



Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice

Network News

May 2021

Congratulations on WNPJ Celebrating 30 Years!

by Judy Miner, (WNPJ office coordinator - 2003-2013 and current volunteer)

During 2021, the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice is celebrating 30 years of work towards the realizations of a peaceful, just, and sustainable world! Our individual and organizational members have done a tremendous amount of work both together in coalition and apart on their own work during this time. WNPJ is proud to have helped advance this work and to have offered overarching campaigns to support specific needs.

We came together to celebrate April 24th, 2021 with our first ever *virtual* commemoration of this anniversary, complete with music, videos, and remembrances.

Look for the recording of the celebration on our website: www.wnpj.org



We introduced our new Network Coordinator, Sarah Hinkley, at this gathering. Sarah is committed to continuing the support we have provided over thirty years to our members and member

You can help WNPJ thrive!



Show your support for our continuing work and new vision by **making a special 30th anniversary contribution!** WNPJ, PO Box 727, Madison, WI 53701-0727 or online at wnpj.org/Donate-Join

organizations - as well as guiding us as we transition and transform to an organization that is even more effective in achieving our goals of peace, justice, and sustainability, always with a lens of racial justice.

A Growing Humanitarian Catastrophe for Palestinians

Madison-Rafah Sister City Project – news is current as of May 16, 2021

The Madison-Rafah Sister City Project was founded in 2003 to start person-to-person relationships with Rafah, Palestine, to increase public awareness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and to influence public policy for the benefit of both peoples. Their work has centered on providing solidarity and material assistance to the citizens of Rafah and Palestine in general,

understanding and educating the public about Palestinian daily life, society, culture, and history, exposing the devastating effects of Israel's occupation of Rafah and Palestine, and opposing U.S. support for those Israeli policies that have created a growing humanitarian catastrophe for Palestinians in Rafah, Gaza, and elsewhere.

By now, those who haven't been living under a rock know that the revolt in Palestine, which has been building steadily for weeks in response to Israeli attacks on Al Aqsa mosque and the looming expulsions of Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah, has led to another brutal, periodic assault on Gaza (referred to in Israel as "mowing the grass").

Things are bad in Jerusalem, the West Bank and even inside Israel proper where rebelling Palestinian citizens are now facing a form of martial law and "race riot" attacks by government-protected Jewish extremists. But the brunt of the destruction is now literally falling on Gaza, which is being bombarded daily from air, land and sea by Israel with casualties and damage steadily increasing. As of May 16, the death toll was at least 192, with 58 children (compared to 10 dead in Israel). Several people were killed last night. The number of injured is approaching a thousand, which the hospitals cannot handle. Media reports have estimated the number of people displaced as 10,000, which is probably more as you are reading this.

In mid-May Al Jazeera reported that Rafah suffered serious damage. Al Kahlout said the



Gaza ambulance service told Al Jazeera it has also received appeals for assistance from citizens in the south of the Gaza Strip, mainly in Rafah, as Israeli jets had destroyed houses in air raids without warning.

“They believe that there are lots of people under the rubble. So far, the ambulance services say they have managed to retrieve five bodies – including children and women – from one of the destroyed houses.”

There are a number of

ways to help:

- **Emergency Relief:** At this time the Middle East Children's Alliance recommends [donations to the Paliroots Food Project](#).
- [Demand that the Biden Administration](#) denounce Israel's illegal expulsions of Palestinians and the demolition of their homes & property. [Ask Senator Tammy Baldwin](#) to follow the lead of [Rep. Mark Pocan](#) and others in Congress and do the same.
- Listen to and share the voices of Palestinians. Post those stories and photos on social media; Use [#SaveSheikhJarrah](#), [#SaveSilwan](#) in all your social media posts.
- Support [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions \(BDS\)](#) against Israel until it lives up to its obligations under international law.

News we don't see: Demonstrations around the world in support of Palestine include many Jewish-Arab solidarity groups in Israel - saying no to hatred.

- Urge your representatives to support [HR 2590](#), the Palestinian Children and Families Act, which is the first legislation of its kind to have the U.S. taxpayer stop paying for Israel's arrest, torture, and imprisonment of Palestinian children, its demolition and destruction of Palestinian homes and communities, and the further annexation of Palestinian land. (Pocan is a co-sponsor, so thank him.)



- **UPDATE: CALL Sen. Tammy Baldwin's office** and demand that she support Sen. Bernie Sanders resolution to stop the pending delivery of \$735 million in NEW guided missiles to Israel, introduced May 20.

