



American Friends Service Committee

AFSC Midwest Digest – September 2024

Stories of work from around the region



Michigan staffer explores somatics and organizing

In August, LaWanda Hollister, statewide organizer with the AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice Program, attended a Black Intensive Groundwork (BIG) training in Florida. Sixty organizers from 13 states joined her at the event, hosted by the Mass Liberation Project.

LaWanda served 34 years in prison before obtaining her freedom. She's worked with AFSC for the past two years. In this [interview](#), LaWanda describes what she learned at the training and how it applies to her organizing work for Second Look legislation in Michigan.



AFSC St. Louis staff include (from left) Kayla Hargrove, Ti Dunigan and Alex Jones

St. Louis kicks off the school year; urban garden in the works

Barbara Gunn Lartey, Program Director in St. Louis, writes: “The St. Louis Peacebuilding Program is excited to kick off the school year, partnering with two local high schools to teach mediation and de-escalation skills. Rooted in abolitionist practices, our program equips students to challenge institutional and systemic inequities while fostering a sense of personal empowerment. This year, we also plan to incorporate restorative healing practices through the development of an urban garden, offering a space for reflection and community growth as part of our broader commitment to creating peaceful, just environments for all.”



Video highlights first-ever Midwest Youth Summer Intensive

With thanks to photographer and videographer Julius Johnson, here’s a [video recap](#) of AFSC’s Midwest Youth Summer Intensive. Youth from AFSC programs in St. Louis and Chicago joined Twin Cities youth for the event in Minneapolis. Read [more](#).

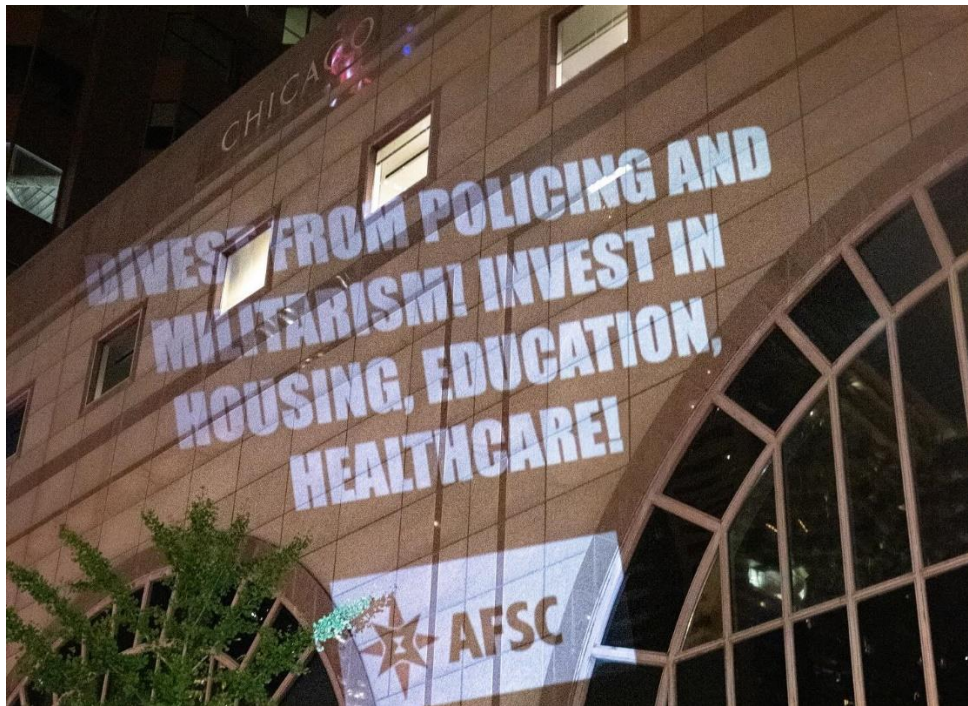


photo: [@erc.productions](#) [@edwithheart](#)

Anti-war message projected on the Chicago Stock Exchange

On the fourth and final night of the recent Democratic National Convention, activists from AFSC and the Chicago #StopShotSpotter Campaign projected a large message on the side of the Chicago Stock Exchange. The message read “Divest from policing and militarism! Invest in housing, education, and healthcare!”

Chicago is spending [nearly two billion dollars on policing in 2024](#), while affordable housing is scarce, schools underfunded, and too many Chicagoans cannot access healthcare. Follow AFSC Chicago’s work on [Instagram](#).



Midwest Regional Group member Steve Tamari gives Cary Lecture

From [Pendle Hill](#): What a beautiful 2024 Cary Lecture with Steve Tamari! His talk on "Light Within and Light Without: The Personal and Political in the Formation of a Palestinian-American Quaker Identity" was moving and timely. If you missed it, you can watch it on [YouTube](#).



Preparing to ring the Japanese Bell in Des Moines

Iowans keep up the work for peace and justice

In August, Iowans gathered at the Japanese Bell south of the State Capitol to [remember](#) the victims of the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 79 years ago. The keynote was given by Ann Sullentrop, a nurse from Kansas City who spoke about "What you can do to stop nuclear weapons." Ann described efforts to close the Kansas City "Nuclear Security Campus."

AFSC alum Kathleen McQuillen is the lead organizer for an October 19 [Militarism and Economic Justice Conference](#) in Des Moines featuring fellow alum Joe Gerson and Kathy Kelly. The AFSC Midwest Region is a co-sponsor of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki event and the conference.

Here's the [latest news](#) from AFSC Iowa alums with Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice.

Short takes

Join AFSC's No Hunger Summer Orientation calls on [Thursday, Sept. 19 at 7:30 pm CT](#) or [Wednesday, Sept. 25 at 6 pm CT](#).

[Take action](#) with the [Boycott Chevron](#) campaign during the [week of action](#) Sept. 23-27.

This fall, AFSC is co-sponsoring the [Making Queer Quaker History](#) event series.

On Sept. 24, join AFSC staff and partners in a discussion about [climate justice in a militarized world](#).

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