



AFSC West Region News – February 2025

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.



Coloradoans celebrate AFSC. Photo: Oscar Juarez

Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Coloradoans celebrate 70 years of AFSC work for peace and justice

AFSC General Secretary Joyce Ajlouny recently joined the AFSC Colorado team and over 200 community members in celebrating AFSC's 70th anniversary of work in the state. Everyone enjoyed music, dance and amazing food.

“My visit was yet another reminder of our extraordinary efforts in community and how we are built for this moment - to resist and persist,” Joyce says. “The AFSC Colorado team, working in coalition, has quickly pivoted to train dispatchers, conduct Know Your Rights trainings, set up hotlines – all to support and protect immigrants under threat during these precarious moments.”

Joyce thanked staff Gabriela Flora, Jennifer Piper, Jordan Garcia, AnnaRose Craig, Lupe Lopez and Judith Marquez “for your warm welcome, remarkable work and for including me in your celebrations. It was a true honor. You inspire me.”



US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

San Diego celebrates Pedro Rios for his decades of service

At its 37th Annual All People’s Celebration, Alliance San Diego honored Pedro Rios of AFSC with its Ashley Walker Award. “This award goes to someone who embodies the spirit of advocacy, justice and compassion,” the Alliance said. “Pedro is a tireless leader and fearless human rights advocate who has dedicated his life to uplifting communities at the US-Mexico border.” Pedro thanked his AFSC colleagues and family -- and recognized the work of global human rights defenders. The presentation begins at the 39:00 mark of this [video](#).



photo: Alicia Lueras Maldonado

People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Helping farmers cope with climate change

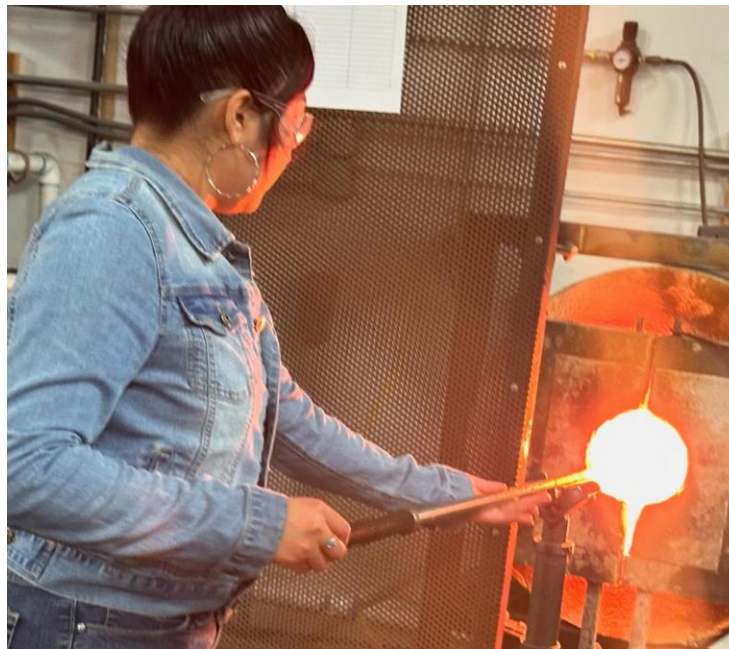
In this [Public News Service story](#), Sayrah Namaste of AFSC New Mexico says that in order to cope with climate change, New Mexico farmers plant a diversity of crops and sequence them to make sure they have at least one successful crop if others fail. She added AFSC will encourage lawmakers to support small-scale sustainable farms to give those who grow food a fighting chance. Her colleague, Patrick Jaramillo, said AFSC has been busy reconnecting with partners and preparing for the state’s legislative session, which runs January 21 - March 22.



Oregon-Washington Project Voice

Interview lifts up ways to counter anti-immigrant sentiment

The Mano A Mano Family Center recently [interviewed](#) AFSC Oregon staffers Pedro Sosa (upper right) and Alonso Oliveros (bottom). The conversation (in Spanish) focused on “tools to protect ourselves against growing anti-immigrant hostility.” This [article](#) warns people of social media misinformation.