Good sources of current information about the apartheid against Palestinians, Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, and how the U.S. has financially supported Israel in English are Al Jazeera, *Middle East Eye* and *We Are Not Numbers*.

Make that peace call to Rep. Pocan!

by Steve Watrous, president of the United Nations Association – Greater Milwaukee chapter and part of Milwaukee's Ends the Wars Coalition.

Here's an update on peace movement efforts to cut military spending plus something Madison-area folks could do right away to help: call Rep. Mark Pocan. He is a key link in a new national

effort to defund the Pentagon, but this struggle won't be easy.

Recently President Biden alarmed peace people by proposing to increase the military budget to \$753 billion. We had hoped for better. The current [Trump] budget is a bloated \$740 billion. Many in and out of Congress have asked for a 10% cut to no more than \$666 billion.

About 15 Milwaukeeans active in peace groups met by zoom 5/10 with Rep. Moore to ask for the 10% cut. She explained that most Republicans in Congress and many Democrats think the military budget is too low. She said that the debate in Congress will be about holding to Biden's budget or increasing it! Rep. Moore said that she supports lowering the military budget but is not committing to shutting down the government over it.

National efforts to cut the military budget and move the money to human needs have shifted into high gear. Code Pink has offered leadership in a new coalition, coordinated by Marcy Winograd and Media Benjamin. It includes Kevin Martin from national Peace Action and Jackie Cabasso from United for Peace and Justice. A recent zoom strategy session included folks active in the Poor People's Campaign, the Union of Concerned Scientists and Our Revolution.

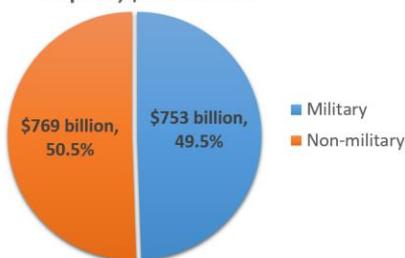
Rep. Mark Pocan could be a central player in this cut-the-Pentagon effort. He recently co-founded, with Rep. Barbara Lee, the House Defense Spending Reduction Caucus. The group has 22 members [see below] including "The Squad" but, as we understand it, is still discussing goals and strategy. This is the time to call.

The ask: Pocan speak out for a minimum 10% cut from Trump's current budget, convince other Reps. in the caucus to make the same pledge, and specifically oppose any new nuclear weapons programs.

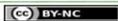
Rep. Pocan will likely be receptive to your ask. He recently tweeted that President Biden's "budget has a \$13 billion increase in defense spending. Spending 1.7% more on defense than Trump isn't building back better. Cut the Overseas Contingency Operations fund, contractor profits, & any new spending on nukes. We need to actually decrease the Pentagon budget."

A great source of peace movement information and activity is Code Pink (www.codepink.org). They host a "Capitol Calling Party" every Tuesday at 7 pm CT with excellent speakers and then a mass call-in to Congress on the issue of the evening.

Biden FY 2022 Discretionary Budget
Request, \$1.52 Trillion



nationalpriorities.org



Source: Office of Management & Budget, National Priorities Project

List of the initial members of the House Defense Spending Reduction Caucus:

Barbara Lee (CA-13); Mark Pocan (WI-2); Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12); Ilhan Omar (MN-5); Raül Grijalva (AZ-3); Mark DeSaulnier (CA-11); Jan Schakowsky (ILL-9); Pramila Jayapal (WA-7); Jared Huffman (CA-2); Alan Lowenthal (CA-47); James P. McGovern (MA-2); Peter Welch (VT-at large); Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14); Frank Pallone, Jr (NJ-6); Rashida Tlaib (MI-13); Ro Khanna (CA-17); Lori Trahan (MA-3); Steve Cohen (TN-9); Ayanna Pressley (MA-7), Anna Eshoo (CA-18).

Who is Responsible for CAFOs?

by Forest Jahnke, Crawford Stewardship Project

As citizens engage at every level, town and county boards sit on their hands, and everyone holds their breath for DNR action.

