

2024 IMPACT REPORT

**Reflecting on 50 years of
Grassroots Investment**



**AJ MUSTE FOUNDATION
FOR PEACE + JUSTICE**

First, let us start with our namesake: Abraham Johannes (A.J.) Muste



Who was he?

Abraham Johannes Muste was born in Zierikzee, Zeeland, the Netherlands, in 1885. His family immigrated to America and settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1891. He was admitted to Hope Preparatory School in 1898, the youngest student at that time. He graduated from Hope College in 1902 after only three years at the age of 20.

In 1909, Muste graduated from the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, married Anna Huizenga in Rock Valley, Iowa, was ordained in the Reformed Church in America, and was installed as first minister of the Fort Washington Collegiate Church in New York City.

The ultimate pacifist, Muste protested against every major war waged during his lifetime. He joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an inter-faith pacifist organization, in 1916. In 1917, he resigned from the Central Congregational Church because of his pacifistic views, and in 1919 he was leading the picket line with textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Among the many places where he protested are famous landmarks like Red Square in Moscow, the United Nations, Times Square, and the White House. Muste has had an impact on major figures in the peace movement, and many called him the “American Gandhi.” The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was a seminary student when he first heard Muste speak.

In 1948, Muste stopped paying federal income tax because they were financing the machineries of war. Each year he sent a package to the IRS containing a Bible, a copy of Henry Thoreau’s “Essay on Civil Disobedience,” and a three-page typewritten paper outlining the principles preventing him from contributing to the armaments of the United States. Although in 1961 the United States Tax Court ruled that the government had a right to back taxes, collection against Muste’s small retirement income was never attempted. A.J. Muste died in 1967 at age 82.

**A.J. Muste
Foundation for
Peace and Justice**

The A.J. Muste Foundation for Peace and Justice (formerly the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute) was founded in 1974. The Foundation has provided grants, fiscal sponsorships, and educational resources to hundreds of grassroots projects. We fund innovative organizing and nonviolent direct action for the liberation of all, often with seed funds that give a necessary boost to bold ideas.

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A letter from Heidi Boghosian

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate the **50th anniversary of the AJ Muste Foundation for Peace and Justice**, we're once again inspired by the work the Foundation has made possible over the years and are proud to share this Impact Report with you.

In large part, our impact is an amalgamation of the work of countless grassroots social justice organizations. These groups, often volunteer-operated and with minimal budgets, are the lifeblood of transformative social change, addressing critical issues at their core and mobilizing communities from the ground up. We are honored to be one of the few foundations in the nation that take a chance on coalitions and emerging organizations that haven't yet received any other foundation grants.

Supporting small and emerging social justice organizations is a matter of pride for us.

These groups perform a trailblazing service to society, working with fierce compassion and limited resources to address systemic injustices, promote peace, and defend human rights. Being a part of the affected communities gives them an intimate understanding, enabling them to respond to unique needs. By funding these grassroots initiatives, the Foundation hopes to amplify the voices of those communities—often marginalized and overlooked—seeking enduring social change for the benefit and liberation of all.

One of the most compelling reasons to support small social justice organizations is the sheer number of them and their collective potential for impact. Statistics show that a significant percentage of nonprofits operate with budgets under \$250,000. In fact, according to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, nearly 75% of all registered nonprofits in the United States fall into this category. These organizations represent a vast reservoir of innovative ideas and passionate advocates who are often constrained only by a lack of financial support.

The AJ Muste Foundation believes in the power of these modest and mighty organizations to catalyze social betterment. We are committed to continuing this legacy. However, the need is immense. We hope that our example can inspire other funders to join in this critical mission. By diversifying funding sources and including these smaller entities in grantmaking portfolios, foundations can ensure that their resources support a broader range of initiatives, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

Your support and that of others like you over the past 50 years has been instrumental in enabling us to fulfill our mission.

Thank you for being a part of this important effort and for your unwavering commitment to social justice.

With gratitude,



Heidi Boghosian



Top: Christopher Muste and Peter Muste (grandsons to A.J. Muste)
Bottom: Heidi Boghosian (Executive Director) and Johanna Fernandez (Board Chair) posing with bust of A.J. Muste at Hope College - his alma mater.

Our Mission...

We support grassroots nonviolent activism for the liberation of all.

Our Vision...

To ensure that high-potential grassroots & direct-action radical activists that are focused on nonviolence & social justice work are more sustainable & have a greater impact.

A timeline of the Foundation's history

Officially became 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the **A.J. Muste Memorial Institute.**

1974



A.J. Muste Institute launches its Essay Series on Nonviolence which remains in print to this day.

1981

Moved from "The Peace Pentagon" to 168 Canal St with tenants

2016

The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute becomes the **A.J. Muste Foundation for Peace and Justice.**

2024

A.J. Muste Institute purchases 339 Lafayette St, "Peace Pentagon," from the War Resisters League

