



**American Friends
Service Committee**

AFSC West Region News – July 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.



Delivering masks to farmworkers (photo: Jose Eduardo Chavez)

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Protecting each other during COVID-19

Myrna Martinez Nateras reports that the San Joaquin Valley in California is rapidly becoming a COVID-19 hotspot with over 10,000 cases in the region. Working with partners, AFSC has delivered 2000 masks to farmworkers along with information on protecting their health and worker rights. 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.



Children crunch carrots in New Mexico.

People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Farm to School Program provides healthy food – and more

Over the past school year, New Mexico kids in five school districts got to savor great local food. Much of that food came from small-scale, sustainable farms and farmer co-ops supported by AFSC, which manages the state-funded program that gets nutritious produce to these children while also strengthening the local economy. Angelina Lopez-Brody of AFSC writes that the COVID-19 pandemic has put into stark relief the importance of supporting a thriving local-food system. Learn [more](#).



Kumeyaay tribal bands and supporters (photo: AFSC San Diego)

US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Acting in solidarity at the border

Representatives of the Kumeyaay tribal bands and supporters recently [returned](#) to the site where Border Patrol and the Army Corps of Engineers intend to use explosives for an 18-foot border wall. While explosives have been suspended temporarily, other disturbances to the land will proceed, including grading of the earth. AFSC staff will continue to [monitor the situation](#) and support the Kumeyaay tribal bands with their demands for access to their lands, where their people have lived since time immemorial. Follow [AFSC-San Diego on Facebook](#) for updates on this and other work.

INVEST-IGATE

Economic Activism Program, Oakland

Long-term work behind the scenes leads to big wins

June 2020 saw the culmination of long-term work by Economic Activism staff behind the scenes resulting in huge public successes. In this [summary](#), Dalit Baum of AFSC writes that three high-tech giants have announced they will stop supplying the police with facial recognition technologies. In addition, the Racial Justice Investing Coalition, which AFSC has been working with, published this [powerful statement](#) about promoting racial equity.



Kelly Gonzalez Aguilar was recently freed after nearly three years in detention.

Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Trans asylum seeker freed after nearly three years in detention

Kelly Gonzalez Aguilar, a young person originally from Honduras who had over 92,000 people sign a petition for her freedom, is now free after 1051 days in ICE detention. Kelly has been a strong organizer and advocate for others. The [AFSC/CFIR Facebook page](#) notes: “Thank you to everyone who fought for Kelly and to those who continue to fight for our immigrant communities and help restore humanity to people caught in a system that intentionally destroys human dignity. We celebrate and continue to fight for the families, children, LGBTQ community and all those seeking asylum.”



