

MAY 6, 2022

Yearly meeting

2022 REPORT

Greetings to Friends around the world!

All of us at AFSC hope this short report finds you well. In a world where headlines too often feature war, displacement, economic inequality, and the disastrous effects of climate change, it is always a comfort to see how the centered courage of Friends is showing that there is another, better way forward. Thank you for your solidarity, insight, devoted work, and support as we strive for a renewed world together.

This year, we have made some remarkable strides together. AFSC, along with regional partners in the Horn of Africa, have launched a new hub for Africa-based research and advocacy on key migration and peace issues. In the U.S., nearly 11,000 registered for social justice webinars. We also engaged in legal advocacy that helped release 120 people from immigration detention last year. These are just a couple examples of the work. You can find much more online and in our publications.

This year, a theme for AFSC has been reflection and rejuvenation. We have been rejuvenating ourselves to meet the challenges of our times. We are happy to report on some highlights and early signs of these efforts.



Mother's Day #FreeThemAll Celebration in Florida.

AFSC Florida and the Miramar Circle of Protection celebrate all immigrants, refugees and asylum-seeking mothers from around the world reporting to the ICE Miramar Facility. Events include poster and art making, flowers, and testimony outside the ICE facility.

Photo: Stefani Davila

Our North Star: A vision for community safety beyond prisons and policing

After a long consultation and discernment, we have recently published our North Star document. It has seven guideposts toward real community safety that lies beyond prisons and policing. We are pulling from the experiences of communities and Quaker insights on how to move toward healing and accountability, invest in community needs, and stop the prison and policing system that creates so much unnecessary suffering.

We encourage you to read our document and we would love to visit with any Friends meeting, church, organization, or gathering to discuss it together. You can find it online at afsc.org/northstar.



Illustration credit: Molly Costello

Engaging Emerging Leaders for Liberation

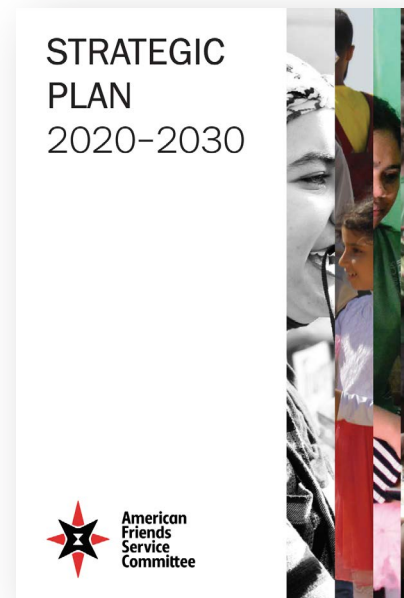
This May, we launched a new initiative, Emerging Leaders for Liberation. Thirty young adults—15 from Quaker colleges and Meetings and 15 from AFSC program communities—are deepening their social justice and leadership skills. This initiative continues AFSC's legacy of programs engaging young adults in life-transforming ways. While it's only just begun, we are excited to see what bold social change work this program will catalyze.

Transforming AFSC for a new generation

Since we adopted our new strategic plan in 2020, we have been having a number of internal and external conversations about restructuring AFSC to move our work forward. This has been a very passionate, heartfelt, and collaborative conversation that has involved a number of staff, Friends, and governance volunteers. We hope to have a proposal approved this summer and will keep Friends informed about our progress.

LEARN MORE

afsc.org/strategic-plan



Reinvigorating Quaker engagement

Our efforts for renewal also feature AFSC's relations with Friends worldwide. AFSC draws inspiration, support, and partnership from Friends, and we want this to be a two-way, mutually beneficial relationship that helps both Quakers and AFSC advance peace with justice.

Last year AFSC relaunched the Meeting/Church Liaison Program with a goal to have an AFSC liaison in every Friends church and meeting in the United States. Conveying engagement opportunities in their congregations' newsletters, websites or social media, liaisons encourage Quaker connection in a more intentional way and serve as a conduit for Friends' concerns. Currently, we have 168 liaisons around the country. In addition, we have communications for all Friends, including the Acting in Faith with AFSC monthly e-newsletter and the Friends Engage web page. (afsc.org/friends-engage)

And every other month, we invite Friends, staff, and all from our community for a meeting for worship for solidarity.

We hope to see you there!

In partnership with Friends General Conference, Pendle Hill, and Friends Council on Education, AFSC launched the Quakers Uprooting Racism coalition. Starting last September, it has invited F/friends to join a cohort of about 80 racial

justice activists over 10 months to learn together, to deepen skills and understanding, and to develop action plans to accelerate racial parity within the Religious Society of Friends.

We have received some very constructive suggestions from Quakers in the Corporation meeting and are looking for broader input, too. We have a simple questionnaire for Friends this summer to help give input about how to build effective communications and work together.

All Quakers are encouraged to fill out our online survey (surveymonkey.com/r/22QuakerEngage) to share different ideas and perspectives.

In this moment of truth, the world needs our best spiritual insights, courage, and persistent work for transformation. We look forward to reporting back next year on how our efforts to strengthen Quaker ties for social change are transforming the world and ourselves. While we are up against a number of social obstacles, together, as the spiritual says, we shall overcome.