1994

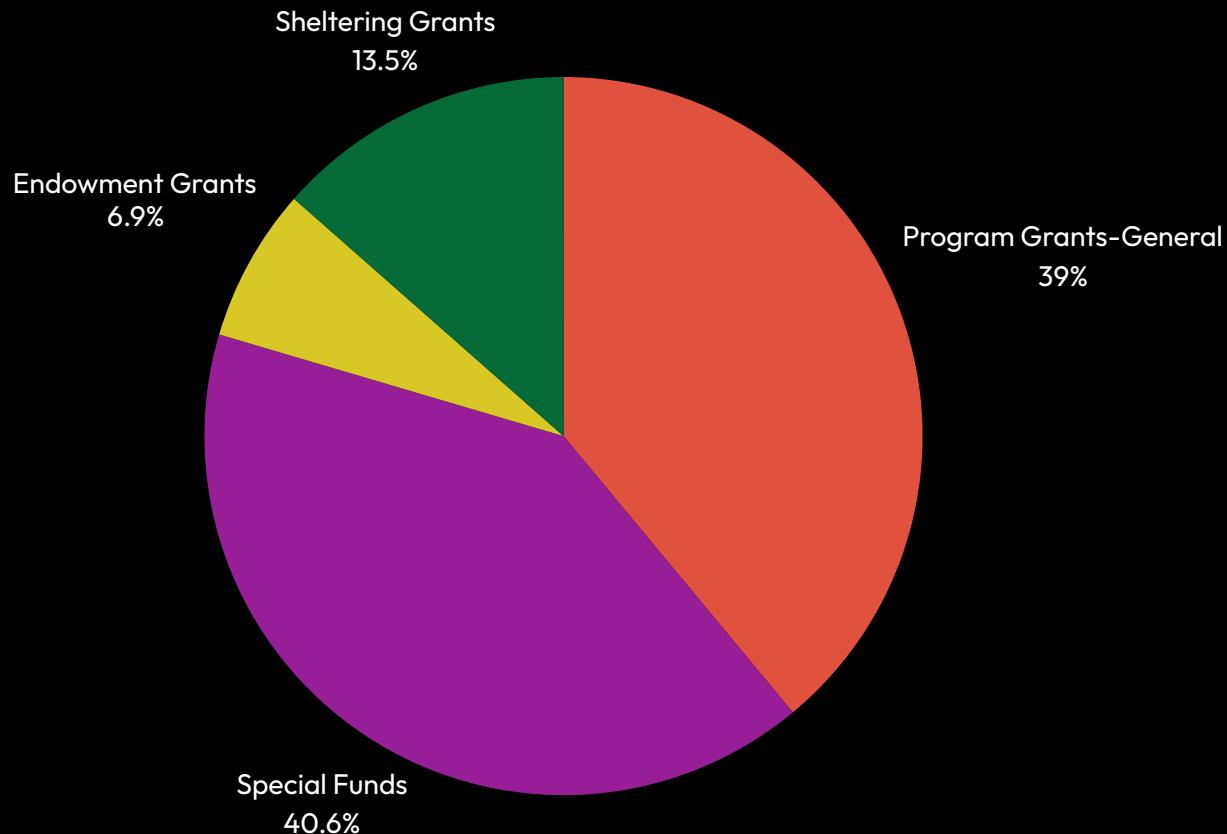
A.J. Muste starts its granting programs including Social Justice Fund, and INTF (International Training Fund)

2023

The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute increases grant ceiling to \$10,000.



Financial Impact Over 50 years



- Program Grants includes:
 - Social Justice Fund
 - Rapid Response Fund
- Special Funds include:
 - NOVA (Non-Violencia Activa) Fund
 - INTF (International Nonviolence Training Fund)
 - Counter Recruitment Fund
- Sheltering Grants includes: funds given to sheltered groups
 - DDTV
 - Met Council on Housing
 - NYS Youth Leadership Council
 - Paper Tiger TV
 - Socialist Party USA
 - War Resisters League
- Endowment Grants include:
 - Freeman Internship
 - Bilezikian Internship Program
 - Paul Schmidt Fund

Over
\$3.2 million
granted

Take a look at our grantees over the years...

350Seattle.org
540WMain, Inc.
A Community Voice
AASJS
ABC NoRio
ABK, Pakistan
Abolitionist Law Center
About Face - Veterans Against the War
Abraham Mehreteab
Abril Alejandria Gonzalez Sotelo
ACEASPA-Proyecto Especiales
ACLU of Idaho Foundation
ACOOC
ACORD
Act for Transformation
Action et Humanisme
Action for Community in Raleigh (ACRe)
Adelante Alabama Worker Center
Africa Faith & Justice Network
AFRIKA AWAKE NPC
AfriRemedy
AFSC, Chicago
AFSC, Hawai'i Area Office
AFSC, San Francisco
AGHAM
Agrupacion Vida Nueva 2000
AHURTOD
AKUAIPA WAIMAKAT
Albany Peace Seekers
Albany Pk, N Pk, Mayfair Neighbors P&J

Albert Einstein Institute
Albuquerque Ctr for PJ
Alliance for Community Trainers: Think Outside the Bomb
Alliance for Community Trainers: United for Peace and Justice
Alliance for Youth Organizing
Alliance to Mobilize Our Resistance
Allied Media Projects
Alternatives to Incarceration Council
Amani Communities Africa
Amani Peoples Theatre
American Friends Service Committee
AMIFANIC
ANAB
Anahit Aharonian
Anibel Zilli & Anistus Chima
Antonio Martins Ferreira
Appalachian Peace and Justice Network
Arab Educational Institute
ARC Associates
AREI La Serena
Arise for Social Justice
Arizona Border Rights Fndtn
Art and Resistance Through Education, Inc
Art for Change
AS220
Asoc Nacional de Recicladores
Asoc. Casa de la Mujer de Bocana
Asoc. Civil Centro Esperanza
Asoc. Civil Crecer con Esperanza
Asoc. Civil Frente Petenero contra Repres

