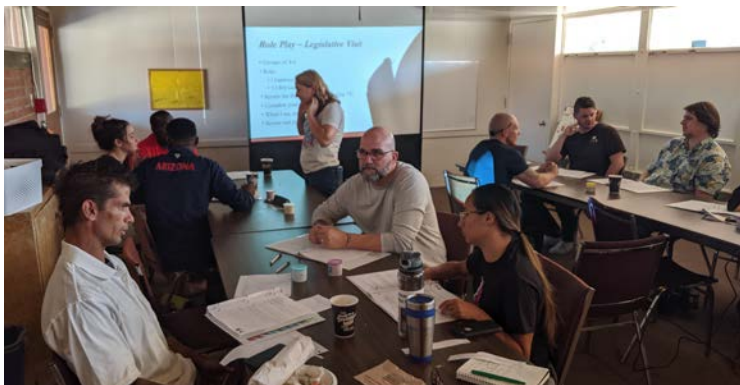




# American Friends Service Committee

ARIZONA OFFICE

## 2019 Annual Report



# Message from the Director:

*What message do you write in a holiday card to an incarcerated person you've never met?*

Not a question most folks are faced with very often. But every year we host a holiday party dedicated to sending holiday greetings to people in Arizona's prisons. Hundreds of community members gather to write messages of hope and encouragement to men and women they've never met.

What can you say during <sup>what</sup> is arguably the most difficult time of year to be separated from your loved ones? What words can bridge the gulf between those we've locked away and us out here in the "free world"?

Fortunately, every year hundreds of our neighbors manage to think of many beautiful, inspiring, and heartfelt things to say. Things like, "you are not forgotten," and "come home to us soon."

**For us here at AFSC-AZ, our mission is to pair the words of caring with concrete action designed to make a real difference for incarcerated people and their families.**

We say, "you are not forgotten," and also *demonstrate* this through our work to elevate the leadership of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people.

We say, "come home to us soon," and then advocate at the state legislature for laws that *create the path home* for incarcerated people. We promote sentencing reform that reduces prison populations, policy changes that remove barriers to people once they have completed their sentence, and demand funding for community-based treatment programs that can keep people out of the system altogether.

**Your generous support helps us back up words with *deeds*.** We are changing the narrative and delivering substantive movement toward a new approach to justice, safety, and community. *Thank you for your willingness to walk the talk with us.*



Caroline Isaacs, Program Director



The AFSC-AZ Team. Bottom from left: Nate McKowen, Caroline Isaacs, Grace Gamez, Rebecca Fealk. Top from left: Joe Watson, Sonia Tuma (Regional Director), Jason Martinez, Tiera Rainey

December 2019



# Expanding Our Work

Our program and staff continue are able to do this work and grow in numbers from the generous support of these foundations:



Please welcome Nate McKowen, our *Media Arts Intern*



Nate is a filmmaker, writer, and an advocate for sentencing reform. He helps produce social media content, graphics, videos, and the ReFraming Justice podcast. Prior to his own incarceration, Nate graduated from the New York Film Academy. He is currently working on a documentary about the barriers that prevent people from successfully re-entering society post-incarceration.

## ReFraming Justice Podcast

**Our ReFraming Justice podcast is now available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts! Subscribe today!**

Hosted and co-produced by Nate and Joe Watson, the RFJ podcast covered a range of topics within the punishment system in 2019 – including the difficulties of post-incarceration re-entry, electronic monitoring and surveillance, and sex work decriminalization – and featured directly-impacted people on each and every episode.

You can now download the podcast straight from [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#), and you can stream every episode directly from the [AFSC-AZ website](#).



# ReFraming Justice

The ReFraming Justice project, conceived and led by AFSC-AZ program coordinator Dr. Grace Gámez, amplifies the voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and their families, and provides participants with tools and opportunities to lead the movement to end mass criminalization and incarceration in Arizona.

## ReFraming Justice Day at the Capitol 2019



Piper Kerman emcees ReFraming Justice Day at the Capitol Rose Garden.

