



**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

AFSC West Region News – September 2021

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.



Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Coloradoans work to Defund Hate, promote Citizenship for All

AFSC led a recent Defund Hate vigil recently in front of the GEO Detention Center in Aurora, Colorado. Not1More Deportation Table members reported on the three congressional meetings we had, and then we handed out \$2.7 billion in fake money and had folks vote for their priorities. Surprise: no one voted for “inhumane detention of our loved ones.” Affordable housing got the most money, followed by food programs, universal health care, and stopping climate change. We found the people’s process of prioritizing the budget at the vigil to be much more efficient than the process Congress follows! Learn [more](#) about the successful work to transform Colorado into one of the most pro-immigrant states in the country and a [March for Citizenship](#) on Saturday, September 25 in Denver.



Katie Dixon talks about the GEO Group.

Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Rededicating to the long struggle for Black liberation and prison abolition

AFSC staff wrote this [post](#) commemorating Black August, an annual dedication of our collective commitment to make Black Liberation real. Paul Redd, a former AFSC Fellow, interviewed several people with significant experiences of incarceration. In this short [clip](#), Katie Dixon talks about the shameful role that private corporations have in perpetuating and maintaining mass incarceration—particularly GEO Group, a major investor in prison and so-called rehabilitative services. “When we talk about self-sufficiency, they don’t want those kinds of programs because now I’m a threat to their dollar,” says Katie.



Economic Activism Program, Oakland

Economic Activism Summer School helps students take on corporations

During July and August, the AFSC Economic Activism Program held our second annual [Economic Activism Summer School](#) with a select cohort of 38 participants, including 11 service learners. While most participants in the paid service-learning track completed projects related to the [Borders section of AFSC’s Investigate database](#), those with more extensive backgrounds in prisons or occupation took on different work. One added to our prison labor research project, and two AFSC Palestine Activism Program Fellows complemented their summer internships with research on companies involved in the occupation of Palestine.

Special report: 'Desperate' migrants risk life and limb climbing into small boats for journey to U.S.



KRON4

US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Protecting the lives of people migrating

While the Biden administration refuses to reopen the southern border to asylum seekers, many migrants have resorted to crossing into the U.S. through more dangerous routes. “The deaths in the water, the deaths in the desert are all avoidable if not only the U.S. but the Mexican government and other governments commit to protecting the lives of those who are forced to migrate,” [says](#) Pedro Rios of AFSC. Pedro also writes about the [50th anniversary of Friendship Park](#).



A farmworker from this [AFSC-PVI video](#)

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Working for relief and protection for all immigrants

Jose Eduardo Chavez Garcia, the AFSC Lovelace Fellow with PVI, [writes](#) about several meetings with members of Congress in which immigrants and partners advocate for meaningful immigration reform that provides relief and protection for all immigrants. Jose joins Myrna Martinez Nateras of PVI in this [blog](#) calling for the recognition of the rights and humanity of immigrant farmworkers. And Jose narrates this Labor Day [video](#) in which PVI thanks all workers, particularly farmworkers, for working tirelessly to guarantee American households have food at our tables.



Roots for Peace (R4P) Program, Los Angeles

Youth Led Community Care: Restoration in South Central

These are difficult times for our communities, especially for young people of color. In Los Angeles, [Roots for Peace](#) alumni hosted a recent event to care for each other, with an emphasis on youth impacted by systems of state violence. Completely youth led and youth facilitated, the one-day event included time at the community farm, story sharing, discussions on local actions for defunding the police, a healing arts workshop, and sharing herbal remedies.

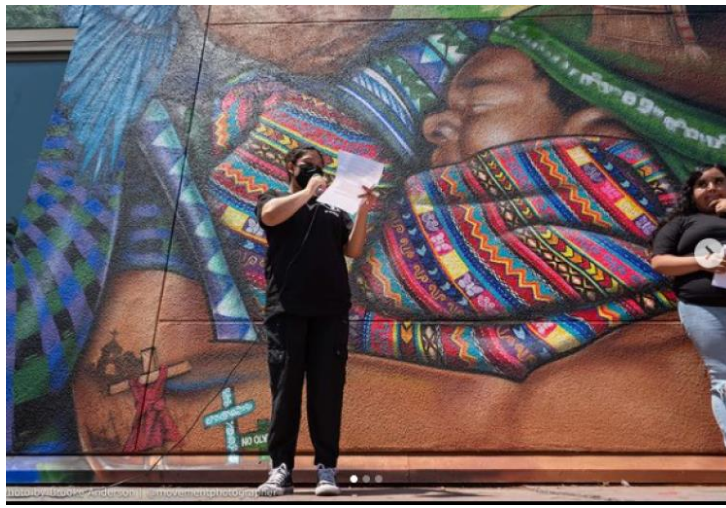


Farmer Fidel Gonzalez with children Photo: AFSC NM

People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Supporting low-income children and family farms in New Mexico

Sayrah Namaste and Angelina Lopez-Brody [write](#) about a new booklet they've created documenting AFSC's five years of experience working together with farmers and Early Childhood Education (ECE) staff to create a Farm to ECE program. "Crunch, Munch, and Chomp: Findings from Farm to ECE in New Mexico" includes insights, photos and stories while highlighting the voices of farmers and teachers. You can download it [here](#).



67 Sueños, Oakland

Mural represents migrant youth and all their responsibilities

Alo, an Oakland Youth Leader with 67 Sueños, **writes:** This image (above) was incorporated to REPRESENT all migrant youth that are forced to take on more adult responsibilities in place of their parents/guardians. The youth that survive and end up making it into the country have to sacrifice their own education, happiness, childhood, etc. for the sake of their younger siblings/family members. Migrant youth hold down more responsibilities for reasons such as their parents/guardians work, and most do not have flexible schedules to properly take care of their younger children, which usually rests on the shoulders of their eldest.



Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Organizing against immigrant detention and for human rights

Pedro Sosa reports that a strategy session with anti-detention activists from three states—including Adriana Jasso with AFSC in San Diego—will take place September 25. AFSC is also working with partners on a virtual training for human rights observers to increase our capacity in the Willamette Valley. Pedro is also pleased to share that the [Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition](#) now has staff for its immigration hotline, 888-622-1510. Follow AFSC OR-WA on [Facebook](#).



Arizona Program, Tucson

Promoting marijuana expungement and civil rights restoration

The *Reclaim Your Future* campaign is organized by the Arizona Marijuana Expungement Coalition (AMEC) to help people expunge their marijuana-related public criminal records. This work takes us one step closer to reclaiming the futures our communities deserve. AFSC Arizona is part of this coalition; learn [more](#).

Short takes

Applications are due October 1 for the [Robert N. and Ella S. Ristad Internship](#) with the California Healing Justice Program.... Apply by October 13 for the [Los Angeles Roots for Peace Program Director](#).... Check out this AFSC Facebook Live on [50 Years Since the Attica Uprising](#) and this related [blog](#).... Read AFSC's [denouncement](#) of a recent House committee vote that would expand Selective Service to include women.... AFSC joined other organizations in signing a [letter](#) to the Biden Administration regarding the need for a new approach at the border.... This is a key time to tell Congress: [Create a roadmap to citizenship for all immigrants!](#)

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!

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.