



**American Friends
Service Committee**

AFSC West Region News – May 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.



Californians form a heart to urge Governor Newsom to #FreeThemAll

Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Working to #FreeThemAll – and oppose new jail funding

In April, AFSC staff and local Quakers joined with other faith leaders to create a human formation of a heart as a message of [solidarity and prayer](#) for those whose lives are at risk in detention centers and prisons. The heart formation is a response to the [human heart](#) that was formed on the yard by people detained in Mesa Verde Immigration detention center before joining others in a hunger strike protest. Also, John Lindsay-Poland of AFSC is [quoted](#) opposing a jail money grab by the Alameda County Sheriff. Check out AFSC's new resource: "[Ten Arguments Against New Jail Funding](#)."

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.



67 Sueños, Oakland

Students create masks to counter anti-Asian racism

Youth involved with 67 Sueños held critical dialogues on anti-Asian racism in the wake of COVID-19 and were challenged to express their thoughts and reactions by decorating face masks. Some of the messages on the masks included “Wash your hands and don’t be racist,” and “Oakland – No Fear,” both direct responses to the xenophobic, fear-based news cycles that are still being perpetuated. Earlier, Beto Ortiz-Silva of AFSC wrote this [blog](#) on the challenges and rewards of writing grants for non-profits.



Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Distributing masks to essential workers

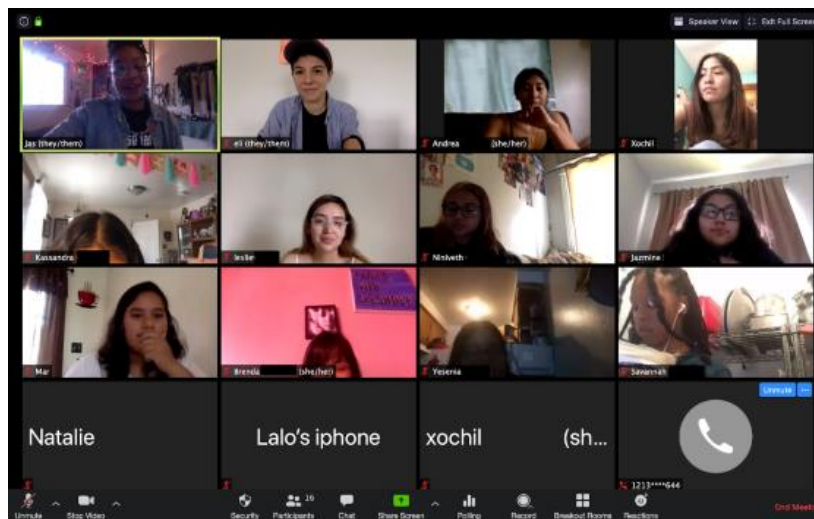
Pedro Sosa reports that Quakers and other people of faith involved in Rapid Response teams have come together to make more than 700 masks that that are being distributed to essential workers, *campesinxs* and day laborers. AFSC is organizing a caravan on May 15 along with [Mano a Mano](#) and [Latinos Unidos Siempre](#) to bring masks, food and popular education materials to 500 workers at Monrovia Nursery in Dayton. Pedro’s work on behalf of immigrants is recognized in these videos by [community partners](#) and [U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley](#).



People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Terrific Turnip Tasting is a Timely Treat

Building on the success of last year’s Great Carrot Crunch, this spring AFSC in New Mexico introduced Terrific Turnip Tasting – and then had to quickly pivot as the pandemic closed schools. With tremendous help from Albuquerque Friends, AFSC was able to distribute 2,500 locally-grown, organic turnips to hundreds of families. Read [more](#) from staffers Sayrah Namaste and Angelina Lopez-Brody. Meanwhile, AFSC’s Farm to Foodbank effort is receiving [national attention](#).