January 2019

On January 22, 2019, over 100 directly-impacted people and allies gathered on the Rose Garden lawn at the Arizona State Capitol to advocate for sentencing reform.

The day began with a press conference featuring Piper Kerman, author of *Orange is the New Black*. She was joined by three directly-impacted ReFraming Justice participants who spoke to how Arizona's punishment system has affected their families.

Teams of participants held meetings with over 30 state legislators throughout the day, asking them to support sentencing reform legislation. A joint proclamation was read in the House and Senate declaring January 22, 2019, ReFraming Justice Day in Arizona.

ReFraming Justice Day was extremely impactful on the 2019 legislative work, bringing stories and experiences to legislators' attention on why sentencing reform is imperative in our state.



ReFraming Justice Leaders meet with Rep. Walt Blackman (R-Snowflake).

January 2019



ReFraming Justice leader Alexandria Pech at the documentary showing in Tucson.  
February 2019

## WE GOT THIS!

In February, we premiered our 27-minute film about giving hope to incarcerated people, featuring the experiences of those directly impacted by Arizona's punishment system. *WE GOT THIS!* documents our first RFJ Day, following teams of sentencing reform advocates as they meet with state lawmakers and make the case for the passage of HB 2270. You can watch the entire film, co-directed by Juliana Piccillo and AFSC-AZ communications coordinator Joe Watson, on [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#).



## ReFraming Justice Leadership Cohort



ReFraming Justice Cohort Leaders in Tucson and Phoenix.

November 2019

A key piece of ReFraming Justice is investing in the leadership of directly-impacted people. In this spirit, we solicited applications for our first cohort of leaders. We have 15 directly-impacted experts working with Program Coordinators to advise and develop work that centers the needs and experiences of directly-impacted people.

Our goal was to create a core leadership team that will guide and enlist other impacted people in the work and amplify the effects of AFSC-AZ's anti-punishment movement work by participating in speaking engagements, media interviews, writing opinion pieces, blogs, advising on legislative policies, grant proposals, and other AFSC-AZ work.

Already, our leaders have attended relevant local, state, and national conferences to refine their personal leadership in the work. Those conferences include the Children of Incarcerated Parents; Free Her; Making and Unmaking Mass Incarceration (MUMI); National Network of Justice (NNJ); and Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM).

Additionally, several of our leaders participated in “talk-backs” after a Tucson production of the play, *Apples in Winter*. The play is the perspective of a mother who is making her son’s last meal (apple pie) before his execution. AFSC-AZ helped the producers curate a slate of conversations to delve deeper into the plays’ subject. One post-play conversation focused on the importance of the arts inside prison; another on loved ones who are navigating the system alongside their incarcerated loved one; another on addiction and re-entry; one on law and policy; and the talk-back featured a discussion on trauma.

One of our leaders, Charlene, reflected:

*I just finished doing a talk-back after the play Apples in Winter... This play is about a mother whose son is incarcerated and the emotions she goes through. First off, THE PLAY IS AMAZING! Secondly, people are ASTONISHED when they find out prison isn't free and the families have to pay for almost everything! They want to know where their \$1.1 billion dollars go! Thank you, Grace, for giving me this opportunity to share a mother's love for her incarcerated child.*

We are excited to have this opportunity to strategically invest in directly-impacted leaders. When “those closest to the problem” lead, transformation is possible.



# Reducing Prison Populations

## Earned Release Credits

The focus of ReFraming Justice Day advocacy was to roll back Arizona's outdated 85% "Truth in Sentencing" law. **HB 2270** was introduced by Rep. Walt Blackman (R-Snowflake), and it would have modernized state law by allowing people with certain convictions to earn time off their sentences and return to our communities to be engaged citizens. The bill had bipartisan support in both the House and Senate.