Asoc. Civil Juventud Divino Tesoro
Asoc. Comunidades Eclesiales
Asoc. de Mujeres Nuestra Voz
Asoc. de Productores Noreste
Asoc. Indigena Buta Wuapi Chilwe Domo
Asoc. Indigena Lafquenche
Asoc. para el Desarrollo de ES - CRIPDES
Asoc. para la Promocion y El Desarrollo
Asoc. Proyecto Caribe
Asoc. Red de Sol y Des. Comunitario
Asoc. SERPAJ AL
Asoc. SERPAJ CR
Asoc. Servicio Paz y Justicia-Costa Rica
Asoc. Servicios Educativos Rurales
Asoc. Union Nac. Mujeres Kunas
Asociacion Civil Hecho
Asociacion Civil por el Derecho a Decidir
Asociacion de Mujeres Indigenas d Tolima
Asociacion Ecologica Santo Tomas
Asociacion Juventud 2000
Asociacion SERPAJ America Latina
Asociacion Xna Ixim
Asociatia Regeneration
Assoc Nac da Juventude Rural-Terra Livre
Associacao Nacional de Agricultura Campo
Associacion Civil de Corazon Tandilense
Association for Union Democracy
ATTAC - Argentina
Austin Community Foundation
Austin Tan Cerca de la Frontera
Back Porch Radio
Bakeneko Collective
Bash Back! Denver
BAY-Peace
Beautiful Trouble
Best Practices Policy Project
Beyond the Bomb
Beyond These Walls
Beyondmedia Education
Big Mouth Productions
Birthright Unplugged
Black Belt Citizens
Black Kids in Outer Space
Black Movement Law Project
Black Yield Institute
Blue Veins
Boston Mobilization
Brandworkers International
Brazilian Women's Group
Brooklyn for Peace
Brother/Sister Sol
California Prison Moratorium Project
Campaign to Bring Mumia Home
CAMS
Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace
Catalyst Foundation
CCCO
CDH Tepeyac del Istmo de Tehuantepec
CEDP
CEHRD
Center for Conflict Resolution
Center for Immigrant Families
Center for International Policy
Center for Participatory Change
Center for Peacemaking Leadership
Center on Conscience & War
Central GEneral de Trabajadores-CGT
Centro de Atividades Comunitarias CAC
Centro de Derechos Humanos, Juan Gerardi
Centro de Desarrollo e Investigacion de
Centro de doc. Y Estudios
Centro de Estudios
Centro de Estudios Internacionales
Centro de Formacion de Misioneras Indigen
Centro de Investigacion y Formacion
Centro Esperanza
CEPAS Proyectos Especiales
CEPPAS
Chicago Freedom School
Chico Peace & Justice Center
Cine Movil NYC
CINEP
Citizens Awareness Network
City Waste Worker's Union

Ciudad Saludable
Cleveland Peace Action Education Fund
CNS/Brazil
Cntr for Justice, Peace & the Environment
CoAct
Coalition for Peace & Justice
Coalition for Peace Action- New Jersey
Coalitn Against Militarism in our Schools
Colombia Support Network
Columbus Mennonite Church
Combatants for Peace
Commonwealth Foundation
Community Alliance of Lane County
Community Education & Empowerment Centre
Community Futures Collective
Community Initiative for Change
Community Movement Builders
Community Resource Center of East Liverpo
Community Resource Initiative
Community Service Care, Inc.
COMPPA
Conf. Nac. Agraria
Confed. Ncnl de Discapacitados del Peru
CONFENACA
Connection e.V.
Cooperation Jackson
COPA Air
Corporacion Accion Ecologica
Corporacion Red Juvenil
Corporacion SER PAZ
Corporation of Newe Sogobia
Corvallis Counter-recruitment
CP-UNION.ORG
Critical Resistance
Culture of Peace Alliance (COPA)
Dakota Rural Action, Inc
Death Penalty Focus
DecARcerate
DecARcerate KC
Deep Dish TV
Democracy Trailblazers
Denver Peace and Justice Center
Desarrollo Alternativo SA
Doctors for Global Health
DRUM
Earth Action
East Timor and Indonesia Action Network
Eastern Michigan Environmental Action Cou
Ecology Center
Economic Justice Coalition
Ecosocialist Horizons
Ecuarunan
Education Para La Paz
El Maestro, Inc
Elmahaba Center
Environmental Community Action, Inc.
Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnes
EPFIC
EPICA
EPOCA
Equal Justice Center
Erotic Service Providers
Esperanza Peace and Justice Center
Estacion Libre Collective
Fabian Pacheco Rodriguez, FECON
Faithful Fools
Faithful Fools Street Ministry
FAME
Family Mediation & Conciliation
Fandom Forward
Faslane 365
FEMUCARINAP
First Congregational Church, New London
Flagstaff New Day Peace Center
Florida College Activist Coalition
Floridians for Alt to the Death Penalty
Colombia Peace Presence Project
Fort Collins Community Action Network
ForthSpring Inter-Comm. Group
Fractured Atlas
Free The People Rochester
Freedom ROC
Freeman Internship Program
Friends of PM

