



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

## **AFSC Midwest Digest – March 2025**

*Stories of work from around the region*



### **Winter Intensive creates space for youth to pursue their dreams**

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the AFSC Twin Cities Healing Justice Program recently hosted “Dream Chasers 2.0.” This Winter Intensive was a continuation of skill building for our Youth Board members. Youth were asked what issues they are most interested in organizing around in their community.

Responses ranged from anti-bullying to community safety. We are forming committees to focus our efforts over the remainder of the school year. The Winter Intensive was an amazing experience. Youth spent time Vision Casting event ideas that would inspire their peers to take part in being a proponent of change on issues our Youth Board members see in their school and community. Read [more](#) from staffers Prescott Jones and Maddie Foss.



Front row: AFSC staff asia smith, Destiny Harris and Gus Funk. Back row: YAP members

### **Youth Advisory Panel provides space for visionary change work**

AFSC Chicago Peacebuilding kicked off our Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) last November. YAP is an incubator for youth-led organizing projects -- a space for young people to bring forward issues in their local schools and communities that they want to organize around. YAP is also a dreaming space for youth to create bold, expansive visions of the world they want to live in, and a space for youth to plug into existing justice work across Chicago. Throughout the year we will work alongside one another to build sustainable connections with youth all around the city to share our skills and experiences. Follow Chi Peace on [Instagram](#) and check out our latest [newsletter](#).

# *The Pulse Check Community Survey*

### **AFSC St. Louis surveys community – stay tuned for results!**

Barbara Gunn Lartey, St. Louis Program Director, reports that AFSC is doing a community-wide survey and focus group asking people: How do we prepare youth – especially Black youth – to step into this current reality? The survey will have an intergenerational voice, as well. Stay tuned for more!





### **AFSC Michigan: End the videotaping of strip searches in women's prison**

Prison officers in Michigan are conducting strip searches of incarcerated women while wearing active body cameras. This practice is a clear violation of Michigan law, which makes it a felony to record individuals in a state of undress without consent. Despite this, the MDOC continues to justify this blatant invasion of privacy.

[Take action](#) – and catch up on the [latest](#) from the Michigan Criminal Justice Program.



### **How to create a mutual aid network**

Everyone deserves to have access to food, housing, and other essentials. But government safety net programs have long fallen short of what's needed. As we advocate for essential services, we can also take direct action in our own communities. By forming mutual aid networks, we can help each other right now while continuing to push for policies that meet everyone's needs.

Read [more](#) from Mary Zerkel, Associate Regional Director of the Midwest Region.



Iowans practice lobbying state legislators for immigrant rights.

### **Short takes**

AFSC alums with Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice (MMJ) share their latest [movement update](#) and [action alert](#)...Read AFSC's [take](#) on the need to cut Pentagon spending – and [take action](#)...AFSC's [Third Tuesday webinar on March 18](#) will focus on economic policies that disproportionately affect women and target the care economy...Read our latest [update](#) on providing humanitarian aid to Gaza.

### **Get social**

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*AFSC Mission Statement: Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light of each person, AFSC works with people of all faiths and backgrounds to challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace.*