



QUAKERS

Canadian Friends
Service Committee

Annual Accountability Report 2023

“For Friends the wellspring of faith is the search for what George Fox and early Friends described as the Inner Light... the Truth.”—*Faith and Practice*, Canadian Yearly Meeting



CFSC members and staff during planning meetings at Camp NeeKauNis, September, 2023.

A refreshing breath in (of hope)

CFSC is the national peace and social justice agency of Quakers in Canada and I am both a loyal donor and CFSC's Clerk (chair of the board of directors).

There are many reasons not to, but **I will be bold**. This year, I encourage all of us who care so deeply about justice and peace, and who are hurt by so much in the world—from continued wars to climate change to racism and injustices big and small—I'd like to encourage us to **take a deep refreshing breath in**.

And as we breathe out, **together, let us release** for a moment **any tensions**. **Let us feel hope**. This is CFSC's gift to the world. It only happens **because of you**.

We are small and can only do so much alone. But **together we are** also **powerful** and **a cause for great hope**.

This year, thanks to your donations, there have been many actions taken at Canadian Friends Service Committee that give me just such hope. You will read about some of them in the report to come.

Your gifts have allowed CFSC to expand. **Your voice**—a steady, even-handed, thoughtful voice **for justice and peace**—is **reaching decision makers** like never before.

Your donations allowed for a new staff person—Sandra Wiens—to start working in Ottawa as our first ever Government Relations Representative!

Friends often talk about the importance of **listening**, of **dialogue**, and of **speaking truth to power**. All of these are happening now more than ever. Your newly expanded work in Ottawa is about **relating on a human level** with decision makers in positions of power.

I am **filled with joy** knowing that CFSC now has a **caring and active presence** in Ottawa. Our new Government Relations Representative is working to promote all our program priorities.

This is just one among many major accomplishments this year. It helps me to feel hopeful for the months and years ahead. There are so many signs of **meaningful progress** through the work you **care about** and **invest in with your gifts**.

I'd like to share with you a short video message where I and some Friends from CFSC explain why **we're so excited** about this new Government Relations Representative position:

That isn't the only thing I'm excited about.

At the end of September we also welcomed Yehuda Silverman to our small staff team as our new Peace Program Coordinator. This means that in total CFSC now has eight staff (four full-time and four part-time). This is the **biggest staff team we've ever had!** It has been made possible thanks to your donations and careful planning and stewardship of funds by CFSC's Finance Committee.

Our financial situation continues to be a concern, however, as all of the peace and social justice work CFSC does **relies on a small base of donors**. We've made some attempts but have not been able to grow our fundraising or expand our donor base.

We feel the need to fundraise more successfully to increase the long-term financial sustainability of the work you'll read about.

Your gifts of support for justice and peace are so needed and precious. They have continued all sorts of service work like support for Indigenous people doing grassroots **cultural revitalization**. Your donations have helped us offer hands-on **peace education** workshops. In so many cases **a small gift to Canadian Friends Service Committee creates big ripple effects** in the world.

We thank all those who give gifts large and small to this work. We appreciate everyone who helps to share information (such as the report you're reading!) to inform others. We especially appreciate the efforts of CFSC Liaisons who help to spread the word within their Monthly Meetings. Together **all of us who contribute make this justice and peace work possible!**

I trust that, like me, you'll **feel bold today**. I hope you'll make an impactful **donation to justice and peace**.

In Friendship,



Vince Zelazny,

Clerk, Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

The urgency of justice and peace

The efforts you will read about are funded by individuals like you. Please, **donate now**.

Indigenous peoples' human rights



Our view from the United Nations during the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2023.

The main goals of CFSC's Indigenous rights work are the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and greater engagement by Canadians in the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* affirms international standards for the “dignity, survival and well-being” of Indigenous peoples.

For decades our work supported the adoption of the *Declaration* by the international community. Now, together with partners in the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which we help to coordinate, we continue to push for the *Declaration* to be fully implemented, especially in Canada.

We worked with Coalition partners and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) on how a Crown corporation can decolonize and implement the *UN Declaration*. Multiple meetings were held involving frank and useful dialogue. A final report was then developed by the Coalition and received with gratitude by the CBC.

We visited multiple First Nations and the United Nations in New York and Geneva. We continued to give presentations to educate about the *Declaration*. We helped organize and took part in an Expert Seminar on Monitoring Mechanisms for the Implementation of the *UN Declaration* at the University of British Columbia. And we helped people to learn what the *Declaration* says through sending thousands of pocket-sized copies to Indigenous nations, organizations, schools, and other groups.

We visited with Indigenous partners to ask them questions about reconciliation for our short video series. These and other educational videos we’ve released have been viewed for thousands of hours this year. The series pairs well with the reconciliation queries that we released to help Quakers and others take action on reconciliation.

We’ve also continued to make grants through our Reconciliation Fund to support cultural and land revitalization work by Indigenous individuals and groups. This year we supported 10 projects! We’re excited about the increased demand for Reconciliation Fund grants as word spreads.

One project funded previously was a Mohawk language book for kids. The report explains why this work matters:

“It is so vital and necessary for our language to continue on to future generations. Our language is who we are, it connects us to the land, to our ceremonies and to our ancestors and the spirit realm. Parents and families need a space where they can feel safe to learn and become part of a supportive language learning community.”

Peace



In the midst of devastating violence, staff of American Friends Service Committee deliver food aid to families in Gaza. Photos by Amjad Fayomi.

The main goal of CFSC's peace work is to identify, engage constructively with, and transform conflicts.

