



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

## **AFSC West Region News – March 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](mailto:WestNews@afsc.org).



At a PVI-hosted community forum in Madera, CA (photo: Joshua Slack)

*Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno*

### **Reflections on a community forum in Madera, California**

The Pan Valley Institute (PVI) recently hosted a community forum that brought together residents and nine leaders from Madera to discuss the increasing presence of ICE in the area and potential law enforcement involvement.

This forum allowed the community to engage with many city officials, officers, school board members, and council members to address these concerns, raise questions and establish trust and understanding with one another. The overwhelming turnout, surpassing PVI's initial expectations, demonstrates the community's commitment to staying informed and advocating for their rights.

Read [more](#) from Carlos Sanchez and Joshua Slack of PVI.



Pedro Sosa of AFSC leads a Know Your Rights workshop.

### *Oregon-Washington Project Voice*

## **Helping everyone in Oregon “Know Your Rights”**

In response to the continued attacks on our friends, family, neighbors and community members without status, AFSC Oregon Project Voice is offering Know Your Rights (KYR) information and resources to protect against ICE detentions, arrests and raids. Although Oregon’s “Sanctuary Law” prevents local and state police from taking part in federal immigration enforcement actions, it does not prevent ICE, Border Patrol and DHS agents from terrorizing and arresting community members without status. Read [more](#).



AFSC immigrant leaders (left to right: Betty, Hilda, and Maria) conduct A Know Your Rights training in Colorado. Photo: Gabriela Flora

### *Immigrant Rights Program, Denver*

## **Surviving the whirlwind in Colorado**

AnnaRose Craig, Potts Intern with AFSC in Colorado, recently shared this [reflection](#) on their work supporting undocumented folks and their families with emergency preparedness and safety planning. “I think of seven generations from now and how we can keep them safe,” AnnaRose writes. “I think of the people and the earth seven generations ago, and what we can learn from those who came before us.”



Photo: Pedro Rios

*US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego*

### **Communities resist bill to narrow California's Sanctuary Law**

Pedro Rios of AFSC reports that a small group of elected officials held a press event recently to announce [legislation](#) that would violate the wishes of Californians and existing state law as upheld by the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit in 2019. “Our communities came together - from the north, east, and south County,” Pedro says. “Unionized workers, service providers, students and educators, organizers, moms and dads - and despite being harassed by rightwing youtubers - we stood for dignity and against bigotry and hate.”



Sayrah Namaste of AFSC (center) with partners at the Roundhouse (Capitol) declare: “Water isn’t for selling, water is for defending.”

*People of the Land Program, Albuquerque*

### **Defending water, protecting acequias in New Mexico**

New Mexico co-directors Sayrah Namaste and Patrick Jaramillo have been advocating at the state legislature for bills protecting water and acequias, as well environmental and free speech issues. Their advocacy includes participation with the New Mexico Acequia Association, the New Mexico Acequia Commission, and the coalition “Defend New Mexico Water.” Recently they supported the annual Acequia Day at the state capitol in Santa Fe, lifting up the importance of this centuries-old water democracy, and marching with shovels and songs around the capitol building. Follow their work on [Facebook](#).



*67 Sueños, Oakland*

### **Youth explore the healing power of water**

From [Facebook](#): “Come along into our healing session learning about Aqua Florida (Flowery Water). We started off our session learning that water listens and absorbs energy, so it carries great power. If used with intention, water can heal. And with the addition of plantitas (little plants), fruit, spices and more, we can create a sacred healing tool that will take care of us in moments of need.”



*California Healing Justice Program, Oakland*

### **Community forum focuses on Alameda County DA candidates**

AFSC is a member of both the [Justice Reinvestment Coalition](#) and the [Care First Community Coalition](#). Earlier this year, the groups hosted an Alameda County District Attorney Candidate Forum to provide an opportunity for the community to learn more about each candidate's platform and hear their stances on pressing community issues like public safety, police accountability, and more.



A student mobilization in LA (Photo: Adalberto Rios)

*Roots for Peace (RFP) Program, Los Angeles*

## **LA Freedom School provides social justice training for youth**

Adalberto Rios of AFSC writes: RFP hosted a weekend Freedom School in February. AFSC supported youth from four core high schools to know their rights in the face of walkouts. Thousands of youth in Los Angeles walked out of schools in protest of Executive Orders that diminish protections for schools and churches from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations.

To support the momentum of student mobilization, Freedom School participants engaged in workshops on the history and power of student protest, reflected on organizing efforts at their schools, and learned introductory concepts to community organizing. Roots For Peace is looking forward to the next Freedom School series to continue to build with these youth towards safety and care for our communities. Stay in touch on [Instagram](#).

## **Short takes**

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....Check out this [update](#) on AFSC's work in the Midwest Region.

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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.*