67 Sueños, Oakland

From blowing glass to cooking bok choy, 67 turns up the heat

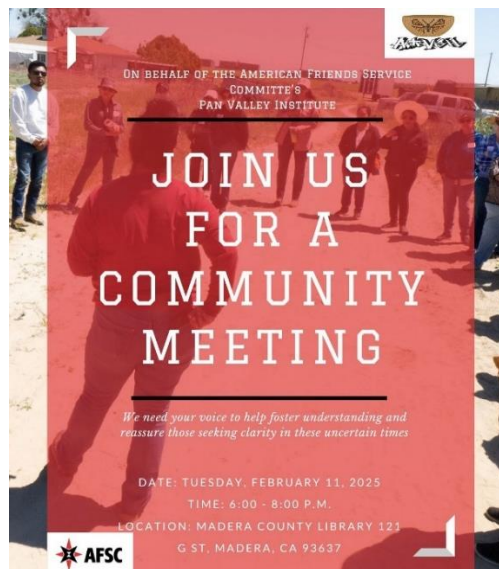
On [Facebook](#), see photos from 67 Sueños’ recent “Staff Self-Care Day,” which included some great food and dope glass blowing (photo above). During their recent Comida Sagrada (Sacred Food) gathering, bok choy was the featured vegetable. From [Instagram](#): “We had tons of fun with our youth, teaching them the healthy benefits and the history behind it!”



California Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Advocating for transparency and demilitarization in local policing

How local law enforcement uses militarized weapons is even more relevant today as new threats arise under the new federal administration, according to John Lindsay-Poland and Jennifer Tu of AFSC. The Healing Justice Program continues to support communities across California in advocating for transparency and demilitarization in local policing. Check out these updated resources: [AB 481 Resource Hub](#), [Policy Advocacy Toolkit](#), [Transparency Advocacy Toolkit](#), and [AB 48 \(crowd control\) Explainer](#).



Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Community meeting to address immigrants' concerns, resistance

Indigenous women are convening a [community forum](#) addressing immigrants' concerns on February 11 in Madera. The meeting will include local and state elected officials and leaders and immigrants who may be directly or indirectly impacted by potential ICE or Border Patrol raids in Madera County. "Our intent is to ask officials and leaders how they will protect and defend their constituents if ICE or Border Patrol starts raiding immigrants in Madera," says Myrna Martinez Nateras, Founding Program Director of PVI. More in this [press release](#).



Roots for Peace (RFP) Program, Los Angeles

The LA fires, AFSC's response, and an upcoming Freedom School

Crystal Gonzalez of Roots For Peace recently shared about the devastating fires in Los Angeles. Impacts included the displacement of thousands of people, loss of jobs for many low-wage workers, and toxic air quality throughout the region. The latter was augmented by lead and asbestos contained in the burnt homes which cast toxic particulates into the air.

In the weeks following the fires, AFSC distributed over 200 masks in South Central Los Angeles, hosted a support group for youth participants, provided access to air filters, and connected low-wage workers to assistance programs.

On February 22-23, Roots For Peace will host its next Freedom School – an in-person, intensive, fun, and FREE social justice training for high school youth. Together, we'll grow our leadership and build community while engaging in community organizing activities and events that push for change on important justice issues affecting our communities in South Central LA. Apply [here](#).

Quaker engagement in Washington State

Brian Blackmore, Director of Quaker Engagement, and Gabriela Flora, Leadership and Planned Gift Officer, will be giving presentations at Olympia Friends Meeting on Saturday, March 1 and at University Friends Meeting in Seattle on Sunday, March 2. AFSC's most recent [Acting in Faith](#) newsletter highlights the ways Friends are working for peace and justice.

More opportunities for young people

Applications are now open for AFSC's Emerging Leaders for Liberation (ELL) program. This is a perfect program for young activists ages 18-22 who want to grow their social justice skills. General information (including a February 20 call) can be found [here](#), including the application process.

The Birches Peacebuilding Fellowship program is designed for recently graduated or graduating B.A. or M.A. students who want to do a peacebuilding year in Guatemala/Mexico, Jordan, or Nairobi/Addis. Please find information and the application process [here](#).

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