



**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

AFSC Midwest Digest – April 2024

Stories of work from around the region



Twin Cities Winter Intensive participant (photo: Michael Roberts)

Winter Intensive focuses on “The Gift of Giving Back”

Fifteen youth from North Community High School in Minneapolis actively participated in S.A.F.E.'s recent winter intensive, “Giving Back.” Youth had high praise for the program, led by AFSC Twin Cities Healing Justice staff.

“This was an amazing experience -- I got to meet new people I would have never talked to before in school,” said one person. Another added, “I have a better understanding that peace is not a place but a mindset.” A third said, “Winter Intensive was surprisingly fun -- I thought it would be like school, but they made it fun to learn.” Read [more](#).

An upcoming intensive solely for AFSC’s S.A.F.E. Youth Board will focus on Know Your (Legal) Rights and restorative practices and circles.



Lawanda Hollister of AFSC at a Second Look rally in Michigan (photo: Mary Zerkel)

Policy briefing, rally and committee hearing focus on Second Look

Everyone deserves a second chance. Yet in Michigan, thousands of people remain stuck in prison for decades due to overly harsh sentencing laws and judges.

The AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice Program is working to change this. AFSC leads a coalition of 29 groups pushing for Second Look legislation. Second Look would allow an incarcerated person who has served ten years to petition the sentencing court to reduce their sentence. Check out this recent [legislative policy briefing](#) and [explainer](#).



Chicago welcomes Daniel Lakemacher, looks ahead to spring trainings

We are very pleased to welcome Daniel Lakemacher (they/he) as our new regional Finance and Office Associate. Daniel learned about AFSC's work in 2009 while being discharged from the U.S. Navy as a CO. They've worked in a variety of roles from supporting fellow COs, facilitating group therapy programming, and providing administrative support for an environmental justice non-profit.

asia smith, Chicago Peacebuilding Program Director, adds that AFSC will be rolling out a series of trainings in late spring to equip people with the life-affirming skills they need to be better community members and not call the police. Stay tuned!



Iowans of all ages fly kites for Gaza in Des Moines.

Increasing the pressure for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza

People in Iowa and around the world are increasing their work for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and an end to arms sales to Israel. AFSC recently joined more than 140 other faith organizations in issuing this [call](#). Take action today by telling your members of Congress to [resume US funding](#) for life-saving Palestinian aid. Join AFSC's [Boycott of Chevron](#). And click [here](#) for more AFSC resources on Gaza.

On April 28 at 11:45 am CT, Mike Merryman-Lotze, AFSC Just Peace Global Policy Director, will speak about Gaza with the Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting via Zoom. Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) Friends are welcome to join, too. Email AFSCMidwest@afsc.org for more information.

Short takes

Brian Blackmore, AFSC Director of Quaker Engagement, has lined up his Midwest Friends Meetings [speaking tour](#) for April and May. Confirmed dates include Des Moines on April 21, Penn Valley in Kansas City on April 28, Ann Arbor on May 5, Twin Cities on May 12, and Evanston on May 26....The [AFSC Corporation meeting](#) is set for April 11-13.... AFSC has launched a new [Reparative Justice and Healing Fund](#) – the deadline for applications is April 15.

Get social

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