

AFSC West Region News – August 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.



Guadalupe Lopez, staffer in AFSC's Fort Morgan office, speaks with [Telemundo](#).

Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Community leaders head to DC to push for Registration Act

From [Facebook](#): The struggle for citizenship for all continues! Recently Lupe Lopez of AFSC and four community leaders from our Not1More Deportation Table took their message to Washington, DC. Together with hundreds of leaders from across the country, they pushed for two proposed bills – the Registry and the New Way Forward. The Colorado group was welcomed by Imani Cruz and Bashir Elhassan from AFSC's Office of Public Policy and Advocacy.

AFSC and community members will continue to advocate with their members of Congress during the August recess. For nearly 40 years, Congress has failed to update our immigration laws, leaving millions of immigrants living in fear and unable to adjust their immigration status. It's time for Congress to update the immigration registry via H.R. 1511 and S. 2606 to ensure that immigrants can live with dignity, freedom to travel, and the ability to contribute to our economy and communities.

Joining in this effort is [AnnaRose Craig](#), AFSC's new Potts Intern!



People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

A win-win for preschoolers and farmers in New Mexico

For nearly a decade, AFSC has helped local farmers supply fresh vegetables to preschool children in New Mexico. Partnering with Head Start, we introduce fresh vegetables to low-income children in preschools around the state. Creative campaigns like "Great Carrot Crunch" have inspired kids to try new foods. Meanwhile, local farmers have benefited from having a new market for their fresh produce. Read more in this [piece](#) featuring Sayrah Namaste of AFSC.



At CA HJ's recent AB 481 convening. Photo: Brook Anderson
IG @MovementPhotographer TWI @MovementPhotog

California Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Resisting police militarization and building support for Restorative Justice

From Jennifer Tu: Legislative changes are just one of the many ways that AFSC's California Healing Justice Program works to reduce reliance on incarceration and policing and replace them with restorative, healing practices. This past legislative session has been challenging; CA HJ sponsored three bills, none of which will become state law. While disappointed, we find setbacks on our path to success. Even though CA HJ was unable to push forward new laws, the program continues to use existing state laws to resist police militarization and to build grassroots support for Restorative Justice. Learn [more](#).



67 Sueños, Oakland

Putting a wrap on this summer's mural work

From [Facebook](#): It was such a blessing to work and paint alongside each and every one of the young people involved in breathing life back into a mural and into the neighborhood. We hope they feel proud of all the work they did this summer and the beautiful art with powerful messaging that they gifted our community. Check out [photos](#) and this [beautiful video](#).



Roots for Peace (RFP) Program, Los Angeles

Ninth annual Freedom School build skills, friendships among youth

Roots for Peace recently completed its ninth Annual Summer Freedom School. Twenty-two high school youth spent four weeks deepening their understanding of social justice and intersectionality. Youth shared their wisdom and their passions, their silliness and their stories, and grappled with difficult issues impacting our local communities and our world. Roots for Peace is excited to continue organizing with youth who joined us for the first time and those who have been working with us for much longer. Follow [RFP on Instagram](#).



The 2023-24 ArteVism cohort (from left): Fellow Joshua Slack and Interns Natalie Moreno-Aguilar, Shane Lara, and Tsim Nuj

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Art and activism flourish in California's Central Valley

AFSC's Pan Valley Institute recently wrapped up its 2023-24 ArteVism fellowship, a nine-month program that brings together local young leaders working for social change in their communities. Since 2019, the ArteVism fellowship program has fostered civic engagement through creative expression and collective leadership among youth of color in the Central Valley. Read [more](#).



Pedro Sosa of AFSC speaks outside the Northwest Detention Center. Photo: Alonso Oliveros

Oregon-Washington Project Voice

Resisting the legacy of misguided justice

In a new blog, Alonso Oliveros of AFSC writes: “The legacy of dehumanizing detention of individuals working hard to provide for their families -- and punishing them for their sacrifice -- is alive and well in our for-profit immigrant detention centers. Will you join us to help stop repeating this shameful history?”
[Read more](#) and learn about a Liberation Obon festival set for September 1.



Benjamin Prado of AFSC speaks with CBS8 in San Diego.

US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Setting the record straight at the border

When Mike Johnson, Speaker of the US House, visited the border near San Diego recently, AFSC staff were there to [tell the real story](#). "We saw the disinformation that somehow people vote when that's not a fact. the slanders that continue to spew," said Benjamin Prado of AFSC. "Working people come through, entire families as well as small children -- they're here right now. We've seen 30 years of building border walls, and in those 30 years it has not reduced the number of people coming. Not by one. We need to address the economic reasons for people crossing."

One donor explains why they support this work: *"When I learned about the [funding need](#) for the AFSC's U.S.-Mexico Border Program, I didn't hesitate to expand my support. My faith and values teach me to be compassionate and extend care to all who need it. AFSC's longstanding humanitarian aid and advocacy for the rights of migrants at the Border reflect my faith in action."*

Short takes

Check out the [July edition](#) of AFSC's Acting in Faith newsletter....Do you or someone you know live in Alaska, Utah, Idaho or Wyoming? Then by all means share the word about [AFSC's No Hunger Summer Campaign](#) to encourage all states to use federal funds to feed hungry kids....Join AFSC in [calling on your representatives](#) to support an arms embargo against Israel and a permanent ceasefire in Gaza....Learn more about [police repression in the US](#) and how we can speak out against it.

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