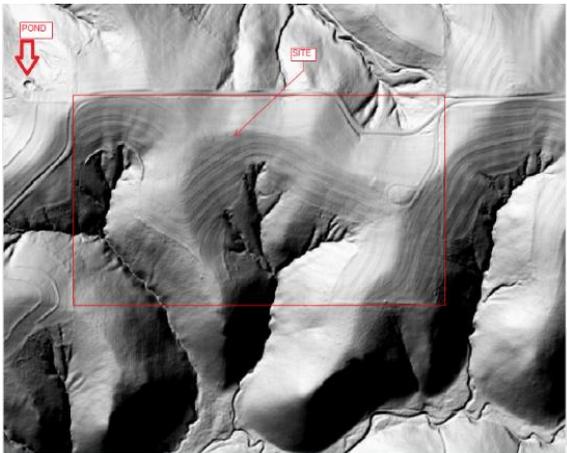
Crawford Stewardship Project supports farmers, and believes we can continue to produce food, fiber and medicine from the land, while maintaining clean air, clear waters and building living soils. That said, we question the direction that so-called "modern" or "conventional" agriculture has taken, and hold a high standard for land uses in the complex and rugged landscape we call home. We promote resilient land uses that will be sustainable and able to feed our communities, despite a harsher climate and the fluctuations of international commodities markets.

We also support all rural residents, including those with no voice, such as the rivers, the fish, the birds, and the human neighbors of high-impact industrial facilities who feel ignored by their local governments. This is why Crawford Stewardship Project and our Midwest Environmental Advocates attorneys filed a request for a full Environmental Impact Statement from the DNR on the Roth Feeder Pig II proposal. This was done on behalf of over 200 Crawford County residents & landowners, and followed this up with a petition signed by 48 organizations in support of this action.

The original Roth Feeder Pig CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation) near Wauzeka has been monitored actively for a decade, and unfortunately, our predictions of what would happen when too many animals are

concentrated on too little land have held true. Soil phosphorus has skyrocketed to excessive levels on many fields, in some cases to levels that would take over a century of no spreading to drop back down to ideal levels. These high levels of phosphorus cause runoff to be particularly harmful to our waterways, and indicate likely high levels of nitrate leaching. Local streams and wells have seen increasing rates of contamination.

Despite this situation, Roth Feeder Pig has submitted a permit application to the DNR to add a second facility (nearly three times the size of their current 2,900 sow operation) just a few miles away, which collectively would make them the largest hog CAFO in Wisconsin. In total, these two facilities would be spreading roughly 12 million gallons of liquid manure in a small area on steep slopes and fractured bedrock. Dozens more CAFOs will be required to grow out all the piglets produced by Roth Feeder Pig alone, and as Iowa fills to the brim with these operations, they will be looking for more local opportunities.



LiDAR Imagery shows the extreme slopes and gullies along the ridge where the Roth Feeder Pig II CAFO facility is proposed

Of course we also engaged at the grassroots level, with the neighborhood, the township, and at the county level, but despite some success, have come up short of any real solutions or improvements to the situation. Marietta Township, after their short-lived moratorium, have not considered ordinances that would mitigate potential problems.

In October, the Crawford County Board received a 125-page report from their CAFO Study Committee (with a broad representation including Nikki Wagner, Roth Feeder Pig's Nutrient Management Plan writer, county department staff, Conservation Committee members, and myself in an advisory role). This impressive report contained a detailed listing of potential actions the county could take to protect the future of agriculture and clean water in Crawford County.

Disregarding calls to extend the moratorium from a majority of the County CAFO Study Committee, overwhelming support from the public and 16 local organizations, the county board allowed the moratorium to expire at the end of 2020. Despite repeated questioning, they have taken no action on any of the committee recommendations, and have even removed public comment from county board meetings!

We are used to dealing with stacked decks so, regardless of the setbacks, CSP is regrouping and broadening our base by forming our own CAFO Committee of concerned citizens to help us work on these issues. What started as the Kickapoo Stewards, challenging one proposal in their backyards, has grown beyond that. We need people from around the county engaged to actively continue education on both stopping CAFOs, and local ordinances that would effectively mitigate some of the problems they create.

Casa Maria volunteers continue to support people fighting racist and classist governmentally contracted agencies.

By Michael Komba & Amada Morales, Casa Maria Catholic Worker

Alicia is a Black mom of nine with health issues who needed assistance with housing. She went to Milwaukee Child Protective Services (CPS), which has funding to provide rental assistance. But instead of giving any help, they took Alicia's 9 children. Alicia does not have any allegation of abuse or neglect on record. After about a year, she found out about one of Casa Maria's houses, Sister Pat's House. Casa Maria provides free housing, food and support to homeless moms trying to reunify with their children when there was no abuse or neglect. Alicia moved in and our volunteers attended her court hearings and confronted the workers from Children's Wisconsin who were holding up the return of her kids.

