

## **Friends Peace Teams Report to SAYMA 2025**

At Friends Peace Teams (FPT), we work "grassroots to grassroots, person to person" with communities affected by violence, oppression, and trauma. We believe that there is good in every person. When we connect through that goodness, healing and transformation become possible—even in the hardest circumstances.

Our justice and peace work grows out of long-term relationships grounded in friendship, respect, and mutual learning. We accompany people as they recover from harm and take courageous steps toward justice and peace in their own communities. We don't arrive with answers. We listen, we learn, and we stay present for the long haul.

We are grateful that Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) is focusing on FPT this year. Your care, attention, and solidarity strengthen our work in powerful ways.

To see a broad and detailed view of FPT's global justice and peace work, please read our most recent [Epistle](#) at the bottom of this report. It reflects spiritual grounding and shared discernment from all five of our regions:

- African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI)
- Asia West Pacific (AWP)
- Europe Middle East (EME)
- North American (NAmerica)
- Peacebuilding en Las Américas (PLA)

In the U.S., FPT continues to support vibrant justice and peace work. [Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples](#) offers workshops and contributes to the Quaker Indigenous Boarding School research, bringing to light the history of Quaker Meetings' participation in the forced assimilation of Native children. Other active justice and peace work includes [Alternatives to Violence Project](#), [Cultures of Justice and Peace](#), and [Children's Peace Libraries](#).

We invite you to take part in our Conscientious Objection to War project. Whether as an individual, a meeting, or a community, you can write or share your own statement of conscience. Visit the FPT website on [Conscientious Objection to War](#) for a guide on writing those statements, and post them on the website.

[Power of Goodness](#) offers an excellent resource for Quaker religious education for all ages, sharing stories of how nonviolence, healing, and reconciliation work in real lives. We also offer internships for students in Quaker high schools and colleges, and host an economic justice discussion group online.

We're grateful for the time and care Steve Olszewsky and others before him spent connecting us with SAYMA. Because we are volunteer-led, we appeal to you for volunteers and we ask you to find a Friend to join us, representing you in FPT. Other ways you can get involved:

Donate, <https://friendspeaceteams.org/donate/>. Donations go directly to work on the ground because we are minimally-staffed.

Join us, <https://friendspeaceteams.org/get-involved/>.

Read further on our website, <https://friendspeaceteams.org/>.

Please continue to share the deep and abiding confidence we hold that justice and peace are possible.

## *Celebrating a Diversity of Voices*

**F**riends Peace Teams celebrates a diversity of voices across five continents. Join us to learn about and support justice and peace work around the world. We would love to hear about your justice and peace work and what you're learning, as well.

**The African Great Lakes Initiative** (AGLI) works inclusively with individuals of all ethnicities, tribes, and clans at the grassroots level. This inclusivity fosters active participation in diverse programs such as Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC), Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), peer mediation, peace debates, women's economic empowerment, caring for people living with HIV, improving women's reproductive health, supporting rape survivors, scholarships for vulnerable children, and climate resilience workshops for youth.

AGLI's facilitators conducted workshops with South Sudanese refugees in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp, one of the world's largest, and in Uganda. These workshops emphasized healing, reconciliation, and resilience among displaced communities.

In Rwanda, 60 farmers learned conservation agriculture methods through Farmer Field Schools. Additional self-help groups focusing on savings and community support were established in Rwanda and Burundi.

In Uganda in November 2024, AGLI convened peacebuilders from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, and Uganda. Participants shared experiences and strategies to promote peace and justice regionally.

The Children's Peace Libraries introduced Digital Peacebuilding, integrating iPads and computers. Rural children and educators praised this innovation for its impact on literacy and peace education. AGLI celebrates Africa's diversity as a source of strength. Embracing varied perspectives fosters unity, honors cultural contributions, and builds collaborative pathways to peace.

**Asia West Pacific** cries out for liberation from colonization, corruption, exploitation, and climate vulnerability. Yet—when we listen—people building regenerative societies call out across the region:

- » Kins collaborates with climate walkers, Plastic Free Bohol, and Student Catholic Action in the Philippines to call for climate justice and reducing single-use plastics.
- » Raissa built Mayã Community Learning Center to preserve the unique language and culture of Bantayan Island.

- » Jungjoo supports the anti-military base movement and preserves Jeju Island's historic culture of peace.
  - » Petrus coaches vulnerable children and youth exposed to religious extremism, expanding the Indonesian peace movement.
  - » Ida helps children in Bima, Indonesia, recover from religious extremism and domestic violence to deepen their faith and culture.
  - » Running from mortar fire, Kwi Kwi organizes primary healthcare with youth leadership in Karenland.
  - » Nanik creates a just, peaceful preschool helping families in Java, Indonesia, recover from colonization, and Ratih searches for storybooks that illustrate justice and peace practices in local Indonesian languages.
  - » Selly brings children out of the Papuan forests after communities flee from armed conflict.
  - » Melanie visits indigenous and migrant people building skills for community in Malaysia.
  - » Ram helps teachers in Nepal reduce school violence and introduce interactive learning.
- Mutual discernment and high-quality training inspire thriving communities of practice.