67 Sueños, Oakland

Lead organizer sought for youth-led program

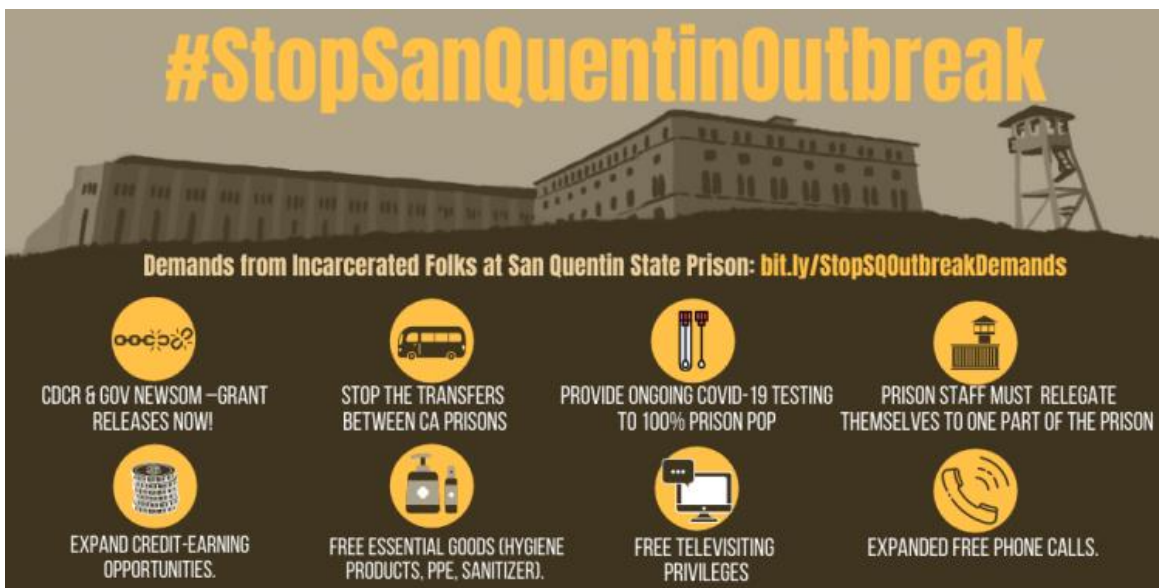
Applications will be accepted through August 6 for a Lead Organizer with AFSC's 67 Sueños program in Oakland. The organizer will work closely with the 67 Sueños team to build a strong youth-led organizing program that supports youth in building power and winning changes that impact their lives and the lives of people in their communities in Oakland and the Bay Area. Building on 67 Sueños' work in immigrant justice and police accountability, the Lead Organizer will initiate and develop local partnerships and coalitions as well as work with other AFSC networks. Apply [here](#).



Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Delivering facemasks and resources to farmworkers in Oregon

In coordination with community partners, AFSC staff and volunteers recently visited farms in West Salem and North Salem to deliver facemasks made by faith communities in Albany, Corvallis and Portland. The organizations delivered food boxes and popular education materials about COVID-19, along with thanks to these essential workers who put food on our tables. Follow [AFSC Oregon-Washington on Facebook](#).



Demands from incarcerated people at San Quentin State Prison

Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Take action to support people incarcerated in California

AFSC staff are asking people to demand that California Gov. Gavin Newsom immediately release all people at high risk of illness and death due to COVID-19. In particular, the Governor must release the elderly and those with underlying health issues that put them in acute danger of COVID-19. The only way to control the spread of this global pandemic (inside prison walls and beyond) is to grant releases, stop ICE transfers for those released, and reduce the state’s prison population. **Take action now.**



Roots for Peace Program, Los Angeles

Celebrating the defunding of a state surveillance program

AFSC’s Roots for Peace partnered with other organizations in the successful #NoPVEinCA coalition. (PVE is short for “Preventing Violent Extremism.”) Staff write: “After much organizing, meeting with legislators and powerful public comments, we celebrate this statewide win to defund the PVE surveillance program that would further harm communities of color, especially our Black, Muslim, and immigrant communities. We celebrate the lead organizing team in our coalition and our collective efforts.” Learn more about this important win **here**, and follow **Roots for Peace on Instagram**.



AFSC staff and volunteers collected nearly 400,000 signatures on the Second Chances Act petition.

Arizona Program, Tucson

400,000 Arizonans agree that people deserve a Second Chance

After a tremendous effort that netted nearly 400,000 signatures on petitions, the [Second Chances Act](#) initiative qualified for the November ballot. The Second Chances, Rehabilitation, and Public Safety Act is a statewide ballot initiative that will safely reduce the prison population, expand rehabilitative programs, reduce recidivism, create a more just sentencing system and save taxpayers money. See AFSC Arizona's [celebratory video](#) of gratitude for all those who volunteered their time to make it happen.

AFSC also [led the effort to guarantee that masks are permitted and available](#) to people incarcerated in Arizona's state prisons; finally, the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry relented. See the story from the Arizona Republic [here](#).

More news

Check out AFSC's suggestions for how to talk about [defunding ICE and CBP](#) while investing in communities....AFSC now has a page full of resources on [defunding the police](#).... Sign up for [AFSC's e-course series](#) for white people of faith to deepen their work for racial justice....Pat Rumer, an AFSC supporter and activist in Oregon, explains why [borders should not be barriers to human rights](#).

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!