Though HB 2270 was blocked from being heard in the Judiciary Committee by chair Rep. John Allen (R-Scottsdale), the intense and passionate advocacy of our ReFraming Justice leaders forced state lawmakers to introduce two additional – though less efficient – earned-release bills: HB 2661 and SB 1310. SB 1310 was ultimately passed into law, but was so narrow in its scope, that only 80 incarcerated people benefited from its passage.



*Tuesday Brauer, ReFraming Justice leader, testifies to the House Judiciary Committee on HB2661.*

**February 2019**

## Bipartisan Legislation

Through the work of a bipartisan coalition that AFSC-AZ has built, many pieces of legislation were introduced in the 2019 session. Unfortunately, AFSC-AZ and advocates faced barriers in passing reform in 2019. Pushback from county attorneys resulted in many bills either not being heard by committees, voted against, or being amended so heavily that they did not meet the goals of reform. Even SB 1334, which passed the legislature almost unanimously, was vetoed by Governor Doug Ducey. None of the bills endorsed by AFSC-AZ and our coalition partners were signed into law, keeping Arizona lagging far behind the rest of the nation.

*Repeat offender bill vetoed by Governor Ducey*



*Sen. J.D. Mesnard (R-) speaks on the stalling of sentencing reform in Arizona.*

Watch the [full interview here](#).

**June 2019**

The silver lining is that many legislators who introduced these bills [are also frustrated](#). With support from AFSC-AZ, the ReFraming Justice project, and our coalition partners, state lawmakers are ready once again to fight for reform in 2020!



## Arizona State Prison Town Hall



*Participants at the Arizona State Prison Town Hall*

*July 2019*

In July, AFSC-AZ was proud to host the [Arizona State Prison Town Hall](#) at Phoenix's First Church UCC. The event drew more than 200 people from across the state for an important and, at times, powerful and sobering discussion that included a panel of state lawmakers, community leaders, and representatives for both the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) and Gov. Ducey.

Based on the testimony and stories of grief, loss and despair that were shared at the town hall, we compiled [a set of recommendations and requests for the Governor](#), first and foremost among them, our renewed call for Gov. Ducey to immediately fire Chuck Ryan as ADC director. Just one week later, after more than a decade mismanaging the department, Ryan announced his retirement under pressure from thousands of directly-impacted voices from across Arizona.

## Opposing Prison Expansion & For-Profit Incarceration

### The Big Pivot Conference

On June 10-11, our Treatment Industrial Complex (TIC) project hosted its first conference, *The Big Pivot: False Alternatives to Incarceration, Profiteers, & The Way Forward*. Attendees from grassroots and national-level organizations traveled to Tucson to discuss various aspects of the TIC and how they could work together to address this troubling and rapidly expanding trend. Organizations who attended include Freedom to Thrive; Detention Watch Network; Mijente; the Chicago Community Bond Fund; the Challenging E-Carceration Project; and Worth Rises.



*The Big Pivot conference participants.*

*June 2019*

### TIC Field Scan

In 2019, the TIC project completed a national field scan that mapped out the changing face of false alternatives to incarceration. Using data collected through interviews with a diverse group of criminal justice experts, the field scan's findings included:



- 80% of respondents reported that **increased use of electronic monitoring** is the most prolific trend they are observing in their communities;
- 66% of respondents were concerned about **the purchasing of reentry centers by private companies.**

The field scan will serve as the basis for the TIC project's anticipated 2020 report on the evolution of community corrections.

## Impacting Change in Arizona

### To make a donation...

**Log onto our website, [afscarizona.org](http://afscarizona.org), and click on the “Make a Donation” button under the “Contact Us” menu.**

Or, **write a check** and mail your contribution to our office:

103 N. Park Ave., Ste. 111, Tucson, AZ 85719.

**On your check, be sure to earmark your contribution for the Arizona office** by writing “Arizona office” on in the memo line on the bottom left corner of your check.

*→ Please note that if you do not explicitly state on your check or otherwise, in writing, that you want your donation to go to Arizona, it will automatically be deposited into AFSC's national general fund.*



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