



American Friends Service Committee

AFSC Midwest Digest – July 2024

Stories of work from around the region



Twin Cities to host Midwest Youth Summer Intensive

Youth connected with AFSC programs in St. Louis and Chicago will join Twin Cities young people in Minneapolis July 28–August 3 for our first-ever **Midwest Youth Summer Intensive**. Curious, passionate and caring Black and Palestinian youth ages 15–18 will gather to learn more about the work of making positive change in our communities.

Participants will gain practical skills in grassroots organizing, learn how to mobilize communities, engage in outreach, and sustain long-term movements. We'll be emphasizing healing justice, creativity, and community building throughout this experience. Stay tuned for stories and photos from the Intensive!



AFSC Midwest staff who travelled to Kenya (from left): Alex Jones, St. Louis; Mary Zerkel, Chicago; Sharon Goens-Bradley and Prescott Jones, Twin Cities; Asia Smith and Jennifer Bing, Chicago.

Midwest staff travel to Kenya, connect with international colleagues

Forty AFSC peacebuilding and support staff from around the world – including six Midwesterners – gathered in Nairobi in June 2024 to build connections and strategize about global work for peace, anti-militarism and healing justice. Participants in the Just Peace gathering agreed that the best part of the trip was spending time with colleagues from around the world, analyzing the current historic moment, and sharing how social, political, economic and ideological forces impact our local communities. There were wonderful moments of connection and a genuine excitement about collaboration and continued work toward building a global, intersectional movement for peace. [See photos and learn more.](#)



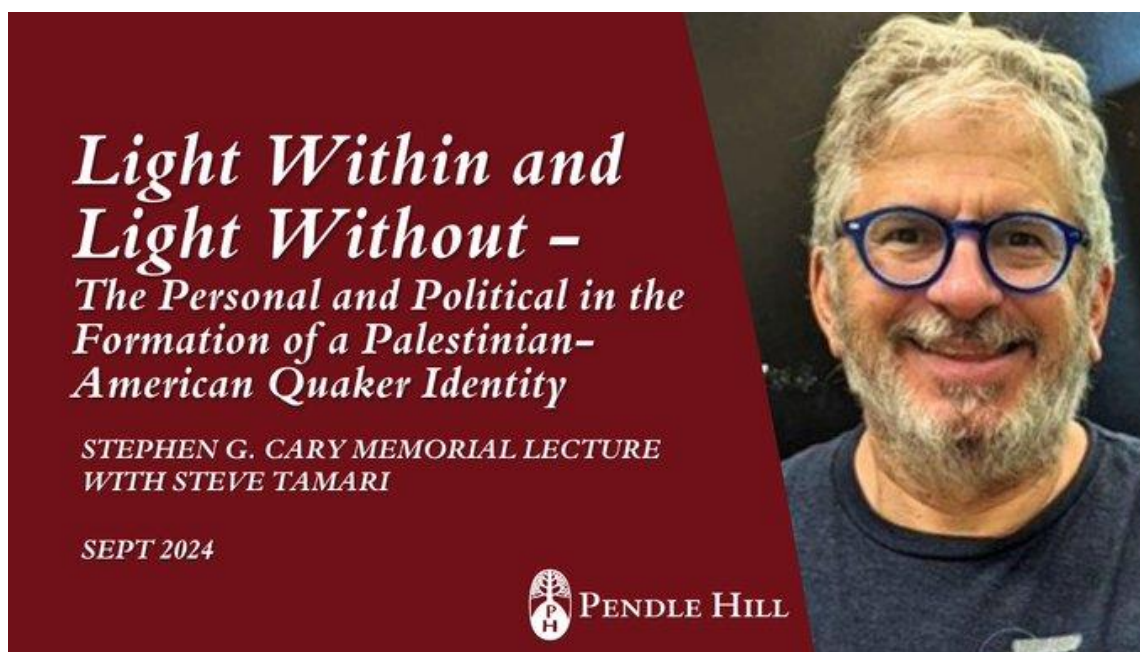
Series of trainings set for Chicago

The AFSC Chicago Peacebuilding Program is teaming up with PO Box Collective to offer three skill trainings this summer in Roger's Park. The trainings include [Know Your Rights with First Defense Legal Aid on July 20](#); [De-Escalation on July 27](#); and [Protest Readiness on August 3](#). Click on each link to learn more and register.



Medically Frail Parole bill sent to governor's desk in Michigan

In 2019, the Michigan Legislature passed a medically frail parole bill that's benefitted only one person. This year, AFSC and partners successfully pushed for an expansion of the bill, which will allow a person who is seriously disabled or terminally ill to potentially receive parole. In this [video from Safe & Just Michigan](#), Natalie Holbrook-Combs, Program Director of the AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice Program, concludes: "I am not safer, and you are not safer, my kid is not safer, the community is not safer, because an old person is dying in prison."



Midwest Regional Group member to give Cary Lecture on September 9

Midwest Regional Group member Steve Tamari will give the Stephen G. Cary Memorial Lecture on Monday, September 9 at 6:30 pm CT. He says the four years he lived, studied and worked at Scattergood Friends School in West Branch, Iowa were pivotal in shaping him as a Quaker. A Palestinian-American, Steve is Emeritus Professor of Middle East and Islamic History at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. [Click to learn more and register online.](#)



Hundreds [rally](#) in Des Moines in support of immigrants and families.

AFSC alums in Iowa earn important court win for immigrants

The latest [movement update](#) from AFSC alums with Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice (MMJ) includes news of a preliminary injunction blocking Iowa's new Texas-styled "illegal re-entry" law. Hundreds [rallied](#) outside the Federal Courthouse in Des Moines during the hearing. Founding MMJ Director Erica Johnson [says](#) the US needs an immigration system that is both workable and humane. Instead, the new law is "creating fear and driving misinformation in immigrant communities around our state."

Short takes

Joyce Ajlouny, AFSC General Secretary, [explains](#) what students mean when they demand divestment – and why we should listen....Check out these [testimonies](#) from Palestinians in Gaza....Watch AFSC's recent webinar on [Rebuilding Education in Gaza: What Can We Do?](#)....Rick Wilson of AFSC explores the [solidarity economy](#)....

Tell Congress to [act now to stop the war in Sudan](#).... Learn how AFSC is working to [defend civic space](#) around the world....RIP [Dana Harr](#), who served as a PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) organizer with AFSC in Des Moines in the 1980s. Dana later served on the AFSC Central Region Executive Committee.

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