



American Friends Service Committee

NH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

DECEMBER 2024



Photo Credit: Wilson Nsabigaba

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Maggie Fogarty, NH Program Director



Grace & Fisto were named among NH's '40 under Forty.'



Leadership team members for the 'O So Beautiful' reentry program



Change for Concord's leadership team



Courtesy Photo

*"Liberation is no small task—it is appropriately daunting for miraculous beings. it is a gift, to be given such undeniable purpose, such immense odds. hold each other tight, and let's do this work."
– adrienne maree brown, from 'living through the unveiling'*

Warm greetings from the staff and Support Committee at AFSC's New Hampshire program, as we wrap up another year of movement-building, leadership development, community organizing, and advocacy for racial, social, and economic justice, and immigrant rights. In close partnership with many of you, we dedicated ourselves this past year to bringing new people into the work of change-making, and to addressing the converging crises of violence, racism and extremism that require us to raise our voices for justice and peace and to mobilize others to do the same.

Now we stand in active waiting, helping to prepare communities and networks for the intensification of threats against already vulnerable people and an already vulnerable planet. The year is ending with a flurry of gatherings and communication as we strengthen connections with community members and allies to refresh our capacity for rapid response, solidarity, accompaniment, care, and resistance to authoritarianism. It is the work of liberation, and we are appropriately daunted.

And yet, we are awed and profoundly grateful for the gift of this work, to be able to live even more fully into our sacred purpose as human beings - to love and care for each other, to tell the truth, and to liberate each other. We can rise to meet this moment because we know how to connect people to each other, how to share our own gifts and skills and to welcome the offerings of others, how to live with grief as well as gratitude and joy, how to find courage and clarity in community, and how to rest and renew ourselves. At our annual celebration in September, we explored the principles and practice of the Solidarity Economy and highlighted the values that nurture our capacity to survive and thrive – solidarity, democracy, equity, sustainability, and pluralism. We reminded ourselves that when we work together, we experience abundance. Let's hold onto each other and go forward together. We have the blessing of good work to do.

WELCOME APRIL RICHER, INTERFAITH ORGANIZER

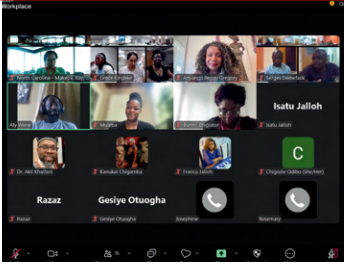
This month, we welcome April Richer to the NH Program as our new Interfaith Organizer to support the work of NH Voices of Faith as well as NH Faith & Labor. A Dover resident, first-term City Councilor, a Catholic, and a Teamster, April is excited to mobilize faith communities, labor unions, and others in collaborative advocacy for economic justice at the NH State House. This position is a full-time, one-year Carey Fellowship funded by AFSC.

ORGANIZING FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE



Our work for immigrant justice in New Hampshire is robust and multi-faceted, including our monthly convening of the NH Immigrant Rights Network, a statewide network advocating for humane immigration policies at the federal, state, and local levels; our co-leadership of the NH Immigrant Visitation Program at the Strafford County jail in Dover, NH (in partnership with the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ Immigrant and Refugee Support Group); our active support for faith communities and regional networks providing sanctuary, solidarity, and accompaniment for undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers living in New Hampshire; and our organizing among Black and African immigrants in NH to build Umokuumani, a community-based network to promote connection, mutual aid, and collaboration to address issues of shared concern. In each of these spaces, we bring our deep commitment to the rights and well-being of immigrants and to policies that are welcoming, dignified, and humane.

BLACK & AFRICAN DIASPORA LEARNING SERIES



The Black & African Diaspora Learning Series was an exciting collaboration between AFSC's New Hampshire, North Carolina, and New Jersey programs which ran from June through September. These three programs worked together to conduct a hybrid dialogue and training series for Black and African immigrants, African Americans, and people who self-identify as belonging to the African Diaspora. Thirty participants from across the country joined the eight-session series to build knowledge on key topics of history, systems of oppression & movements for justice. The goal of the series was to utilize cultural and trauma-informed wellness practices to build connection and develop the capacity of participants for leadership in local and national work for immigrant justice, healing justice, and economic justice. With the support of movement leaders who joined as guest speakers, participants developed a shared and intersectional analysis, a vision for humane policies, and opportunities for community building and collaborative action.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES

It has been a year of welcoming new leaders! Our Healing Justice Program Associate Ophelia Burnett built a leadership team of passionate and dedicated women to create the 'O So Beautiful' Reentry Program. The new team – Sara, Ebony, Kristie, Carissa, Natasha, and Ophelia – gathered for a weekend retreat in June led by Nia Eubanks Dixon of Creative Praxis, where they shared their vision for a program that will nurture women to recover from incarceration and build new lives full of healing, hope, connection, and economic security. And then they bounded forward together, working diligently to create for other women the reentry program they wish had existed for themselves and their loved ones when they returned home from prison. Leaders receive a stipend for their work, thanks to a grant from the NH Women's Foundation and other supporters. Our Healing Justice project is funded with grants from the NH Charitable Foundation, the Bean Foundation, and the Arnie Alpert Action Fund.



