



Canadian Friends Service Committee E-Newsletter

January, 2015

Annual appeal - now's the time!

As we get ready for the new year we are pleased to say that, thanks in particular to an unexpected major donation, CFSC is getting very close to reaching our goal for donations! This is great news - it means we will be able to continue all of our programs for justice and peace at their current levels.

Thank you for your support and the trust you put in the work that we do together as CFSC. If you have not yet responded to the Appeal **it is not too late to get a 2014 tax receipt!**

<http://quakerservice.ca/news/cfsc-annual-appeal-2014/>

Be the 2015 CFSC Program Assistant

Friends ages 19-29 with an interest in CFSC's areas of work are encouraged to apply to be a Program Assistant from May 1 to August 31, 2015. This is a paid position working full time hours.

Interested in Indigenous rights, penal abolition, civil liberties or other areas of CFSC's work? **Application deadline is February 15, 2015.** Find out more: <http://www.quakerservice.ca/ProgramAssistant>

Conscientious Objectors to be removed from Canada

We've been asking that you write to your MP and Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, in support of CO's. Here's an example letter forwarded to us:

"Dear Minister:

As you likely are aware, an alarming number of US Iraq War resisters in Canada are threatened with deportation now – and more are

expected. Seven COs have received negative decisions on various applications to stay in Canada this fall. I have met many of them and really appreciate them as fine principled people.

Are you aware that:

- Under international law, military personnel can desert and expect protection from foreign governments, particularly when they "can show that the performance of military service would have required his participation in military action contrary to his genuine political, religious or moral convictions, or to valid reasons of conscience" (UNHCR Handbook, paragraph 170).
- There have been many court decisions critiquing how their cases have been assessed and noting what factors Canada must consider (and did not) in its adjudication of their cases. The war resisters ability to expect a fair hearing was compromised by the government calling them "bogus refugees".
- The majority of Canadians want the war resisters to stay in Canada, including myself.



Photo: Toronto Friends at Federal Court hearing for CO Kim Rivera, 2012

- All removal orders/deportations should cease – those who return (or are deported) to the US will be tried and imprisoned by the US military. Punishment for deserting or refusing to perform military service, when based on deeply held moral, religious or political convictions, is a form of persecution.
- Like the Vietnam war resisters before them, the US war resisters came to Canada because of their conscientious objection to an illegal and immoral war.

The U.S. war resisters who are residing in Canada right now should be allowed to stay.

I would like a reply indicating how you are going to act to allow these brave principled young people to remain in Canada, which is and should be their choice.

Sincerely,
Murray D. Lumley"

Now more than ever your support is needed!

<http://quakerservice.ca/news/urgent-action-us-conscientious-objectors-facing-deportation/>

Continuing revelation – alive and well at CFSC!

CFSC has been in a process of long-term discernment regarding our work and our structure (which should support our work). In October, the Board approved a new organizational structure. Now, when Friends are appointed to serve on CFSC, it will be to either sit on the Board (governance, administration) or on a Program Committee (Indigenous Rights, Justice, Peace and Sustainable Communities). Previously, all Friends appointed to CFSC had to cover off everything: program, administration, and governance. A diverse set of skills was needed, and the workload could be overwhelming. After an extraordinary amount of detailed and considered work, a new structure that speaks to the testimony of simplicity and best use of gifts was revealed to us. The new structure will:

- enable Friends to focus on a particular area of service, drawing on their areas of experience and skills;
- create more opportunities for Friends to serve, particularly with regard to program work, and with a reasonable set of expectations;
- not require Friends to fulfill multiple, complex roles with vastly different skills or knowledge requirements.

The focus of CFSC is its program. To that end, Friends serving on Program Committees (and their Associate members) can focus fully on the advancement of CFSC's witness in the world, while a small Board addresses CFSC's governance and administration needs (also a critical responsibility to fulfill).

Sometimes Friends are wary of change – and yet our theology is predicated on new ways being revealed to us as we listen deeply to that of God within. While that may sound odd in relation to an organizational structure, so it is. We are excited to live into this new structure – and fortunate to have been able to discern it out of a desire to do our work better and more faithfully, rather than out of a crisis.

Friends who are exploring service on CFSC through their Monthly Meeting nominations process are invited to be in touch with us to learn more information about service on CFSC. Email cfsc@quakerservice.ca or call 416-920-5213 and we will put you in touch with the Clerk or Nominating Clerk.

Welcome (back), Lesley Robertson!

Lesley Robertson (Vernon Meeting, BC) completed her service as CFSC Clerk and on the Board in August. It seems the lure of the new structure was too tempting! Lesley will rejoin CFSC as Nominating Clerk, a new position focusing specifically on the cultivation of nominations, working with CFSC's Board, its committees (program and administrative), and Canadian Yearly Meeting's Nominating Committee. People are the foundation of our work, and we believe it is important to put time, thought, and energy into supporting the nominations process so that there are good matches between skills and needs.



2015 Canadian School of Peacebuilding

The seventh annual Canadian School of Peacebuilding will be offered this summer at Canadian Mennonite University, in Winnipeg.

Session one runs June 15-19, 2015 and features classes on: women and peacebuilding; youth voices and peace activism; and human rights and peace.

Session two will be June 22-26, 2015 with the following classes: Train the Trainer: Working for Conflict Transformation; Friendship and Peace: The Blackfoot Way; The Justice of God: Questions of Justice in the Bible and the World; and Peace Psychology. Register at: <http://csop.cmu.ca/index.php/registration/>

Canadian Yearly Meeting offers online/distance education

Two free courses are being offered by the national body of Friends in Canada, "Introduction to Quakers and Friends' Ways" and "Being Peace, Being Quaker". Sessions start January 11, 2015 and space is limited.

Contact e-and-o-clerk@quaker.ca if you are interested in participating. More information plus learning guides and materials for the courses are available at: <http://quaker.ca/resources/education/>

CFSC joins in encouraging Canada to help stop torture

On Human Rights Day (Dec 10), we joined with Amnesty International and several of our other partners to encourage Canada to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. This would be an important step in the global efforts to end torture. Canada has promised on multiple occasions to consider ratifying the Optional Protocol, but has yet to actually ratify. Find out more in our open letter: <http://quakerservice.ca/news/5390/>

CFSC writes in support of Friends & others at Burnaby Mountain

We've written a letter of support for those who are taking nonviolent actions on Burnaby Mountain in the lower mainland of British Columbia. Read it at: <http://quakerservice.ca/BurnabyMountain>



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