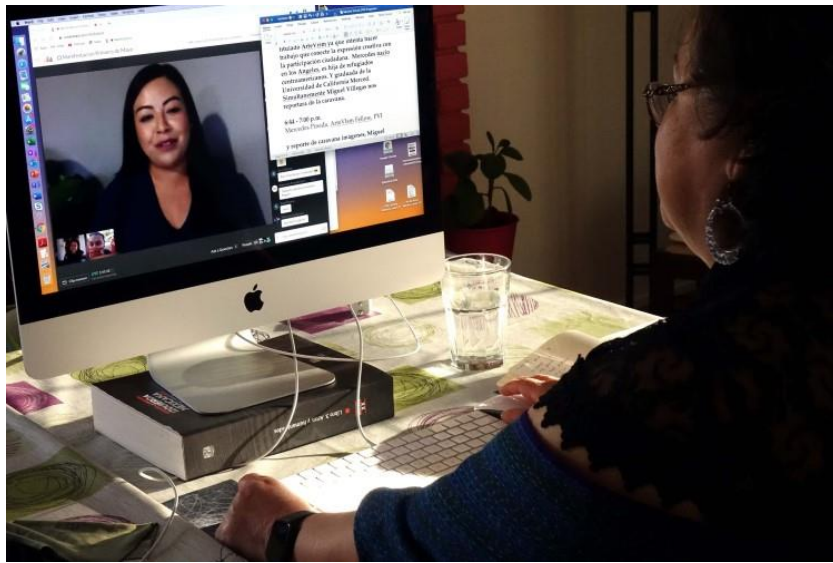


LA Freedom School Natural Medicine workshop with Jas Wade

Roots for Peace Program, Los Angeles

Donations requested for Los Angeles Undocu Worker Fund

From the Roots for Peace [newsletter](#) for May: “Amid this pandemic, we’ve prioritized supporting each other, our youth, and our most under-resourced community members: our undocumented families. We invite you to contribute to our [Undocu Worker Fund](#) to provide direct assistance to families who have lost wages and need our support.” The newsletter includes updates on LA’s first virtual Freedom School and upcoming events.



Minerva Mendoza wraps up PVI's virtual rally on May 1, 2020.
Photo: Eduardo Stanley

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

PVI focuses on immigrant workers' contributions and protection

Bringing front and center the economic contribution of immigrant workers while advocating for their protection amid the COVID-19 pandemic has been the main focus of PVI's work for most of the month of April into early May. At the same time, PVI launched the [ArteVism Fellowship Program](#) with four Latinx-indigenous young women. Read more highlights from PVI's work [here](#).



US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

First COVID-19 related death at Otay Mesa Detention Center

In response to the first COVID-19 related death of a detained person at the CoreCivic-operated Otay Mesa Detention Center in California, immigrant rights advocates issued this [press release](#). "We hold ICE and CoreCivic responsible for this preventable death," writes Pedro Rios of AFSC. "The only reasonable and humane response at this moment is for everyone detained to be released." Earlier, Pedro was [quoted](#) about delivering masks to Otay Mesa. In this [video](#), Vanessa Ceceña of AFSC describes AFSC's work to stop the militarization of border communities and uphold human rights.



Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Coloradoans share action steps to #FreeThemAll

In this [bilingual video](#), AFSC staff and members of Coloradoans For Immigrant Rights (CFIR) share a number of [action steps](#) we can all take to free people from immigrant detention centers, including [creating personalized videos](#) to our members of Congress. Jordan Garcia of AFSC acknowledges we can feel overwhelmed but suggests we “sit with that feeling of anger and impotence and then focus on what’s in your circle to do. Do that. It’s our duty to do what’s ours to do and that’s all.” Stay up to date with [AFSC and CFIR on Facebook](#).



photo: AFSC San Diego

Economic Activism Program, Oakland

Exposing who profits from the militarization of the US/Mexico border

In this [article](#) in Yes Magazine, Noam Perry and Tori Bateman of AFSC write that “the same military–industrial complex that for decades benefited from foreign wars is now benefiting from border militarization and the horrific treatment of migrants. These companies provide a lot more than just military services. The billions of dollars appropriated and diverted to fund Trump’s border wall have created a new border-industrial complex, in which the same weapon companies also manage the government’s IT systems, design systems of mass-surveillance, offer management and hiring services, and more.” Check out the [borders section of AFSC’s Investigate website](#).



Arizona Program, Tucson

Mutual Aid Project benefits people at extreme risk

AFSC's [ReFraming Justice Mutual Aid Project](#) recently donated 43 boxes of gloves, over 1800 masks and nearly 2000 rolls of toilet paper to people in Arizona state prisons. Caroline Isaacs, who directs AFSC's work in Arizona, is quoted in these articles describing the [spread of COVID-19 in prisons](#), the potential for nearly a [100% infection rate](#) therein, and how one [county attorney](#) is ignoring the crisis. Join [Joe Watson for a Facebook Live](#) on May 14 at 1 pm PT.



Matthew Leber (right) and Wren Minen call to #FreeThemAll

Short takes

Matthew Leber, Assistant Regional Director for AFSC's West Region, recently organized the region's first Quaker Engagement Call. Check out these opportunities for [further engagement](#), and contact [Matthew](#) to get involved....Xochil Rodrigues from Los Angeles and Jason Martinez from Arizona are featured in this [new blog](#) about how AFSC staff around the world are taking care of themselves during the pandemic.... Check out this [round-up of work](#) supported by AFSC's Pandemic Relief Fund.

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!