Every month that Children's Wisconsin is supervising kids in out-of-home care, they are paid about \$1,300 per child. It was in their best financial interest to keep her 9 kids in the system. Children's Wisconsin has a \$22 million yearly CPS contract with the state and systematically takes Black and Brown kids for reasons unrelated to abuse or neglect. Children's Wisconsin is also a foster care & adoption agency. They use homelessness, as well as domestic violence when only the mother faces abuse, as one of the reasons to separate families. Every foster child that is removed is automatically placed on their health plan which is the Badgercare/Medicaid sponsored

HMO Children's Community Health Plan. Very profitable indeed.

"The number of children that are being removed without a substantiated allegation has been slowly increasing in Wisconsin," reports Lincoln Rice PhD.

After a CPS investigation starts, Black children are categorized as being victims of maltreatment 2 times as much as white children and are 4 times more likely to be removed from home and placed somewhere else. To make matters worse, Black extended family members are overlooked and are denied as being placement options for the children for no discernible reason. Besides this being horribly wrong, this also means resources are taken from children who are actually facing abuse and neglect.

Since there is such a great need, Casa Maria will soon be opening another house that will take in homeless mothers trying to get back custody of their kids. We have also nonviolently protested with Welfare Warriors, Milwaukee Black Panthers, and many different Black and Brown family members currently fighting to get custody of children who have been unjustly taken by CPS.



This increased privatization of the CPS system is very similar to the W-2 "welfare-to-work" system that drives so many families into deeper poverty. Wisconsin truly is a testing ground for racist,

poor-bashing privatization. But many of us are doing our best to support families fighting back.

Sources:

- [Ethika Politika | 'Safer at Home' Preserves Impoverished Black Families: A Critique of Child Protective Services](#)
- [Alum highlights conflict of interests in Briggs & Al's Run and Walk – Marquette Wire](#)

Nothing has slowed down at Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

*By Rabbi Bonnie Margulis,
Executive Director of Wisconsin
Faith Voices for Justice*

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice (WFVJ) is busier than ever. As a statewide education and advocacy organization with a wide social and economic justice agenda, we have been actively engaged in addressing the many challenges our state has faced this year, from COVID-19, to racial injustice, to immigrant rights, to voting, to climate change, and building bridges among faiths.

As the pandemic hit Wisconsin and businesses began to close, or move online, or struggle to stay open, we began to realize that not all workers were treated the same. While some of us were privileged to be able to work virtually from home, others were not so lucky. Low-wage and undocumented workers were often told they were 'essential' and were required to show up to work. Farm workers, factory workers, grocery store clerks, home health aides, among others, faced



going to work or losing their jobs. Because they have no paid sick leave, they were forced to show up to work, even if their kids were home doing online school, or they had a sick relative at home, or they themselves were sick.

In response, WFVJ and Worker Justice Wisconsin convened a committee of our Dignity at Work Coalition with representatives from the Dane County NAACP, Kids Forward, South Central Federation of Labor, the University Labor Council, and Voces de la Frontera. The committee worked with the Dane County Public Health Department to strengthen the public health orders regarding safety in the workplace and worked with them to create a poster in English, Spanish, and Mandarin which is now required to be posted in the workplace. The poster informs the workers of their rights and their employers'

responsibilities to keep the workplace safe from COVID and gives employees information on where they can go for help if the workplace is not safe. We created a series of videos in English and Spanish for Dane County and for the state, to tell the workers about their rights and how to keep themselves safe.

WFVJ partnered with Wisconsin Council of Churches to convene Faithful Action for a Healthy Wisconsin, a coalition of clergy and faith leaders around the state who come together to raise the voices of the interfaith community to keep Wisconsin safe.

Our coalition is determined to stay together past the end of the pandemic, to continue to work to eradicate disparities and inequities in our health care system, which have been brought into stark relief over the past year.

Worker Justice Wisconsin and WFVJ are working together on a PR campaign to promote trust in the vaccine, particularly in African American and

Latinx communities. We are using traditional and social media, printed materials which we will hand out in targeted neighborhoods and asking people in the communities to create selfies and videos using our I Got the Shot graphic to encourage others to get the vaccine.

Our Dignity at Work Coalition continues to fight for paid sick leave and paid family leave, and for the Governor's office to use funds from the America Rescue Plan to provide cash payments and replacement wages for undocumented workers who were left out of all COVID relief packages and do not qualify for unemployment insurance.