Frontier Indigenous Network
 Fund for Empowerment
 Fund. Casa de la Paz
 Gap-Bridge Foundation
 Garden of Peace, Inc.
 Gendler Family Foundation
 Gente Unida
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
 Georgia WAND
 Global Exchange
 Granny Peace Brigade
 STOPP
 Youth Rise Texas
 Green Action, Israel
Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA
 Gush Shalom
 Hawaii Peace and Justice
Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom
 High Rocks Educational Corporation
 Hogar Comunitano
 Holy Land Trust
House of Peace and Nonviolence
 Housing Works
Houston Com. Youth & Nonmil. Alternatives
 Human Rights Coalition
 ICHRP-US
 Idaho Abortion Rights
 Immigrant Voices for Justice
 INDEX
IFA Chicago - Little Egypt Productions LLC
 Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees
 Jericho Movement Richmond
Iglesia Catolica Cristo el Hijo d Hombre
 Indigenous Youth Sovereignty Project
 Institute for Labor & the Community
 Intercommunity Justice & Peace Center
 Interfaith Peace-Builders DBA Eyewitness
 Palestine
 Interference Archive
International Documentary Association
 International Humanities Center
 International Solidarity Movement
International Women's Partnership
Interreligious Foundation for Comm Org
 Iraq Veterans Against the War
Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability
 Jewish Voice for Peace
 JK Education Council
Johnson House Historic Site
 Just Don't Go
Just Foreign Policy
JUSTUS JUNKIE Inc.
 Kartekri
 Koinonia Partners
 Közélet Iskolája Alapítvány
 Kristin del Carmen Beltran Acosta
 Kwale Interfaith Youth Association
 Lakota Solidarity Project
 Lead Initiative
 LeHigh Pocono
LI Counter Military Recruiting Committee
 Lideres sin Fronteras
 Lioness Media Arts
 Los Alamos Study Group
Louisiana Advocates for Immigrants in Det
 Love Thy Neighbor
 MADP
 MASAR
 MDC Solidarity
 Meaningful Movies Project
Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute
 Met Council on Housing
 Met Council Research & Educational Fund.
Metropolitan Community Church of New York
 Mid-South Peace and Justice Center
 Migrant Justice
 Military Families Speak Out
 Minnesota Arms Spending Alt. Proj.
 Minnesota Break the Bonds
 Miramida Centar
Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates
 Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty
 Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow
 Mladinski Init.
 MMCCN

Movement for Justice in El Barrio
 Movement for Survival in the Ogoni
 Movement Training Network
 Moving Train
 Bayan USA
 Nansana Women Development Association
 National Day Laborer Organizing Network
 National Death Row Assistance Network
 National Labor Committee
 National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (NOMY)
 National War Tax Resistance (NWTRCC)
 National Women's Liberation
 Nazdeek, Inc.
 NC Peace Action
 NC Stop Human Trafficking
 NCRRC
 Peacemakers Society Cameroon
 Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty
 NEED Trust
 Nevada Desert Experience
 New Endeavor Texas
 New Hampshire Vets for Peace
 New Israel Fund
 New Jersey Peace Action Education Fund
 New York Communities Organizing Fund Inc.
 New York Labor History Association
 Newburgh Anti-violence Committee
 Newtown Florist Club Inc.
 Nicaragua Solidarity Committee
 Niger Delta Project
 Nikkei Progressives
 Nonviolence International
 Nonviolent Education and Research Center
 North American Rojava Alliance
 Northeast Political Prisoner Coalition
 Northern Alabama School for Organizers
 Northwest Suburban Peace & Education Proj
 Not1More
 NV Trainers Inititive
 NW Interfaith Hospitality Network
 NW Workers' Justice Project
 NWTRCC
 NY Veterans Speak Out/Veterans for Peace
 NYS Peace Action
 NYS Youth Leadership Council
 Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance
 OCCO
 ODEMIHF
 OFRANEH
 Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church
 Oil and Gas Action Net
 OK Committee for Conscientious Objectors
 Olneyville Neighborhood Association
 OMNI Ctr for Peace, Justice & Ecology
 One Community United
 One People's Project
 ONG Centro de Promocion y Desarrollo And.
 ONIC
 ONIC (Colombia)
 Onyx Foundation - BAMSA
 Onyx Foundation-NY/NJ Labor for Palestine
 OpenOversight VA
 Opportunity Fund for Developing Countries
 Optimizing Community Towards Resilience
 OPTIONS
 Orbitz
 Oregon Peace Institute
 Org. Cultural Alternativa para la Paz
 Organizacion W.M.
 Organize! Ohio
 Orita Peace & Justice Program
 Other Worlds
 Out of the Blue Productions, Inc.
 Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service
 Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement
 Pamela Church
 Paper Tiger TV
 Partners for Peace
 Partners4 Palestine
 Pastoralist Journalist Network
 Peace & Justice Action League of Spokane
 Peace & Justice Center
 Peace & Justice Center Sonoma County
 Peace & Justice Cntr S.C. Kansas
 Peace Action Education Fund

Peace Action Fund of NYS
 Peace Action Wisconsin
 Peace and Justice Studies Association
 Peace Brigades International
 Peace Development Fund
 Peace House
 Peace Resource Center
 Peaceful Vocations
 People Organizing to Win Emplymnt Rts
 PEP Liberia
 Philly Black Worker Project
 Physicians for Social Responsibility LA
 PICA
 Picture the Homeless
 Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission
 Pine Tree
 Pioneer Valley Peace Center
 Pobladores, AC
 Portland Central America Solidarity Comm.
 Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
 Prison Action Network
 Prison Justice League
 Prison Project of Santa Fe, Inc.
 Prison Project of SF/Cltn Prisoner's Rts
 Project Hajra
 Project HIP-HOP
 Project YANO
 Providence Student Union
 Providence Youth Student Movement
 Proyecto Transgenero
 PSP-NYC
 Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Chicago
 Quaker House
 Question Why Films
 Rabbis for Human Rights
 Rachel Corrie Fdn for Peace and Justice
 RAPP
 Raza Education Fund
 Recruiter Watch PDX
 Red Ambiental Loretana
 Red de Comunicaciones Indigenas Apuchita
 Red de Esperanza y Solidaridad
 Red de Personas Viviendo
 Red Juvenil
 Reflect & Strengthen
 Refugees United for Peaceful Solutions
 Refuser Solidarity Network
 Regionalna Adresa Nenasilno Djelovanje
 Remembering Hiroshima, Imagining Peace
 Renton High School YAWR
 Resistance Studies Network
 Resource Center for Non-Violence
 Resources for Organizing & Social Change
 Richmond Peace Education Center
 Rise and Resist, Inc.
 Rise Up Georgia
 Rochester Against War
 Saint Pius V. Parish - Chicago Workers' Collaborative
 Salina People for Peace
 Salinas Action League
 SANE
 Santa Barbara Friends Meeting
 Save Our Cumberland Mountains
 Save Our Section 8 Colorado
 Seeds for Change
 Self Education Center
 Sept. 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
 SER PAZ
 SERPAJ - Argentina
 SERPAJ America Latina
 SERPAJ Costa Rica
 SERPAJ Ecuador
 SERPAJ Morelos/Pietro Ameglio
 SERPAJ Paraguay
 SERPAJ-Uruguay
 Servicio de Orientacao de Familia
 Servicio Paz y Justicia Costa Rica
 Servicio Paz y Justicia Paraguay
 Servicios Juridicos y Sociales, S.C.
 SHADO Pakistan
 SHCJ-African Province
 Shoal Collective
 Shorouq Organization
 Shri Gandhi Seva Ashram

