



Spring 2021 Issues

A Newsletter of the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center

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Changing Your Story

By Sandra Ramirez - Immigration Program Organizer

Telling a story is all about change and growth. As we grow and learn, we add to our experiences, which can lead to changes in our story. Over the past couple of years, storytelling has been a huge part of YES' work. We have provided training for our members to help them discover and structure their stories. We believe that every member has a powerful story and we focus on creating a platform so they can be vocal and share those stories.

When the pandemic hit, it affected many organizations. YES' events are very social, so we had to find a way to convert everything to Zoom, which was hard. The pandemic gave us an opportunity to reflect and see what needed to change and grow about YES. One of the areas that kept being discussed was our storytelling training.

We sat down and decided to reconstruct our training. We went through each section discussing how it impacted us and how could we change it or improve it. Throughout this

process, I attended a training from the ACLU about how to use your story for advocacy work. From the training, I took resources and activities that asked rooted questions for self-assessment. Activities that had members reflecting on social justice issues and seeing how or where did their story fit to help advocate for those issues. One of the new major parts of the training we added and tried to be more vocal about is how through storytelling you can find healing. Coming from personal experience, speaking about the experience and feeling like you are being heard, can help heal.

We had the opportunity to have one socially distanced in-person event this year. We went to Clifton United Methodist Church to have our storytelling training and we successfully trained eight members. Eight members got the opportunity to learn how to communicate the values that moved them to become leaders. Members learned how their stories can make a huge impact. Their stories can influence people to see things differently and can create change in the community.



Members of YES gathered this Spring for a storytelling training.

Make an impact by giving to IJPC

Contributions, large and small, make up about 60% of our operational budget. IJPC depends on your generosity to keep our programs strong, update our resources, and continue to work for peace and justice. Consider making a tax-deductible donation to support the mission of IJPC. For more information visit <https://ijpcincinnati.org/give>

- Become a Recurring Donor: Give monthly or annually as an IJPC Peace Partner. give.classy.org/IJPCPeacePartner
- Make an IRA Charitable Gift. Avoid taxes on your IRA required minimum distribution by making a qualified charitable distribution to IJPC.
- Leave a Legacy: Consider including IJPC in your will and estate to leave a legacy of social justice.

A Letter from Allison Reynolds-Berry

These last months, we've been working to get people plugged in to IJPC. No, I don't mean through more Zoom meetings (though it has involved some virtual connections), I mean connecting individuals with skills and passion to the needs of IJPC and the broader work for justice.

Nine creative columnists are crafting their first pieces for our new Blog Team. Their articles and reflections will be posted on the IJPC website to help keep us informed on IJPC's justice issues from a variety of voices and perspectives. We're grateful to these individuals who are connecting their commitment to justice with their passion for writing and volunteering to share their skills with the broader community!

Members of the Justice Ministry of Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church saw an opportunity for their whole church to take an active role in justice work and in support of IJPC by making a formal covenant together. We are thrilled to welcome Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church as a new IJPC sponsor! It was an honor to connect with many from their community for a recent presentation on the death penalty. We are grateful for this partnership and look forward to building deeper relationships in ministry.

Soon, we'll be welcoming new board leaders to IJPC and truly appreciate the way so many are putting their skills and connections to good use to benefit IJPC. We also appreciate all those who hit the pavement for the Flying Pig! Thanks to all those who gave in support of our runners and walkers. There's so much we can do as individuals, on our own and in connection to our faith and professional networks.

One resource we're still looking for is a small team of volunteers who can help with IT needs as they arise. The team would offer advice and recommendations for new laptop purchases, website support, and how to keep IJPC's technology safe and up to date. If you're interested in helping with this or offering your skills in another way, please email Allison@IJPCcincinnati.org.



Upcoming Events

For more information and to register visit www.IJPCcincinnati.org/events

May 26, 6:30 - 8:30 PM
Immigrant Dignity Coalition Meeting
Online - Registration Required

May 26, 7:00 - 8:00 PM
Abolishing Ohio's Death Penalty
Online - Registration Required

June 14, 9:30 - 10:30 AM
Human Trafficking Public Education and Awareness Committee
Online - Registration Required

June 14, 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Death Penalty Committee
Online - Registration Required

June 23, 6:30 - 8:30 PM
Immigrant Dignity Coalition Meeting
Online - Registration Required

July 12, 9:30 - 10:30 AM
Human Trafficking Public Education and Awareness Committee
Online - Registration Required

July 12, 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Death Penalty Committee
Online - Registration Required