Our Dane Sanctuary Coalition continued to be a strong partner in the fight for immigrant rights and justice. This past year we sponsored a Big Read on *The Death and Life of Aida Hernandez* by Aaron Bobrow-Strain and hosted an event with the author. We sponsored webinars on immigrant rights and kept our members informed on what was happening at the border, providing tools and talking points to be vocal advocates to oppose separating families at the border. We continue to advocate for legal drivers' licenses, in-state tuition for DACA recipients, and a pathway to citizenship.

As people of faith, we believe that the right to vote is sacred. Beginning in late 2019, WFVJ and the Wisconsin Council of Churches created the Wisconsin Interfaith Voter Engagement Campaign to bring different faith communities together across the state to promote voter education, registration, and Get Out the Vote. We held webinars on voters' rights, voter suppression, the intersection of racism and voter suppression, and trainings in advocacy around voting rights and the state budget. Our work continues, as we fight voter suppression, advocate for jail voting and for voting rights after incarceration and advocate for an end to partisan gerrymandering.

Racial justice has always been a core principle of WFVJ. This year we are sponsoring a ten-month Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training for leaders of our Dignity at Work Coalition, and in the fall we will begin a similar training designed especially for clergy and faith leaders. We have promoted and participated in a Juneteenth event with the African American Council of Churches, marched for justice for George Floyd and Jacob Blake, and worked with the NAACP to advocate for a ban on chokeholds, knee holds, and other deadly use of force. We are working with First Baptist Church, the Wisconsin Council of Churches, and other congregations to begin a Racial Justice Coalition in Dane County.

Also a core principle is bringing faith communities together to build unity, interfaith understanding, and mutual support. Our popular Sacred Site Visit program had to move online this year, but that has only enabled us to increase our reach across the state. With our interfaith clergy coalitions based in Dane County and Greater Milwaukee, we sponsored a virtual interfaith service to remember those we have lost to COVID. Some of our clergy acted as chaplains at the polls during the November election, to help voters feel comfortable as they waited to vote.

All are invited to our upcoming Annual Celebration on June 10 at 7:00pm on Zoom and Facebook Live. Our theme this year is *Harambee – Let's All Pull Together*. Our keynote speaker is Professor David Pate Jr., an expert on low income African-American men, fatherhood, and child support. Dr. Pate studies how black men are affected by the social welfare system and the challenges that impede their ability to attain economic security.

Please join us in this important work! Sign up for our e-newsletter and get more information about our work and upcoming events at [wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.org](https://www.wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.org)

Military Spending and the F-35 Fighter Jets

By Jerry Folk, Interfaith Peace Working Group



In his Farewell Address in 1960, President Eisenhower spoke about a new phenomenon in the life of our country. He called it the “Military-industrial Complex” and warned us that it could become too powerful and dominate the nation’s life. History has revealed the Eisenhower’s remarks were prescient. Fueled by the US’s enormous military expenditures, this Complex has grown larger and more powerful than President Eisenhower could ever have imagined. Already huge in 2017, from 2018 through 2021 US military spending grew 27 percent, from \$583 to \$741 billion dollars. It now accounts for 55 percent of all the nation’s discretionary funds.

We are told by Pentagon officials that these expenditures are necessary to provide security for the nation, but many credible individuals and groups are convinced that they in fact undermine our security by depriving us of sufficient resources to address threats at least as dangerous as those posed by enemy nations—threats like economic inequity, racial and gender injustice, and climate change. To address these threats adequately, we must change our nation’s priorities. That this can be done without

endangering national security is obvious when we realize that the US’s military budget is higher than that of next 10 highest nations combined, eight of which are US allies whose weapons target the same locations ours do. Surely there is redundancy here that should be eliminated.

Many people hoped that the Biden administration would change these priorities, but the President has recently announced that he is likely to propose a 753-billion-dollar defense budget for 2022, a 1.7% increase over 2021. This proposed increase reveals that the difference between the two major political parties on the issue of military spending is minimal.

The Airforce’s decision to deploy F-35 Fighter Jets at Truax Field brings the issue of military spending much closer to home and makes it more concrete for Wisconsinites. The F-35 is a prime example of out-of-control military spending.

Over its lifetime the production, deployment and maintenance of the F-35 weapons system is estimated to cost taxpayers 1.7 trillion dollars. According to some studies, this makes it the most expensive weapons system in history. In addition to its enormous cost, the deployment of F-35s at Truax poses serious threats not only to the people of Madison and the surrounding area but potentially to the whole state and Upper Midwest.

