



**American Friends
Service Committee**

AFSC West Region News – April 2020

Highlights of work from around the region

Welcome to the American Friends Service Committee's West Region monthly newsletter. We look forward to connecting with you regarding our shared work for peace and justice. Thanks for your interest and support; please send feedback to WestNews@afsc.org.



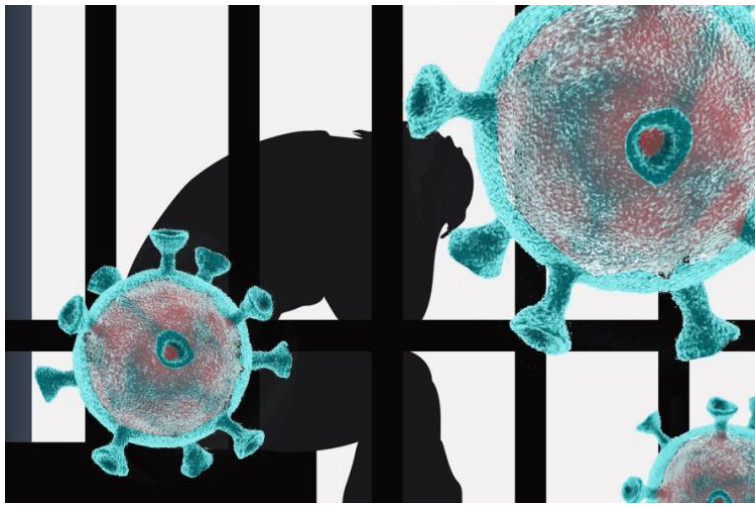
Photo: Adriana Jasso

US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

“Honk for Justice” rally calls for an end to immigrant detention

AFSC took part in Detention Watch Network's [#FreeThemAll national week of action](#) to demand the liberation of all people in immigration detention. In San Diego, AFSC supported the [Otay Mesa Detention Resistance](#)'s "Honk for Justice," a COVID-19-safe-car rally to demand that Gov. Gavin Newsom and San Diego County officials advocate for the closure of the Otay Mesa Detention Center, a privately run detention facility that profits from human suffering. More than 70 cars joined the caravan, driving through downtown San Diego in the call to free all ICE detainees before COVID-19 turns detention centers into death camps. Read [more](#).

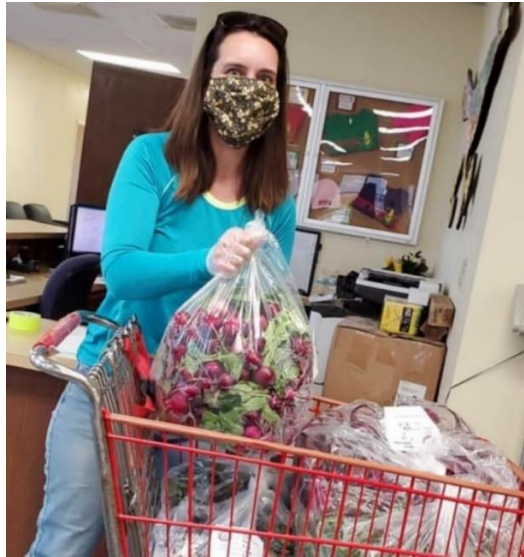
Founded in 1917, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is an international Quaker organization that works on many social justice issues, including immigration, mass incarceration, youth civic engagement, and human rights in Palestine/Israel. With programs in 24 states and 15 countries, AFSC engages communities experiencing marginalization in the pursuit of shared security, based not on arms or coercion, but rather on creative nonviolence, sustainable economics and respect for all peoples.



Arizona Program, Tucson

Pushing for the safety of people inside prisons

A coalition of criminal justice reform advocates and healthcare professionals, led by AFSC Arizona, has formally [requested](#) that the Arizona Department of Health Services and Director Dr. Cara Christ conduct inspections of state prisons, aiming to ensure their compliance with CDC guidelines on COVID-19. Learn more and take action by visiting AFSC Arizona's [coronavirus resource page](#).



People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

New Farm to Foodbank project meets needs during COVID-19

“Helping make the link between those who grow food and those who need it is a concrete, practical action we can take to help mitigate the fallout from COVID-19 and support and strengthen our communities,” says AFSC’s Sayrah Namaste, shown above delivering organic radishes and beets from local farmers to a food bank. AFSC has also delivered much needed facemasks to farmers. Read more about this innovative work on [AFSC’s website](#), the [Albuquerque Journal](#) and [KOB TV](#). You can support the effort by [donating here](#).