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Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship
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Congregation of Divine Providence
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor
Franciscans, St. John the Baptist Province
Glenn Home Missioners
Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church
Mt Auburn Presbyterian Church
Sisters of Notre Dame of Covington
New Jerusalem Community
St John Unitarian Universalist Church
Ursulines of Brown County
Ursulines of Cincinnati

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Sandra Ramirez
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Executive Director

Samantha Searls, MSW
Program Manager

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The Time for Abolition is Now

By Allison Reynolds-Berry - Executive Director

In preparation for a recent educational event on the death penalty, a colleague and I were listing the many reasons to be opposed to executions - racial bias, innocent people have been exonerated from death row, it's twice as expensive as life in prison without parole, there's a geographic bias and therefore is cruel and unusual, it's a painful and long process for victim's families, isn't a deterrence for crime, and offers no acknowledgement or possibility of redemption or restoration for individuals. (There of course are still more reasons to include beyond this list!) Isn't just one of these reasons enough for abolition? There's one more piece of the equation, and that's your voice. Me sitting in my house opposed to the death penalty doesn't do anything to end it. Calling my state senator and representative and asking them to vote in favor of abolition (SB 103 and HB 183), that is the critical piece that will help us move from being opposed to executions to actually abolishing the death penalty in Ohio.

I was blown away to hear from someone at a meeting two weeks ago who had signed up for our newsletter more than 20 years ago and is willing to put all of his personal and political weight behind abolition.

Are you like him? Knowing you're supportive of abolition but waiting for the right moment? The time to [get involved](#) is now. In the last few months, we've grown from meeting with our own key influencers to becoming part of an organized [statewide coalition for abolition](#).

In partnership with Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE), ACLU Ohio, and more, we're playing a lead role in bringing individuals, organizations, faith communities, and more to take action. IJPC is currently organizing folks in Southern Ohio to make calls, schedule 1 to 1 meetings with people in their own networks, write letters to the editor, become trained in phone and text banking to spread the word, and stay informed. We need your voice as part of this movement. If you're interested in getting involved, please email Allison at Allison@IJPCcincinnati.org or call 513.864.5784.

Raising Awareness the Right Way

By Samantha Searls - Program Manager

As chair of the Public Education and Awareness (PEA) Committee of our local anti-human trafficking coalition, End Slavery Cincinnati, IJPC plays an integral role in Cincinnati's efforts to end trafficking. Earlier this year, our efforts were noticed when leaders from the [Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Initiative](#) asked us to put together an informational "Do's and Don'ts" document to be used by multiple state partners.

The PEA Committee has done great work to address the problems of [public](#) and [media](#) narrative, as well as issues surrounding imagery and language. The work had been so well received that we summarized it in "[The Do's and Don'ts of Human Trafficking Awareness](#)," now available to read on our website.

With this resource we hope to pivot from focusing on images depicting suffering and abuse, to images focused on resilience, survival, strength, and hope. We hope to shift the mainstream narrative from focusing on the pain and blame of victims and survivors, to focus on the systems of exploitation that allow trafficking to happen in the first place.

If you are passionate about changing the way we tell the story of trafficking, please join PEA's efforts. Meetings are on the second Monday of each month at 9:30 AM. Email peacommittee.esc@gmail.com to RSVP and receive the Zoom link.

Saying Goodbye...

Sadly, we say farewell to Jessie Frank (former Program Manager for death penalty and peace & nonviolence) and Sandra Ramirez (Immigration Program Organizer) as Jessie heads to law school and Sandra finishes up her senior year at Mount St. Joseph University. We are grateful for all they've contributed to IJPC while on staff. Best wishes, ladies!

Pictured left to right, Jessie Frank, Hayley Huge, Sandra Ramirez, Samantha Searls, Tanner Hensley (MSW intern), and Allison Reynolds-Berry.





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Contact: info@IJPCcincinnati.org to join our e-mail list to receive this newsletter online instead.

Thank you for flying with us, Team IJPC! Another successful Flying Pig in the books!



Thank you to our sponsors:



"Thank you to all the women religious of Greater Cincinnati!" - Anonymous

We had a beautiful day for our Team IJPC Flying Pig this year. Despite the main events being postponed, we were still able to gather as a team and walk/run for IJPC (fully vaccinated!). Our team has spent the last few months training for their runs and raising money for IJPC! Together with our sponsors, we've raised over \$5,700 so far. If you know one of the many people on Team IJPC, consider congratulating them by [making a gift](#) to their fundraising page or to the team.