Siddetsizlik Egitim ve Arastirma Dernegi
SIGNO, Asociacion Civil
Skwelkwek'welt Protection Center
Snake River Alliance
Social and Resource Development Fund
Social Good Fund
Social Justice Sewing Academy
Socialist Party, USA
Solidarity Uganda
South South Network Engagement
South Sudan Community Change Agency
Southern Center for Human Rights
Southern Maine Workers' Center
Southern Presbyterian Church
Southern Vision Alliance
Southside Presbyterian Church
Southwest Research and Information Center
St. Louis Inter-Faith Com. on L.A.
STITCH
Stony Brook Foundation
Stowarzyszenie Refuges Szczeci
Student Farmworker Alliance
Students Creating Peace Network
Students for a Free Tibet
SURCO A.C.
SURGE
SWADHINA
Swaraj Peeth Trust
Sweat Free Communities
Syracuse Peace Council
Tam Brazilian Airline
Tana Delta Child Protection Network
TASSC
Tecnicas Rudas
Tex. Juvenile Justice Documentary Project
Texas Death Penalty Education and Resourc
The BlackOUT Collective
The Catalyst Foundation - Death Penalty
Projectthe City School
The Enduring Voices Foundation
The Light House Project
The Palestine Center

The Progressive Foundation-Nukewatch
The Sanctuaries
The United Covenant Union
Third Sector New England-Ct Network to Abolish the DP
Third World Newsreel
Thomas Merton Center
Tibetan Children's Village
Time's Up
Tri-Valley CAREs
Truth 2 Youth
Truth Telling Project
TSNE Mission Works
Twin Cities Nonviolent
Twin Streams Educational Center
UCIZONI
UFANISI WOMEN GROUP
UMECS
Unidad Latina en Accion
Union de Campesinos Poriajhu
Union de Femeninas
Union of Minority Neighborhoods
Unite for Dignity, Inc.
United Action Connecticut Inc.
United Interfaith Action of SE Massachusetts
USA Cooperative Youth Council
USPC Peace Education Fund
Vermont Workers Center
Veterans for Peace
VIDATUR
Vietnam Veterans Against the War
Village Community Welfare Society
Voice of Women Uganda
Voices on the Border
Voz Latina Broadcasting
Vredesactie
WA CAN ERF
Waging Nonviolence
War Resisters International
War Resisters League
Warren J Plant Charitable Trust
Washington Area Truth in Recruiting
Washington Peace Center

Washington Truth in Recruiting
W.E.B. Du Bois Movement School for
Abolition and Reconstruction
WeCopWatch
WESPAC Foundation
Western Regional Advocacy Project
Whatcom Peace & Justice Center
Wheelock Mountain Fram, Inc.
Wisconsin Network for Peace & Justice
Witness to Innocence
Women Against Military Madness
Women for Weapons Trade Transparency
Women in Black
Women in Dialogue
Women Make Movies
Women's Fund for Human Rights
Women's Justice and Freedom Initiative
Workers' Center of Central New York
Workers Defense Project
Workers' Rights Center
World Comics India
World Without War
Young-eun Oh
Youth Arts New York
Youth Forum, Zamibia
Youth Justice and Power Union



The A.J. Muste Foundation for Peace and Justice is honored to share the heartfelt testimonials of our grantees, whose impactful work and transformative initiatives have been made possible in part through the support of the Foundation.



NY State Youth Leadership Council

We came to the AJ Muste Foundation struggling to secure a physical space to gather as a community. In our previous locations, we were confronted with microaggressions and ageism due to our work with immigrant youth. Through the sheltering grant, we obtained a new and safer community space to: host open mic nights, organize self care and arts events, we held information sessions on new legislative actions, fundraise for our work, and come together to bond.

“The Foundation was one of the few that believed in the importance of our work and showed us continuous support.”

We also were able to host an annual summer learning series for undocumented immigrant youth with the foundation's support. NYSYLC trained over 30 youth on different political issues impacting them. Those interns continue to be involved in our work today because of the impact of this space on their personal lives and leadership trajectory. Jackie Muller is now our Interim Co-Executive Director, Maria Vera is now our Community Organizer, Ana Vera is our Political Education Fellow, Fernando Aguilar is now our Organizing Fellow, and Denise Vivar is now the Director of the Immigrant Student Success Center at John Jay College. All of these immigrant women leaders were interns and youth participants of our YEP program, supported by the Foundation. Some members of the Youth Empowerment program also joined our grassroots fundraising team, some became presidents of their school's immigrant student clubs, and others joined different spaces dedicated to social justice causes and human services.