The mission of the Interfaith Peace Working Group (IPWG) is to work for world peace and nonviolence. We believe one important way to do this is to advocate deep reductions in US military spending and the use of that money to fund human and environmental needs. The IPWG is joining the efforts of groups like Safe Skies Clean Water WI and Peace Action WI to oppose the deployment of F-35s in Madison by organizing a **postcard campaign focusing on Senator Tammy Baldwin** - the most powerful person in



Wisconsin who supports the deployment of F-35s at Truax.

If you are interested in participating in this campaign or would like to learn more about or support other efforts of IPWG to promote world peace and nonviolence, visit our webpage at interfaithpeacewg.org or message us at ipwgcampaign@gmail.com.

For more information about the threat of the F-35 fighter jets and efforts to stop them, check out safeskiescleanwaterwi.org.

Milwaukee Veterans For Peace Expands Focus, Builds Coalitions

- Bill Christofferson



During this pandemic year, Milwaukee Veterans For Peace (VFP) Chapter 102 has worked to broaden its focus and support other organizations working for social justice.

National VFP launched a “*Peace at Home, Peace Abroad*” program several years ago to help people see the connection between domestic and foreign policy, and how war and militarism negatively impacts both. This organizing strategy is directly connected with the larger mission of ending war.

During the last year, Milwaukee VFP has:

- Joined forces with the Milwaukee Area Labor Council and unions representing employees at the VA hospital to oppose privatization of veterans’ health care, support their need for adequate protection during the pandemic, and protest harassment and anti-union activity by the Trump administration.
- Supported efforts by the African American Roundtable and Liberate MKE to shift money from the Milwaukee police and sheriff’s budgets to fund community programs like housing and mental health, with limited success. The long-term effort continues.
- Joined the National Lawyers Guild and others in prodding state government to prioritize incarcerated people for Covid-19 vaccinations, which was successful.
- Signed and circulated a letter and petition to Climate Change Envoy John Kerry, a fellow veteran, urging the US to address militarism in ongoing climate change talks, since it is a leading cause of global pollution.
- Regularly joined, supported and promoted activities of Peace Action-Wisconsin, with which we enjoy a close working relationship.
- Supported the work of the Wisconsin Coalition To Normalize Relations With Cuba.
- Sponsored its 14th annual Armistice Day event, virtually for the first time, with more than a dozen peace and justice groups, including WNPJ, as co-sponsors, and more than 200 people participating. David Swanson of World Beyond war and Fred Royal of the Milwaukee NAACP were featured.

The chapter’s priorities for the coming year are to continue coalition building, oppose privatization of VA care, and increase and diversify its membership.

Chrysalis: Focus on Peer Support

Chrysalis promotes mental health and substance use recovery in our community by supporting work opportunities that encourage hope, healing and wellness. One of our programs employs peer support specialists - where persons with mental illnesses have the opportunity to use their unique set of recovery experience in combination with solid skills training to support peers who have mental health challenges.

Peer Support encompasses a range of activities and interactions between people who share similar experiences of being diagnosed with mental health conditions, substance use disorders or both. This mutuality, often called, “peerness” between a peer support worker and person in or seeking recovery promotes connection and inspires hope. -SAMHSA

Some of our peer specialists share their experiences here:

Mutuality in Peer Support

- Candace Berger and Jessica Perez, Chrysalis

My name is Jessica Perez and I have had the wonderful opportunity to work alongside Candace as her peer support for about a year and a half.

There is a saying in peer support, “Nothing about us without us.” ... right from the beginning we created a safe space knowing that we can come as we are with no judgement, no expectations and having it be truly person centered.

When Candace and I were writing this blog I asked her what peer support means to her. Candace openly and honestly stated, “I grew with Jessica in my recovery and the mutuality we shared helped me become more confident, more sociable and assisted in my mental wellness.

Upon hearing this I thanked Candace and shared that being her peer support has helped me learn and grow immensely and the fact that we did all this mutually is the essence of peer support.

Vocational Peer Support

- Alysha Clark, Chrysalis



Here are some Chrysalis Vocational Peer Specialists describing why peer support is SO important:

“It is so strong and good role modeling to share and speak out. The real strength is shouting down the silence just by your example.” – Eric

“When people feel heard they begin to heal.” – Jenny

“Having someone to listen to them makes all the difference” Andrew

Vocational Peer Support is a vital part of Chrysalis services.

Vocational Peer Specialists provide individual support over a shared lived experience of mental health and/or substance use with peers who are working on their vocational goals. Vocational Peer Specialists are different than traditional clinicians, they use their unique set of experiences and recovery, and thrive when a peer support relationship is mutual.