Economic Activism Program, Oakland

Microsoft divests from the Israeli Occupation

In a major campaign victory, [Microsoft](#) announced on March 27 that it would “divest its shareholding in AnyVision,” an Israeli company whose technologies power the Israeli military’s surveillance of the occupied Palestinian civilian population of the West Bank. Microsoft’s decision was prompted by a [multi-stakeholder campaign](#) demanding Microsoft to comply with [its own principles](#) for the ethical use of facial recognition and divest from AnyVision. The AFSC organized an appeal by responsible investors of the company, including large institutional investors, and raised their concern in Microsoft’s annual shareholder meeting in December. Learn [more](#).

**ENACT A REAL MORATORIUM
ON EVICTIONS AND
FORECLOSURES THAT
PREVENTS LANDLORDS AND
MORTGAGE HOLDERS FROM
FILING FOR THEM.**

Roots for Peace Program, Los Angeles

Staying connected and supporting each other

AFSC works with young people and adults from predominantly immigrant Latinx families to address health and economic inequities and work toward a more just food system. Although we can’t gather together on our urban farm because of COVID-19, we’re staying connected through community healing conference calls. The calls provide a space where community members can know they are supported, continue building connections, discuss their struggles, and share [resources](#) with each other. AFSC joined more than 240 organizations recently in a [#HealthyLA](#) call to action urging county supervisors to protect renters (above), workers, immigrants and unhoused Angelinos.



photo: Eduardo Stanley

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Supporting farm workers and communities with critical information

“Many people told us that they lack critical information about how to protect themselves, their families and their communities from the COVID-19 pandemic,” write Myrna Martinez Nateras of AFSC and Robin Maria Delugan in the *Fresno Bee*. “They put their health and that of their families and communities at risk because they offer essential services to our community. Yet, not all employers are informing these workers about how they can protect themselves or what benefits, if any, they will receive if they get sick or lose their jobs.” Read the full [op-ed](#).



Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Spanish-language video on how to make a mask

Pedro Sosa, who directs AFSC’s Immigrant Rights work in Oregon and Washington, recently posted this [video](#) in Spanish on how to make a mask. He writes: “I am very grateful to everyone for your good wishes on my birthday. [I’m self-isolating] to reduce exposure and spread of the virus, which is affecting the world more and more every day. I also wish you all to be well and take the necessary precautions. Here I share with you some ideas, like making homemade mascariallas.”



Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Urging governors to expand public health measures over militarism

John Lindsay-Poland of AFSC assisted several public health advocates in drafting this [sign-on letter](#) to governors urging public health responses to COVID-19, not the expansion of militarism in our communities. AFSC promoted [these actions](#) to prevent a COVID-19 catastrophe in Santa Rita Jail and was mentioned in this [article](#) about mitigating the spread of the virus in the San Francisco County jails and legal system.



A young person supported by 67 Sueños

67 Sueños, Oakland

Providing educational and emotional support to youth

Beto Ortiz-Silva of AFSC reports that 67 Sueños is moving educational sessions online while providing support for teens who are being holed up in their houses. Some of their parents are losing work or seeing hours cut. Recently Beto put together a debrief of the most recent federal stimulus bill, the CARES Act, to make it easier to understand. The program's first online presentation was Naomi Kline on the [shock doctrine](#). 67 Sueños is also looking to partner with [Centro Legal de la Raza](#) on an undocumented workers relief fund in Oakland. Stay tuned.



Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Working together for a Just Response to the COVID-19 Crisis

AFSC has joined 10 other Colorado progressive organizations in working towards a just [response](#) to the economic and health crisis caused by COVID-19 that centers the needs of all of us, not just the wealthy few. AFSC and the Colorado People's Alliance (COPA) recently joined 84 organizations across the country to call for ICE to “Save Lives and #FreeThemAll” from immigrant detention. Nationwide, about 2,000 people were released for a 6% reduction in the detention population, and about 10 hunger strikes have popped up in the past two weeks. [Our premier](#) with Detention Watch Network has over 1,000 views!

In other news, the [Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition](#) and AFSC have jointly decided it's time for MDSC to become its own independent organization. Piper of AFSC writes, “I am in awe of all we did together and all the things the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition has yet to do! All the love and luck to this organization and all the people involved, who I so love and respect, as you carry the work forward.”

Short takes

Are you a Friend living in the West? Would you like to connect more with AFSC's work? [Register now](#) for our upcoming [Quaker Engagement Call](#) set for Wednesday, April 15. Contact Matthew Leber at MLEber@afsc.org for more information....Rae Abileah, a West Region Executive Committee member, co-wrote this [guide](#) to activism during the time of pandemic.... Sign this [petition](#) demanding that federal and state lawmakers drop private prison contracts with GEO and CoreCivic....Check out AFSC's [COVID-19 resource page](#) and [donate](#) today to help impacted communities.

Your support matters

Your gifts of time and money make a real difference. Please be in touch with any West Region program by visiting afsc.org, and support the AFSC West Region by [donating](#) today. Please share this subscription [link](#) for this newsletter with others. Thank you!