We experienced many challenges implementing our learning series prior to the support of the Foundation. Without this additional support, we were struggling to pay rent and our interns. The AJ Muste Foundation made it possible for us to not only get financial support to launch our project, but also to be part of a larger support system through our neighbors. The Foundation was one of the few that believed in the importance of our work and showed us continuous support.

Testimony about the impact of the Youth Empowerment Program, funded from the support of AJ Muste, from our current Community Organizing Fellow Fernando Aguilar.

"When I first joined the New York State Youth Leadership Council it was to attend the summer youth empowerment program. I heard about it from a friend and decided to go, even though talking about politics was something new for me. I was a high school senior, and being in that space with everyone I learned so much. I remember having my mind open because we talked about things I never heard in school, it was the first time I heard about what was done to Emmitt Till, it impacted me. The following year, I was able to participate again but this time as a paid intern of NYSYLC through the support from the AJ Muste Foundation. As an intern, I was in charge of putting the same program together for a new cohort of youth. I gained new skills like: how to facilitate, how to teach, how to guide discussions, and a lot of logistics skills. I learned to make agendas, plan events and trips, and gained new communication skills I still use today like using Emails. I am now the Community Organizing Fellow at the NYSYLC because someone believed and trusted me then. I am grateful that foundations like AJ Muste exist and see the value in our work and believe in immigrant justice too."



Hawai'i Peace and Justice

The AJ Muste Foundation was among the very first to support our multi-year campaign to end the extension of the US Army base leases, which expire in 2029. The Army received thousands of acres from the state of Hawaii in 1964 on a 65 year lease for \$1. In that time, the military has devastated the environment and contaminated fresh water supplies, through live fire training and weapons testing. As the largest drivers of greenhouse emissions in Hawai'i and throughout the world, we set out to call an end to the ongoing claims for the need for constant military readiness and permanent war economy. Through seed funds in the beginning of our campaign, HPJ was able to identify impacted communities, begin a youth organizing collective and develop political education for impacted communities.

Popular education curriculum and materials were made possible and a youth organizer collective was created, who were recruited from high school aloha 'āina clubs and several went on to become youth interns in college, through the foundation's support.

The most measurable outcomes were the development of our youth organizing committee, who are actually key leaders in a rising demilitarization youth movement in Hawai'i. We have grown by twice our size since the AJ Muste Foundation first provided funding and those youth have gone on to provide key testimony to challenge Army land retention at the Army draft EIS hearings. We were also able to hire a youth researcher to create infographics on the impacts and the amount of the lands the Army is occupying. This information spread widely throughout the community and prepared members to challenge the Army.



“...youth have gone to provide key testimony to challenge Army land retention at the Army draft IES hearings.”



Early on in our project, all of Hawai'i was impacted by the Lahaina fires. Team members and our youth all had families who lost homes or loved ones in Lahaina. For several months our attention was refocused on caring for our Maui 'ohana. If not for the initial funds from AJ Muste to allow us to build community, it would have been harder to hold a space for support for our youth.

Our youth spoke on an international panel on militarism at the Hawaiian annual event Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea. One youth shared, "This is the first time I have ever spoken on a panel on what I truly believe." At our first Youth Liberation Camp, another youth stated "I felt isolated at my school, HPJ gave us the space to find other youth who think like me, who believe in social justice." Had it not been for HPJ receiving those initial funds from AJ Muste, these stories would not exist.

"Had it not been for HPJ receiving those initial funds from the AJ Muste Foundation, these stories would not exist."



Project YANO

“The AJ Muste Foundation’s funding has made a huge difference in our survival. During years when resources were very slim and we were uncertain about our future, receiving a grant made a huge difference because we were then able to continue doing our local and also our national level work and it wouldn’t have been possible otherwise.

The first grant in 1996 supported our interactive computer program with a counter recruitment theme in a time where people were just utilizing the download function on their computers. This program was distributed to hundreds of teachers, libraries and a few counselors. The program allowed students to explore the possibility of volunteering, working, or interning for different organizations addressing social issues. Within the same year, literature bags with an anti-war graphic on the cover were dispersed at high school career fairs.

“The AJ Muste Foundation’s funding has made a huge difference in our survival.”

Both grants in 1998 and 2005 allowed Project YANO to update important educational tools and literature about their organization and cause. Particularly in 2005, a counter recruitment brochure in Spanish was produced; nobody had done this before. Being able to have these translations put us in a position where we were key nationally because no other organization was doing this.



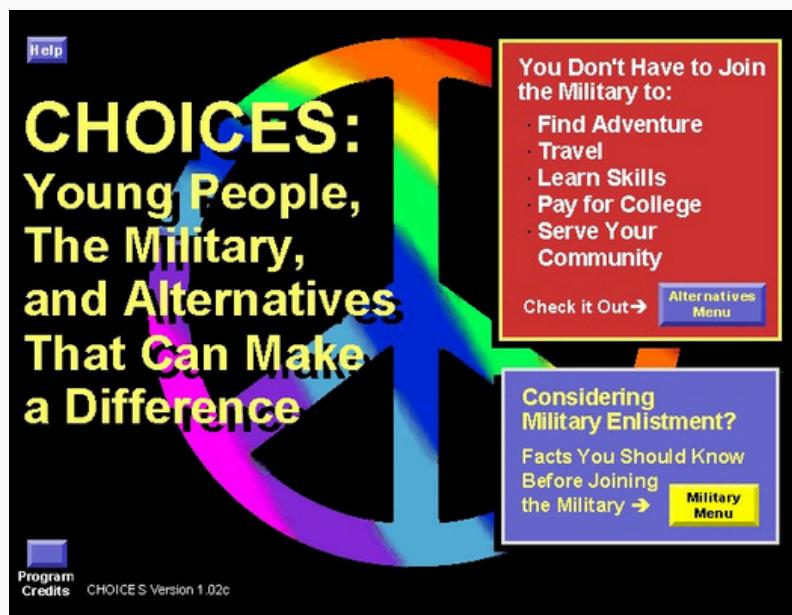
In 2007, Project YANO's outreach helped form a coalition that successfully removed 11 shooting ranges from Junior ROTC programs in the San Diego Unified School District between 2005 and 2016. This coalition also pushed the district to adopt policies restricting military recruiter visits. David, a student activist from that time, now serves on Project YANO's board, showing the long-term impact of these efforts. Continuous funding enabled Project YANO to support these significant community-driven actions against militarization in schools.