My role as a peer support specialist.

- *Kurt Stapleton, Chrysalis*

The peer support role takes on many shapes. You are a trusted confidant, a safe place, a mentor, a listener, a resource, a last hope...

My journey began many years ago and I didn't have any knowledge of what recovery looked like and I was lost. I had the help of my wife... She was my peer support without knowing it. As I navigated through the murky waters of recovery and substance use disorder I always had her to talk to, share my success with, cry with, and just talk to when I really needed to talk to someone.

That is the reason I became a peer support specialist. To be able to walk with someone who is going through those difficult times and guide them and give them hope. To help empower them and inspire them to become independent and successful. It is an indescribable feeling...

I do this work because nobody should have to go through it alone. I do this work because I am here today because someone was there for me when I needed them the most.

An Update About Our Building Unity Project

By Tim Cordon, Building Unity

Building Unity is not an organization. It is a project that is shared by a number of groups including the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, the Wisconsin Grassroots Network, Call for Peace, Family Farm Defenders, Vet's for Peace - Milwaukee and Madison Chapters, Nukewatch, Our Wisconsin Revolution, First Unitarian Society-Justice Ministry, the WI UU State Action Network, Mothers Against Gun Violence and many others. We also partner with a wide variety of other groups including Voces de

La Frontera, the League of Women Voters, the NAACP, Peace Action Wisconsin, EXPO, affiliates of Wisdom Wisconsin and well as smaller local groups that are committed to peace, justice, sustainability and democracy.

WNPJ is proud to be one of the leading Building Unity groups and to serve as Building Unity's fiscal sponsor. We share Building Unity's goal of building a united grassroots movement for people, peace, and the planet - a movement that is grounded in anti-racism, anti-militarism, economic justice, collective liberation for all oppressed people, and a liveable world for future generations.

In 2019, inspired by the climate justice movement, we focused on building unity among many climate justice groups, and together we played a significant role in organizing the Madison version of the Global Climate Strike which happened all over the world on September 20th.

In 2020 we focused on turning out the vote with the help of our "Votemobile" (now called the "UnityMobile"). We traveled over 3,000 miles in almost all areas of Wisconsin bringing groups together for outdoor gatherings calling for dramatic "get out the vote" efforts. Many of you joined these gatherings and we thank you for all the efforts that led to record voter turnout across Wisconsin last year,

This year, we have been mostly focusing on building unity for a just state budget. We pulled together over 40 different groups and formed the Coalition for a Just Wisconsin Budget which put out a "Call for a Just Budget" that many groups and individuals have signed on to. (You can view this "Call" and sign-on by going to www.wnpj.org/just-budget.)

We also partnered with Wisconsin Video Hub to create the *Just Budget Unity Project* which is

making short inspirational videos using the words of people's stories, songs, or testimonies.



The Just Budget Unity Tour took place statewide in early May, led by our “UnityMobile” and stopping in 12 of the 16 districts that are represented by the members of the Joint Finance Committee. At each stop, we led a public “speak-out” demanding that justice be funded in this coming state budget. Partners in the other four districts hosted similar events. Organizing this 16 city action with our partners around the state has deepened our connections and is helping us to build a stronger and more united push for a state budget that is grounded in justice.

For quite some time, Building Unity groups have partnered with the James Reeb Justice Leadership Team to present *Sustainable Saturday Nights*, a fourth Saturday monthly potluck and program spotlighting different topics, groups, or activities each month. When the pandemic hit, we have been conducting these events virtually and have recently enjoyed adding *Our Wisconsin Revolution* as a partnering organization for these events.

In the months to come, Building Unity groups will continue fighting for a just budget. And, we will do all that we can to support the dismantling of systemic racism in areas such as energy and climate, militarism, voting rights and increasing

civic engagement by making connections. around the state.

Financial donations to the Building Unity project can be made on our website or or mailed to WNPJ - please specify Building Unity in the memo section of your check.

Find out more about this exciting project at www.BuildingUnityWisconsin.org.

WNPJ Members Meet to Inform our Work

The first part of our Spring Steering Committee meeting on April 25 was dedicated to more than 20 members sharing what their organizations have been up to. It was striking how every one of them have incorporated elements of racial justice in their work.

Following that we broke into small groups to talk about how our work contributes to challenging systemic racism, and how WNPJ could better facilitate bringing groups together to make our voices stronger and our movement more powerful. WNPJ staff and board will incorporate the responses into future planning.

