



## AFSC Midwest Digest – December 2025

*Stories of work from around the region*



At the Pulse Check Experience at the Deaconess Foundation in St. Louis

### Highlights of AFSC work in St. Louis in 2025

The St. Louis Peacebuilding Program had a busy year in 2025. Check out these [highlights](#). Barbara Gunn Lartey, Program Director, writes: “The most meaningful moment of the past year for AFSC St. Louis was our inaugural Pulse Check Focus Group—an intergenerational gathering that convened youth, parents, educators, school staff, organizers, activists, attorneys, and even representatives from the Mayor’s Office into one brave, sacred circle of truth-telling.

“In the chapel of The Deaconess Foundation (one of our community partners), people who rarely share space spoke vulnerably about harm, hope, safety, and what St. Louis youth truly deserve. Barriers dissolved. Wisdom flowed across generations. And, for the first time, the community began to collectively articulate a vision for transformation that still anchors our work today.”



Chi Peace staff celebrate AFSC Chicago's 90th anniversary.

## **Chi Peace celebrates a year of creative and impactful work with youth**

It was a year full of good work in Chicago, as well. Program Director asia smith writes: "With their enthusiasm, creativity and spirit, young people give me great hope. I'm so glad to share a few [highlights](#) of Chi Peace work from 2025. Here's one:

"In September, Chi Peace partnered with About Face, Black Alliance for Peace, and Lucy Parson's Lab to create an Anti-JROTC Back to School event. The purpose was to educate community members (students, educators, and parents) about their right to refuse enrollment in JROTC at their schools. It was timely, given Project 2025's push for BIPOC people to join the military and police forces.

"The event consisted of a teach-in on the history of recruitment in Chicago schools, and breakout groups to discuss what resistance of JROTC can look like. Overall, it illustrated the type of collaborative, creative work that we get to do as a program. Participants left with Chicago Public School JROTC opt-out forms and more information on how to inform community members on their rights around military recruitment."



## Vision Board event is one of many 2025 highlights from Michigan

The AFSC Michigan Criminal Justice Program hosted a Vision Board event in May in collaboration with women inside the Huron Valley Correctional Facility. Those who attended took part in making their own vision boards, as well as collaborating on the over 170 individual vision boards meant for each woman registered for the partner event inside prison.

Our partners inside prison celebrated their Visions at the end of May and early June in various ways throughout the prison. This included receiving an individual vision board made for them by those who attended the event and AFSC staff, as well as a vision board booklet for inspirational messages and images to help them realize their visions. This event was an incredible success and generated immense positivity for these women. Read [more](#) about what the event meant for people inside.





In Chicago (at left) and Des Moines

## December “Love as Action” events include Friends in Chicago and Des Moines

On December 6, Quakers and community activists gathered across the country in silent vigils to bear witness to the chaos our federal government is inflicting on our communities - and to show solidarity with our immigrant sisters, brothers and neighbors. AFSC coordinated vigils in Philadelphia, New York City and Atlanta -- along with Midwest sites in Des Moines and Chicago. The next actions are planned for January 17 – read [more](#).

## Short takes

Here’s AFSC’s latest [Acting in Faith newsletter](#)....Tell Congress: [Stop murders at sea](#)....Sign this [petition](#) to stop detention and deportation....Read this [AFSC report](#) about “The Business of Apartheid”....Act now to [end the genocide in Sudan](#).

## 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.*