In 2008, intense outreach efforts in San Diego schools were correlated with a significant decrease in Army enlistments, with local enlistment rates falling nearly 30% short, compared to the national shortfall of 10%. This suggests a substantial impact of the foundation's activities on military recruitment. While in 2016, we used

the Muste Foundation's funds to hire an intern that helped increase our outreach and visibility. The main challenge faced by organizations like Project Yano is consistent funding, which has been alleviated somewhat by grants from the AJ Muste Foundation. Despite having good organizers and ideas, they often struggled to pursue projects without these grants.

Additionally, youth work and demilitarizing schools are not widely supported within the broader progressive social change movement, making it difficult to gain the necessary support. While they have community allies, these are mostly localized, and there is a lack of national interest and support from other progressive groups.

The progressive movement often overlooks long-term strategies compared to the military and conservative religious groups, which focus on influencing school boards and curricula. This lack of attention poses a major challenge for us.



Idaho Abortion Rights

The Muste Foundation's grant helped Idaho Abortion Rights with their "Stranger Danger Idaho" project which aims to educate the public about the dangers of crisis pregnancy centers in Idaho including promoting abortion pill reversal and providing medical procedures like vaginal ultrasounds without qualified medical personnel. These centers often mislead people by presenting themselves as legitimate healthcare providers while pushing anti-abortion agendas - and are listed on health and welfare departments' websites as legitimate facilities. The project empowers individuals with accurate information and support in a state where access to such resources is often limited and contested.



The project aims to inform the public about safe and legitimate alternatives, including local Planned Parenthood services and their Idaho Abortion Rights' network of 30 locations offering free pregnancy tests, emergency contraceptives, and condoms.

This project includes the development of a zine, website, and a sticker bombing campaign. The design of the zine is inviting and resonates with a wide audience with a "don't take candy from a stranger" theme. This zine will direct readers to the Stranger Danger Idaho website for further information about deceptive practices - and the stickers and posters (featuring a QR code) will do the same. These stickers are also for sale on their website with proceeds supporting abortion access. Idaho Abortion Rights also looks forward to having youth volunteers to help out with the campaign.

The project has faced several challenges including resistance from the conservative community in Idaho. This resistance includes online harassment and public criticism from elected officials. Despite these challenges, the project has garnered significant community support which helps mitigate some of the backlash and reinforces our mission.

Additionally, the group is focusing on improving their social media presence to better disseminate their message and engage with a broader audience. They have media contacts ready to cover the campaign once it launches, and ads in local newspapers to increase visibility. They are also mindful of the potential risks of increased attention, including unwanted harassment, but **remain committed to their cause.**



DecARcerate, Inc.

The support from the A.J. Muste Foundation provided much needed support during a challenging time for our Court Watch project. During 2020 and 2021, the pandemic shut down courts and changed our ability to observe court regularly, whether in person or online. However, this support facilitated partnerships and the development of materials for Court Watch. In particular, we were able to lay out a plan for a state-wide Court Watch vision with several nonprofits and we began conversations with Bowen Law School, which also wanted to begin a Court Watch program. It also supported ongoing partnerships such as partnership with Hendrix College, as students were able to observe court and test forms as they were under development.

This funding was critical to carrying the vision forward during a time of profound organizational and social upheaval. Without this funding, this program would likely not exist because there would have been no through line of staff support.

“This funding was critical to carrying the vision forward during a time of profound organizational and social upheaval.”

The Court Watch program has been in operation regularly since June of 2021, and has recently hired a part-time program coordinator. Two trainings have been conducted, observers participate in a coordinated schedule, and data collection and entry has been ongoing. We now have a database of district court outcomes in Faulkner County. In total, more than 20 volunteers have been regular observers. This program has also facilitated several internships and independent research projects for Hendrix students.



Accountability

Court Watch AR takes Arkansans into publicly accessible court rooms across the state in an effort to promote public scrutiny and accountability of prosecutors and judges and other system actors.



Data Collection

We use community-based data collection to compile reports documenting injustices within the criminal legal system. These reports are made publicly available and serve as a tool for public transparency.



Storytelling

We use storytelling to help contextualize data, empower directly impacted people to share their own experiences and help shift public narratives around the criminal legal system.



Direct Support

Court Watch AR helps connect people directly impacted by the court system with the resources they need to navigate the system, advocate for themselves, and better their lives.

Our organization has faced widely-shared challenges including court opacity, difficulty communicating with all stakeholders, and volunteer turnover. In addition, as a small organization, we were forced to redirect significant resources away from the Court Watch program to fight state legislative efforts to build new prisons, expand jails, and further marginalize individuals who are currently or previously incarcerated. A.J. Muste's funding provided some space and accountability for decARcerate to devote some ongoing attention toward this project, despite emergent policy and public crises.



This program's current stage does not lend itself well to stories from court defendants as we are observing court procedures and collecting data. However, a few students' involvement in the Court Watch program and its impact on them is detailed below.

