

AFSC, South Region's 2018 report for SEYM

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 is excited to share her vision for our work at a future Palmetto Friends 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 SEYM are 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 pronounced 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 network. 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 aid you and your meetings implement 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. AFSC's Quaker Social Change Ministry (QSCM) 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 rebuild a broken immigration system. In West Virginia and Atlanta our economic justice initiative are organizing from community centers to state capitals to ensure that the economic futures of our most vulnerable communities are protected. While 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.

We also 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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