoming trainings to focus on commutations and Second Look legislation

Join the AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice Programs for two upcoming trainings. On Thursday, March 14, a webinar for the loved ones of those incarcerated will focus on [Commutation Training and Second Look Info](#). One week later, on March 21, AFSC will offer a training specifically focused on [women and trans folks](#). Natalie Holbrook-Combs of AFSC gives a Second Look update at the 28:00 mark of this [video](#).



## Winter Intensive focuses on “Giving Back”

Over a dozen youth from North Community High School in Minneapolis took part in AFSC Twin Cities Healing Justice Program’s recent winter intensive, “Giving Back.” One of the exercises asked youth to think about characteristics of their role models. Most youth named their fathers and said that love and support from their families is most important to them.

Youth then visited the Capri Theater to develop presentations and share their videos with their role models. They also produced letters and videos to their future selves. Brynne Crockett, AFSC Program Director, said she knows there’s a place and time for youth to learn about activism and organizing skills. But in the heart of North Minneapolis, it’s important first to ask youth to think about what inspires them. Prescott Jones and Maddie Foss of AFSC handled much of the facilitation for the intensive.



## Iowans a part of international push for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza

People in Des Moines recently held this [car caravan for Palestine](#), one of thousands of actions over the past five months calling for a permanent ceasefire. Visit [AFSC’s Gaza-Israel resources page](#) to learn more, take action, and donate in support. Join our weekly [Action Hours](#) every Friday at 11 am CT.





Billie Wade

### **Short takes**

Billie Wade, Midwest Regional Governance member, has two stories published in a new collection of women writers entitled [We See You, We Hear You Anthology Volume I...](#). The application deadline for AFSC's new [Gaza Coordinator](#) is March 18--the position could be based in Chicago.... Brian Blackmore, AFSC Director of Quaker Engagement, is lining up his Midwest Friends Meetings [speaking tour](#) for April and May. Confirmed gigs include Des Moines, Kansas City and Ann Arbor.

### **Get social**

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