“Growing up I didn’t have a clear idea of what I wanted my career to look like. When I first started at Hendrix College, I was overwhelmed by all the choices I had. This changed when one of my professors, Dr. Delphia Shanks, introduced me to court watching. The first iteration of Hendrix Court Watch started during the pandemic when courts were limiting access to the public. We had to jump through hurdles trying to get into the courtroom which gave me an indication of how some courts view people wanting access to court proceedings. When we finally got to observe in person I was fascinated with everything I saw.

Seeing firsthand how the judge treated defendants and the lack of legal representation available opened my eyes to the reality that so many people stuck in our court system face. After sitting in on that first court session, I knew that I wanted to continue court watching to learn more about the criminal justice system and to find ways to inform the community about what happens in court. During my junior and senior years, I continued to court watch across Arkansas to help build the Hendrix Court Watch program, and I did an internship with the Arkansas Justice Reform Coalition to kick-start their program. By the end of my senior year, I knew that I wanted to become an attorney and help people navigate the complexities of the court system. I am about to start my first year of law school and can credit my passion for criminal justice and my desire to pursue a career in that field to my court watching experience.”

-Chloe Griffith, Hendrix College '23

“Being a part of Faulkner County Court Watch (FCCW) was a lifechanging experience for me. As a first-generation aspiring law student, it was an opportunity to gain valuable experience in the courts. As a passionate advocate for social justice, it was a chance to work within the criminal legal system without contributing to the harm it causes.

Through this work, I developed extensive knowledge about criminal law, court practice, communicating with court actors, and legal research. I became, functionally, an expert on the biosphere of the Faulkner County District Court. That being said, the benefits I reaped from this experience were more broad than the direct experience, it also opened other doors that allowed my knowledge to grow exponentially. **My work with FCCW lead directly to an internship with a state-wide court observation program, a \$5,000 grant funded expedition to court watch across America, and an apprenticeship with a renowned civil rights attorney working on a Constitutional appeal of the LEARNS Act.**

The legal, administrative, and professional skills I gained during my tenure with Faulkner County Court Watch are valuable to me even today in my position as a paralegal with the Oklahoma Indian Legal Services; a position in which I am routinely navigating local court procedures, interacting with low-income individuals in need of legal aid, and facilitating communication between attorneys and the court. It is absolutely true that my work with FCCW played a key role in both my acceptance to this position and my ability to excel in it.

More than the benefits this program granted me, I loved watching court watch change and inspire people. This program allows students with little knowledge of the legal field play an active role in their community and learn about the systems that directly impact them. FCCW, and the amazing leadership behind it, makes lawyers and advocates out of people, me included. Over the past few years, this program has become a vital part of both the Hendrix community and the Faulkner County Court itself. The potential for its impact and expansion are massive, and it was an honor to be a part of it.”

-Isabel Bieligk, Hendrix '24, Paralegal at Oklahoma Indian Legal Services



Celebrating 50 years!

25



Our 50th Anniversary Celebration was a smashing success! Held at the iconic Strand Bookstore in NYC, the Foundation had speakers from various grantees including Movement for Justice in El Barrio, Planet Over Profit and the Hudson Valley Bomba Comité as well as a call from imprisoned radio journalist and veteran Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal at SCI Mahanoy prison in Pennsylvania.

The event brought together activists, donors, artists, and changemakers - united in their commitment to the fight for a more equitable and peaceful world.

We were reminded by Peter Muste (grandson to A.J. Muste) about our collective responsibility to “rededicate ourselves to the work of making our communities better, fairer places through nonviolent action.”



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Future Outlook



Marching Forward!

The AJ Muste Foundation envisions a future where it remains steadfast as a beacon to grassroots progressive groups and initiatives. With recent decisions to consider funding general operating expenses and increasing the grant ceiling to \$10,000, the Foundation recognizes and responds to the demands of our times. Throughout the year, the Foundation has also made significant changes including our brand refresh and name change. When thinking of the future - we wanted to have a name and 'face' that would be more accessible to the wider nonprofit and activist community.

We imagine a future where the Foundation continues to act as a beacon for radical grassroots initiatives and groups while also informing other nonprofit leaders in funding about how they can do the same.

Activism is changing - and we must adapt to support the fight. This is increasingly true given the historic times we find ourselves entering. We ask our grantees, fellow activists and changemakers to not lose sight of the goal - a world that ensures liberation for ALL.

Giving

Help us continue this journey forward by making a gift!

The fight for a better world cannot cease until all are liberated. The power that grassroots organizations and ideas hold to create real change are key to the success of this.

We know this. We work towards this every day.

However, the AJ Muste Foundation cannot do this work alone. With your support we can maximize this impact and positively affect people in local communities to organize and fight the inequalities present across all of our systems.



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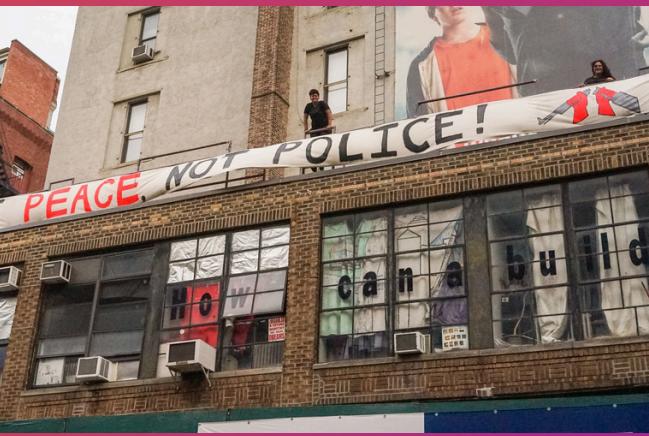


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