



American Friends Service Committee

Area Office of the Carolinas

NATIONAL & REGIONAL UPDATE

As the American Friends Service Committee moves into its 101st year the organization is embracing both change and resistance. That change has brought **Joyce Ajlouny** to the organization as the AFSC's first Palestinian-American General Secretary. Joyce joined the AFSC at the end of its Centennial year and would love to share her vision for our work at a Piedmont Friends Fellowship/ Yearly Meeting gathering in the future. In 2017, AFSC worked in **17 countries and 35 U.S. cities**. Every day, courageous individuals are coming together to demonstrate the transformative power of love to overcome violence, discrimination, and oppression. AFSC is honored to partner with communities around the globe in pursuing peace and justice. We hope you enjoy these highlights of our accomplishments from the past year and meeting some of the constituents, volunteers, partners, staff, and supporters who make our work possible. This report focuses mainly on **activities in the U.S. South**, as that is the region in which the NC Immigrant Rights Program in Greensboro is located.

The election of Donald Trump and the further right-wing shift of most state legislatures in the South region has driven much of AFSC's work in the region over the past year. These political changes have resulted in immediate threats to the communities that we work in predominantly: Latinx, African-American and low-income communities. Additionally, the growth and increased visibility of forces of white-nationalism and white-supremacy has been more pronounced in the South region.

In order to protect and defend the rights of the communities that the AFSC is working in, we launched several national initiatives including the **Communities Against Islamophobia** campaign and the **Sanctuary Everywhere** project (coordinated by the South's own Lori Khamala). People are pushing back against the rising tide of hateful policies that target immigrants, Muslims, and communities of color—and AFSC is providing them with the tools and training to succeed. Our Sanctuary Everywhere and Communities Against Islamophobia initiatives help everyday people work together to keep each other safe. Through webinars, in-person trainings, and online resources, people are coming together to resist state violence and interrupt acts of hate and fear. The results are impressive. More congregations are now well-equipped to offer sanctuary to those facing deportation, more community members understand how to respond to public harassment, more immigrants and allies know how to exercise their rights, and more schools and municipalities have adopted policies that improve safety for all.

We come to this gathering prepared to support you and your meetings in implementing these strategies as individuals and in our communities. A principal resource we would ask that Friends consider in their local social justice work is the **Quaker Social Change Ministry (QSCM, afsc.org/qscm)**, which serves as a model for congregations and other groups interested in engaging in Spirit-led activism while following the leadership of communities most impacted by injustice. This year, AFSC provided training and resources to more than 125 people in congregations using QSCM tools in their efforts.

Our eight individual programs in the South are working diligently to protect, defend and vision a future without oppression with communities in the region. In **Miami** and **Greensboro** we continue to accompany immigrants in their struggle to bring justice to immigrant communities. In **West Virginia** and **Atlanta** our economic justice initiatives are organizing from community centers to state capitals to ensure that the economic futures of our most vulnerable communities are protected. And our youth organizing programs in **New Orleans, Washington DC, Baltimore, Atlanta, Miami and West Virginia** continue their work to nurture future generations of active, educated and empowered leaders through their youth organizing activities. We encourage friends to learn more by visiting our website at www.afsc.org or pulling someone from the AFSC aside during this weekend's gathering.

NORTH CAROLINA UPDATE

Last summer, our office moved into the New Garden Friends Meeting, which has been a wonderful partnership and for which we are so grateful!

We also announced a shift in our programming to more intensely focus on local community organizing and leadership development of undocumented immigrants in the NC Triad. This work includes: Developing undocumented leadership by supporting small groups of immigrants meeting to identify their own issues and plan how to address them; Holding direct actions on issues identified by undocumented immigrants; Expanding political education of immigrant communities; Connecting local undocumented leaders to the immigrant rights movement statewide and nationally; Supporting needs of immigrant families facing detention and deportation and organizing public campaigns to stop deportations; and Supporting Sanctuary congregations. We have a Community Organizing coordinator (Andrew Willis Garces) and an Organizing Fellow (Laura Garduño Garcia) who are carrying out this important new work.

AFSC NC has been a leader in congregational sanctuary efforts in the state, leading the launch of two Sanctuary cases in Greensboro and providing support to others. North Carolina currently has more people residing in public Sanctuary than any other state in the nation.

Lori Fernald Khamala continues as the director of the NC Immigrant Rights Program, and has also taken on a new role of Sanctuary Everywhere national coordinator. Sanctuary Everywhere is an AFSC initiative that equips people with tools to increase safety for communities targeted by law enforcement, including Black, Muslim and undocumented communities. We are developing tools for youth and parents to know and defend their rights, holding regular webinars for allies to better understand these issues and gain effective accompaniment skills, and we are also lifting up non-traditional “Sanctuary Spaces” to highlight creative ways that targeted communities are creating safety for and by their own communities. Learn more about this project at afsc.org/SanctuaryEverywhere.

RESOURCES & WAYS TO CONNECT

We invite Friends to join us in utilizing the following resources and opportunities to become active in their meeting and community:

- Please join us at this year’s FGC gathering: www.afsc.org/fgc
- Join our Sanctuary Everywhere webinars: www.afsc.org/sanctuaryeverywherelive
- Utilize Quaker social change ministry for your ongoing social change work: www.afsc.org/qscm
- Read Acting in Faith regularly: www.afsc.org/friends
- Visit our Friends Engage pages with many ways for Quakers to get involved: www.afsc.org/friendsengage

Thank you for all that you do. The AFSC stands ready to work with you to achieve the needed change in our country and in our world. Please do not hesitate to ask us how you might get further engaged.

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