**Peacebuilding en Las Américas** supports peace workers who work with children, teens, young adults, adults, families in crisis, incarcerated individuals, people with disabilities, war survivors, and indigenous peoples across El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, and Ecuador—where persistent inequities and violence prevail.

We are excited to nurture children as young as four years old through the Power of Goodness stories, instilling the values of justice, peace, cooperation, and the dignity of all people. We work with families to end domestic violence. We help teens and young adults build self-love and resilience so that they might resist pressure to join gangs and other criminal groups. We work with people with disabilities, building strength to overcome societal prejudices. In Ecuador, we work with Kichwa women who are studying midwifery to build respect and compassion for themselves and girls and women who are survivors of gender-based violence. In Cuba, we have trained new facilitators and support them in

continuing workshops on both ends of the country.

Together with the diverse populations we serve, we build justice and peace, resilience, creativity, and the capacity to transform our realities into a vision of inclusion and hope. Please hear the diverse voices of some of our peace workers here: [FPT Work in Latin America](#).

**Europe and Middle East** supports Power of Goodness, gender equality, and AVP-based work in Ukraine, North Caucasus, northern Iraq, and Palestine. Ukraine and Gaza are currently experiencing the horror of all-out war, while people in Chechnya and Kurdistan still feel the impact of war through continued repression, daily violence, and military drafts. Our team in Ukraine supports psychologists and trainers who help communities heal from trauma and spread the message of peace and nonviolence through psychosocial workshops.

Our team in Kurdistan/Iraq joined Friends Peace Teams (FPT) just over a year ago and conducts AVP workshops in the region.

Our team in Chechnya brings the Power of Goodness stories of nonviolence and reconciliation to schools and the AVP workshops special topic series Cultures of Justice and Peace to universities.

Our team from Gaza and the West Bank in Palestine joined FPT in May of 2024 and conducts AVP workshops and other community projects.

In July 2025, Muslim and Christian peace workers from these regions will come together in person to learn from each other and practice our peacebuilding tools at a Cultures of Justice

and Peace Gathering in Armenia. To experience the diversity of voices from our region, please watch [FPT Europe and Middle East](#).

The **North America** Regional Team recognizes that meaningful peace is rooted in justice and equity, which are, in turn, rooted in respect for all life and the inclusion of diverse perspectives. Join us in this transformative work, which takes many forms.

As a step toward justice, we acknowledge the harms to generations of Native families caused by Quaker Indian Boarding Schools, and we support healing in Native communities today by documenting both historical and ongoing harm. We also confront the wars and ecological destruction perpetuated by U.S. tax dollars, striving to build relationships where we speak authentically and develop our consciences. We invite you to listen to your conscience, write a statement of conscience, and share your statement on the FPT website.

We are excited to be identifying children's books introducing the practical skills of justice and peace at every reading level and to edit stories to add to the Power of Goodness Story Collection. This developmental work supports FPT's Children's Peace Libraries and Power of Goodness teams globally.

Additionally, we are honored to be amplifying contemporary Indigenous voices, such as Mona Polacca, Candi Brings Plenty, and Jordan Decker, through webinars hosted by Towards Right Relationship with Native Peoples.

## Opportunities for you!

We depend on your active participation, prayers, abiding concern, outreach, and financial support. As an organization made up primarily of volunteers, we distribute 100% of funds designated to a specific region directly to the people in that region.

**Share this FPT Epistle** with your meeting, church, family, and friends.

**Write to [Office@friendspeaceteams.org](mailto:Office@friendspeaceteams.org) to:**

- » **Share your ministry for Justice and Peace**
- » **Join a Regional Team:** African Great Lakes, Asia West Pacific, Europe and Middle East, North America, or Peacebuilding *en las Américas*
- » **Join a Global Support Team:** Communications, Organization, Peace Ministries, or Resource Sharing
- » **Invite a speaker** from Friends Peace Teams to join your community online or in person

**Go to [Friends Peace Teams](#) to:**

- » **Register for events** or workshops: Alternatives to Violence Project, Power of Goodness, or Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples
- » **Sign up** for e-news, and then share the news with your meeting, church, group, or community

- » **Read our news** and reach out to the authors to offer encouragement and feedback
- » **Read [Power of Goodness stories](#)**
- » **Find storybooks** in the [Peace Libraries](#).
- » **[Donate](#) online.**

**Donate by** transferring funds or sending a check/cheque:

- » **USA (tax-deductible):** Friends Peace Teams, Inc., 1001 Park Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63104 USA
- » **Australia:** Friends Peace Teams AWP Inc, Elizabeth J. Drexler, 5/5 Que Court, Riverside, TAS 7250 Australia. **BSB:** 032 086 **Acct No:** 366770 **SWIFT:** WPACAU2S
- » **United Kingdom (tax-deductible):** Friends Peace Teams Europe, Thurlibeer, Stratton, Bude, Cornwall EX23 9NP, United Kingdom. **Sort Code:** 20-04-59 **SWIFT:** BUKBGB22 **GBP Account:** 03290352 **IBAN:** GB70BUKB20045903290352 **Euros Account:** 83753644 **IBAN:** GB89BUKB20045983753644

**The needs are great, the Spirit is moving.**

**Thank you for your generosity!**