



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

## **AFSC Midwest Digest – September 2025**

*Stories of work from around the region*



AFSC Michigan staff (from left) Adalia Kirby, Claudia McLean, Lawanda Hollister, Natalie Holbrook-Combs and Skylar Gillette stand with cutouts of friends and family inside prison.

### **Commutation Project changes lives in Michigan**

Everyone deserves a second chance. For many in prison, that opportunity never comes. Instead, the U.S. criminal legal system overly relies on life or long sentences. AFSC's Michigan Criminal Justice Program is working to change that. Our Commutation Project pairs women serving life and long-term sentences with volunteers on the outside. Through visits, phone calls, and letters, they learn from each other and work toward applying for commutation and release. Read [more](#) about this work, directed by Adalia Kirby of AFSC.

Natalie Holbrook-Combs of AFSC recently spoke on a webinar panel convened by Safe & Just Michigan. The topic was *Debtors in Prison: How fees and fines capture justice-involved Michigan families in debt*. Check out the [recording](#).



### **Chi Peace to host event looking at non-military alternatives for students**

Join AFSC in Chicago on Saturday, September 20 for [Beyond JROTC: a back to school event](#)! Responding to a push from the current administration to increase military recruitment of students, we'll be exploring the current state of recruitment efforts in Chicago Public Schools, how to opt out of recruiting, and alternative options for students preparing for their next step after graduation. We'll be talking, making art, sharing a meal, and sharing resources.

We also invite you to join AFSC on Saturday, September 27 as we celebrate 90 years of social justice work in Chicago and help us continue our visionary work in Chicago's communities and beyond! Have you volunteered, donated, worked, interned, or participated in AFSC? Are you connected to someone who has? Or would you like to be connected and involved? You are invited! Register [here](#).





photo for image: KRCGTV

## Support still needed for students heading back to school in St. Louis

The AFSC St. Louis Peacebuilding Program continues to raise money to create supply packs for young people who were affected by a devastating tornado in May. We are also raising money for youth programming, some of which we are already doing in our partner schools. Programming will include healing circles and spaces, intergenerational collective activism, community events and third spaces, and shadowing and job training opportunities. And, most of all, continued support for those most marginalized and affected in our communities.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed already. Although the school year just began, there will still be a need throughout the year for school supplies. Whatever you can spare will be put toward these supply packs and youth programming for the students. [Please give today.](#)



Becky Pringle, left, signs a poster in Des Moines.

## Iowa updates

Becky Pringle, President of the National Education Association, spoke in Des Moines at a Labor Day rally (see [photos](#)). The NEA is the nation's largest union.... Here's the latest [resistance update](#) from AFSC alumni with Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice.

## Short takes

Daniel Lakemacher of AFSC was recently part of this [press conference](#) featuring veterans opposed to National Guard deployments to Chicago.... Here's a [story](#) about Native Americans in South Dakota fasting for people Gaza.... An immigrant detention center has been [proposed](#) for western Nebraska....Here's the latest [Acting in Faith newsletter from AFSC](#).

## Get social

Check out AFSC Midwest on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Blue Sky](#).

## [DONATE TO AFSC MIDWEST PROGRAMS](#)

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.*