Look for the 30th anniversary celebration video and videos of our members' presentations on our website at wnpj.org

The work of WNPJ Members is wide-ranging, but it is all interrelated and each piece contributes to making a better world for the people in it.

Peace • Nonviolence • Climate and environment • Physical and Mental Health • Spirituality • Economic justice • Criminal justice • Immigration • Sustainable agriculture • Racial equity • Communication • and more!

Sea of Brilliance

By Vicki Berenson

On a glorious winter day
I glide along in a sea of white
on tracks that are made for me.
Unquestioned, I belong.

I move smoothly
expecting fully to reach my destination
relatively unscathed.

I am white on white.
I am privileged.
I am invisible.

My ancestors were white and privileged
for a while
until they weren't.

No longer white and invisible,
they were scapegoated and annihilated
except for the ones
allowed to escape to this country
so a new generation could arise -
just a few, not enough to threaten the status quo.

Here we are allowed to be white (for now).
Some of us have thrived helped by reparations
and of course the color of our skin.

I continue to glide along these tracks
knowing that should I fall
there will be a
soft layer of snow
to cushion me.

My reverie is interrupted by the flight
of fighter jets overhead
and I am reminded that this country
that affords me privilege
also divides and destroys.

Who are those privileged ones
who command the destruction and division?
Have they no conscience?
Or are they invisible to themselves, so they
cannot see?

How can I not be complicit?

I want to help groom a new track
on a sea of brilliance
wide enough and constructed for
every color
every size
every age
every one
to travel with the ease that I have found,
to reach their chosen destination
not only relatively unscathed
but joyful and fulfilled.

WNPJ Staff:

Sarah Hinkley, Network Coordinator

Board of Directors:

Tim Cordon – Chair, Mary Kay Baum –
Secretary, Charles Uphoff – Treasurer, John
Peck, Jerry Folk, Tynnetta Jackson, Debra
Gillispie

Volunteers:

Judy Miner, Vicki Berenson, Ambar
Cornelio, Bonnie Block, Ann Smiley

If you're interested in volunteering,
see <http://www.wnpj.org/volunteer> and sign
up!

WNPJ 2021 Member Organizations

350-Madison Climate Action team
Anathoth Community Farm
Building Unity Wisconsin
Casa Maria Catholic Worker
Chrysalis
Church Women United - Madison
Church Women United of Wisconsin
Citizens Climate Lobby - Madison WI Chapter
Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
Colombia Support Network
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Crawford Stewardship Project
Dane Co TimeBank Inc
Echo Valley Hope
Family Farm Defenders
Farley Center for Peace Justice and Sustainability
First Unitarian Society
First United Methodist Church Madison
Forward Marching Band
Fox Valley Peace Coalition
Groundwork
Interfaith Peace Working Group
James Reeb UU Congregation
Juneau County Peace Committee
JustDane
Kickapoo Peace Circle
King Coalition of Madison and Dane County
Madison Area Bus Advocates
Madison Area Democratic Socialists of America

Madison Friends Meeting
Madison Infoshop
Madison/Rafah Sister City Project
Marquette University Center for Peacemaking
Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA)
Pax Christi
Peace Action of Wisconsin
Peregrine Forum of WI
PSR Wisconsin
Racine Coalition for Peace and Justice
Raging Grannies of Madison
Richland Center - Santa Teresa Sister City Project
Safe Skies Clean Water Wisconsin
Sinsinawa Dominicans
Sisters of the Divine Savior
SOULS: Solomon's Outreach and Urban Learning Sessions
United Nations Association - Dane County
United Nations Association of Greater Milwaukee
Veterans for Peace Madison #25
Veterans for Peace Milwaukee #102
Veterans for Peace Sheboygan #114
WAVE Educational Fund
WI Books to Prisoners
WI Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
Wisconsin Green Muslims
Wisconsin Physicians for a National Health Plan
Wisconsin Pledge of Resistance
Wisconsin Resources Protection Council
WISDOM, Inc.
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom
Worker Justice Wisconsin

WNPJ Membership Form

(Suggested dues: \$35 Individual, \$52 Sustaining, \$45 Family, \$10 Fixed Income, \$50 Organization without paid staff, \$75 Organization with paid staff, Benefactor: any amount)

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ **Phone** _____

___ Send me email News & Alerts Checks payable to **WNPJ | PO Box 727 | Madison, WI 53701**

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**of connecting activists
working for peace,
justice and
sustainability**

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