Change for Concord, a community organizing group for 18–30-year-olds, has also taken a significant step forward this year with the creation of a leadership team. Our Grassroots Organizer, Fisto Ndayishimiye, reached out to colleagues in the youth organizing field for guidance to design the new leadership team role; he led a search committee and hiring process; and brought on a team of new leaders in July 2024. The team – Lawi, Landrine and Steven – are working to strengthen the membership of Change for Concord and to identify their next campaign. The stipends for these leadership positions are funded by a grant from Resist, Inc. Our young adult organizing work, now in its ninth year, is made possible through the generous and ongoing support of the You Have Our Trust fund and several major donors.



VOTER ENGAGEMENT

Thanks to a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation, and additional support from the NH Democracy Fund, we were able to engage new voters in Manchester and Concord from primarily BIPOC, immigrant, low-income, and formerly incarcerated communities. With Grace's leadership, we convened a team of emerging leaders who worked together to learn more about the electoral process and where candidates stood on the issues that mattered most to them. They engaged potential voters through 1:1 conversations, canvassing at community festivals and by hosting two community conversations focused on housing affordability and protecting LGBTQ+ rights. Team members created social media content to inform voters about the presidential primary. They worked together to sign up interested voters to receive email, phone and text reminders about when, where and how to cast their vote.



ROOTED RESILIENCE: BUILDING A SOLIDARITY ECONOMY



We packed the house at Tuckaway Farm in Lee, NH in late September for an energizing afternoon of delicious food, great company and an interactive workshop on the theme of the Solidarity Economy, led by AFSC's Economic Justice Director Rick Wilson, and Emily Kawano, founder of the US Solidarity Economy Network.



We shared inspiring examples of large and small scale models for community care, sustainability, and cooperation, including lots of wonderful initiatives rooted right here in New Hampshire. Participants celebrated the many ways we can build an economy that works for people and the planet.

Photo Credits: (above), Wilson Nsabigaba, (below) Grace Kindeke, Maggie Fogarty

STATE HOUSE WATCH



We monitored and acted on many legislative proposals in 2024. We helped to defeat a number of anti-immigrant bills, as well as bills that would harm public education, tenants, LGBTQ+ people, and workers. We were unsuccessful in our efforts to limit funding for the Northern Border Alliance program which receives \$1.4 million each year in 'non-lapsing' state funding despite zero evidence that additional border enforcement in NH is justified.

We celebrated the passage – by near unanimous votes in both the House and the Senate – of a bill that would have enshrined the abolition of slavery in the NH Constitution, but changed course once the Senate amended it to restore the allowance of slavery for those who are imprisoned. We'll return another day to get this done right.

Join the thousands of subscribers who receive our weekly State House Watch newsletter from January through June. Maggie, Grace and Kathleen Wooten are preparing to kick off the new season in just a few weeks. Subscribe today! [Bit.ly/AFSCsubscribeSHW](https://bit.ly/AFSCsubscribeSHW)



WORKING FOR PEACE



We are members of the Coalition for a Just Peace in the Middle East, a new coalition formed in response to the devastating violence in the Middle East and the occupation and destruction of Gaza. We join peace activists all over the world in calling on the US to end funding for the war. We thank NH Peace Action for their leadership.



THANK YOU FROM OUR SUPPORT COMMITTEE!

The Support Committee and staff of the NH Program want to thank all of the donors, foundations, events sponsors, coalition members, and volunteers who made our work possible this year.

Please visit our website at www.AFSC.org/NH for more information, and to make a donation.



*Top row (left to right): Anthony Payton, Candace Cole-McCrea (clerk), Ginny Cole, Hannah Bissex, Jennifer Keller
Bottom row (left to right): Lidia Yen, Lina Shayo, Margaret Hawthorn, Nan Beiter, Sara Smith, Sebastian Fuentes*

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & FUNDERS!

How we do this work is as important as what we do! And it's all about partnerships, coalitions, networks, and collaborations with hundreds of New Hampshire leaders and organizations – too many to name them all!

We host multiple spaces where individuals and groups come together, deepen our analysis, identify opportunities for strategic action, and support each other to make systemic change. AFSC-NH convenes the NH Immigrant Rights Network, the Abolition Network, Change for Concord, and Umokuumani, a group for Black and African immigrants. We coordinate NH Voices of Faith; we co-lead the NH Immigrant Visitation Program; and we are active in the NH Coalition for a Just Peace in the Middle East, the Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition, the NH Host Home Network, the NH Peacekeeper Team, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition.

Our work would not be possible without the funding we receive from individual donors, Quaker meetings, and event sponsors, as well as grants from the NH Charitable Foundation, Clowes Fund, You Have Our Trust fund, Resist Inc, Bean Foundation, NH Women's Foundation, and the NH Democracy Fund.

**YOUR FINANCIAL
SUPPORT MAKES OUR
WORK POSSIBLE!**

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