



**American Friends
Service Committee**

AFSC West Region News – October 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.



Protesting at General Mills HQ in Minneapolis. Photo: Emma Leigh Sron

Economic Activism Program, Oakland

AFSC to General Mills: Stop profiting from the occupation

Earlier this fall, AFSC launched our “No Dough for the Occupation” campaign to pressure **General Mills** to **stop producing Pillsbury products in illegal settlements** in the occupied West Bank. Last month, our campaign coalition—which includes the Palestinian Boycott National Committee, Jewish Voice for Peace, and others—held its first day of action to coincide with General Mills’ annual shareholder meeting. The day before the meeting, on the UN International Day of Peace, protesters gathered in front of General Mills’ headquarters in Minneapolis. **Read more** and **take action**.

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.



People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

New Mexico program to be honored on World Food Day, October 16

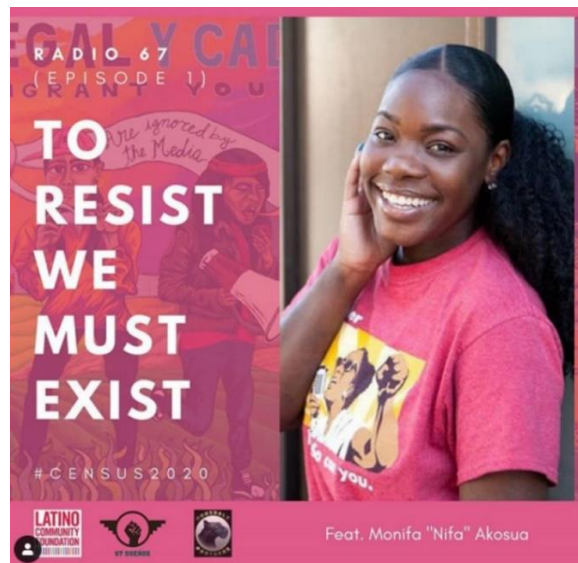
On World Food Day, the Interfaith Hunger Coalition of New Mexico will honor AFSC's Farm to Foodbank work. An organizer writes: "The global theme for World Food Day is agriculture sustainability and long-term food sustainability. We also want to highlight the efforts of groups in New Mexico that are working to address the immediate food needs of families and individuals affected by the COVID-19 crisis. The AFSC Farm to Food Bank Project appears to fit in both categories." Please check out and share this [new video](#) about the effort. In addition, as part of AFSC's Farm to Early Childhood Education work, we built a garden for a preschool that serves mostly refugee children; during the pandemic, outdoor classroom activities are especially important. See [photos and more stories on Facebook](#).



Roots for Peace Program, Los Angeles

Teamwork makes the dream work in LA

From preparing seed packets in the morning, to a soil drop off in the afternoon, to a powerful tree-planting session in the evening, AFSC shares its gratitude for all who recently volunteered their time and *ganas* [desire]. Follow [Roots for Peace on Instagram](#) for more. Additional resources include this [Roots for Peace case study](#), [AFSC and farming for social change](#), and this ['zine with visions for a new world](#).



67 Sueños, Oakland

“To Resist We Must Exist”

The first episode of Radio 67, hosted by Beto Ortiz-Silva of AFSC, features interviews with two people addressing the importance of the census as it wrapped up. Why are communities of color undercounted? Nifa Akosua says that, given the pandemic, “it’s been challenging to engage with people face-to-face.” From her phone calls and through social media, she sees that people are suspicious of what the census is and why the government needs to know details of people’s lives. Being undercounted, however, means that our communities lose out on resources. [Listen in.](#)



Distributing aid to farmworkers in Oregon. Photo: Beth Ronk

Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Supporting immigrant communities

In this [interview](#), Pedro Sosa of AFSC talks about how recent wildfires have affected farmworkers and other communities, the support AFSC and partner organizations have provided during the pandemic, and AFSC’s response to immigration enforcement, including the provision of Know Your Rights trainings for immigrants and community members in Oregon and Washington.



Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Governor signs landmark Racial Justice Act, vetoes informants bill

Gov. Gavin Newsom recently **signed** the historic California Racial Justice Act. Fatimeh Khan of AFSC said the act is a “step toward addressing the deep-rooted racism in our courts and in healing for communities plagued by harmful policies and overrepresentation in our prisons and courts.” Unfortunately, the governor **vetoed** another bill co-sponsored by AFSC that would have stopped unreliable informant testimony. Read Laura Magnani’s **reflections** and watch this **Facebook Live interview**.



AFSC #FreeThemAll event in San Diego. Photo: Pedro Rios

US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Working for the release of people in prisons and immigration jails

At multiple actions across California, demonstrators are **demanding the release** of people held in prisons and immigration jails. Gov. Newsom has the authority to address “the medical emergency that ICE is causing worldwide in spreading COVID-19—and the crisis in California’s own prisons,” AFSC said. “To fail to do is so is to be complicit in this systemic state violence.” Pedro Rios of AFSC is also quoted in these stories about **border wall prototypes** and a **new mural memorializing Anastasio Hernandez Rojas**.



Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Bill to support local news signed into law

Gov. Newsom recently signed AB 323, a bill supported by PVI-AFSC that would “strengthen California’s community news organizations, protecting their ability to provide all of the state’s residents with information about news and events in their communities,” as reported in the [Daily Republic](#). “AB 323 provides a bridge for our local newspapers to continue informing readers and their communities,” said Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio in a statement quoted in the [California Globe](#). “The First Amendment and our independent press are critical to the open exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives.”

Automatic Voting Rights Restoration: DO YOU QUALIFY?



American Friends Service Committee
ARIZONA OFFICE



TIM HINTZE



STEVE SCHARBONEAU

Arizona Program, Tucson

Webinar looks at restoring the right to vote for felons

Many people in Arizona with a first-time felony conviction are under the impression that they are forever prohibited from voting. But typically, once they've completed probation or community service, their right to vote is automatically restored. Ahead of the October 5 voter registration deadline, AFSC Arizona hosted this quick [Facebook Live webinar](#) on automatic rights restoration. See related [media](#).



Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Partnering to expose--and oppose--Palantir

AFSC Colorado partnered to oppose the company Palantir, infamous for being the technology backbone for Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) operations. In September, Palantir relocated their headquarters from Palo Alto, CA to Denver ahead of going public with their stock. We joined national resistance and enjoyed our increased collaboration with AFSC's Economic Activism program. We threw an **Unwelcome Party for Palantir**, featuring speakers such as Sen. Julie Gonzales, Carlos Rodriguez from Padres y Jóvenes, Sal from Black Lives Matter 5280, and Jennifer Piper of AFSC. Our Not1More member leaders made a Palantir piñata and candy, which was smashed in front of Palantir's office, and we launched the promotion of a **pledge** (still available to sign!) committing to keep Palantir's influence out of our Colorado institutions.

The second event, entitled "Palantir Exposed, Going Deeper," featured Dalit Baum of AFSC and Jacinta Gonzalez of Mijente in a virtual conversation detailing Palantir's involvement with ICE, the Department of Defense and policing. We look forward to potential events around Halloween, so stay tuned!

Short takes

AFSC issued this statement on the 2020 elections: **Making real the promises of democracy**....Gilda Sheppard got her start with filmmaking as an AFSC intern in Seattle in the 1970s; **check out her new film**.... Take action now to push Congress to **include immigrants** in any Coronavirus relief package....Check out AFSC's **Defund Hate messaging toolkit**.... AFSC encourages everyone to **share your message of hope**.

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!