In Canada we've continued to offer free workshops to discuss and do exercises from our award-winning book *Are We Done Fighting? Building Understanding in a World of Hate and Division*. Hundreds of people have now taken part.

Overwhelmingly participants say they've learned practical skills and are applying them in difficult conversations. They're helping to overcome the waves of hate and dehumanization we're surrounded by. Here are three quotes from participants this year:

- I learned so much from each chapter—and have repeatedly re-read sections (and shared, with friends and colleagues, their insights and very helpful citations). I've also learned from the group conversations. Thank you, all of you.
- It has been a staggeringly amazing experience. Thank you all for your insights and your wisdom.
- I'm feeling more hopeful after taking this course.

This year we gave four presentations and a podcast interview to university classes and to groups looking to build justice and peace and practice active nonviolence in their lives. And we joined some exciting peace networks to share information and good practices.

We continued our popular blog for *Psychology Today* and also wrote an article for *Peace Research*, Canada's premier academic journal about peace and conflict issues. The article focuses on active nonviolence, how it can help in seeking social justice, and the role that professors who read the journal could play in educating about these skills.

We wrote a new pamphlet about how Quakers can get involved in nonviolent activism and had a successful launch event with a rich discussion about it.

We again acted as a voice for Friends on a range of pressing peace issues like the devastating situation in Gaza, where a partnership with American Friends Service Committee (our sister Quaker agency with local staff) has allowed us to send urgently needed humanitarian aid.

We supported training for Nigerians working at the grassroots to reduce violence and turbulence during their elections in February and March. We funded women's empowerment and rights work in Burundi. And we helped young Israelis access information and support when they decided to follow their hearts and refuse conscription into the military.

And in Toronto we helped provide free high quality advice and support services to refugees and other newcomers.

Criminal justice



The main goal of CFSC's criminal justice work is to eliminate the punitive mindset that pervades society and justice systems by transforming harmful approaches to ones that are healing.

This year we continued work to advance our vision of a transformative justice—promoting responses to crime that are healing rather than causing further harms.

Our education efforts in this area included this brief video we made explaining five effective alternatives to prison:

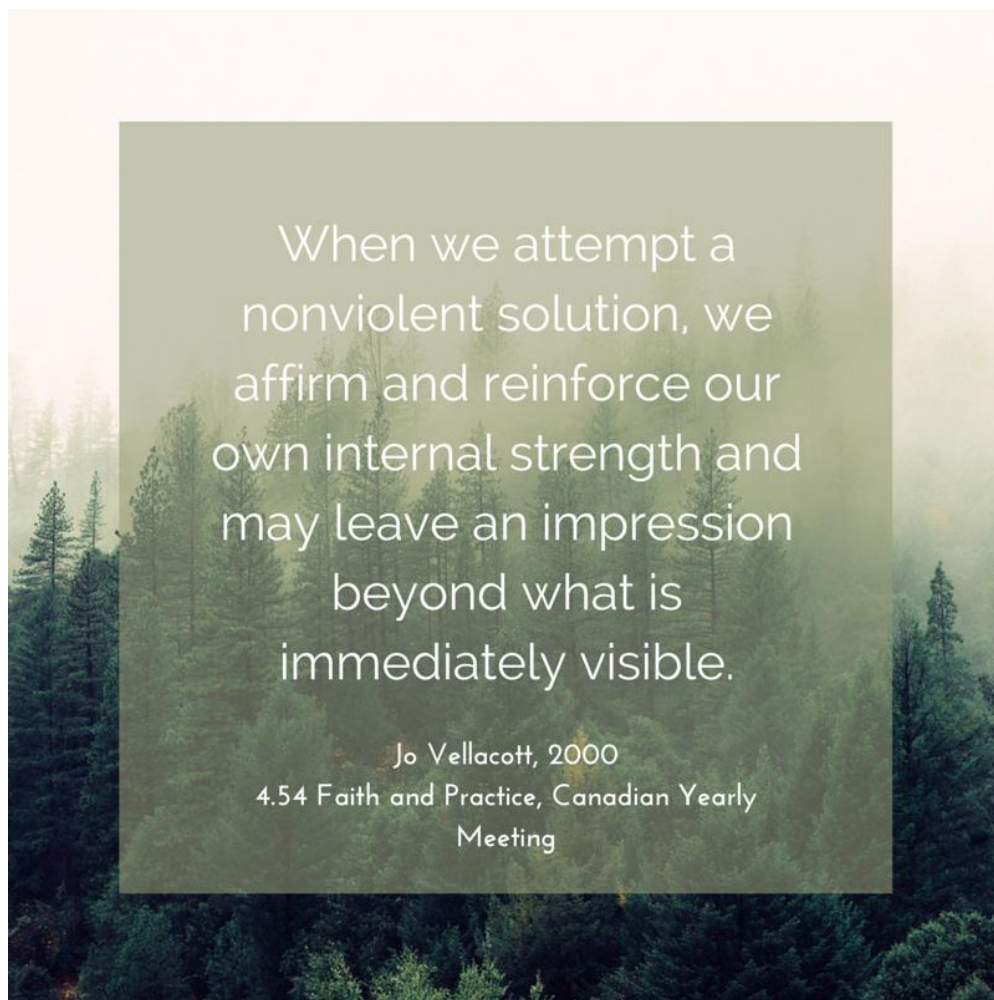
We continue to collaborate with the Canadian Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents. We host the Coalition’s website and help members work together to promote greater respect for children’s rights in Canada.

One form this took is in creating a report and infographic to raise awareness about the number of children with a parent in Canada’s jails and prisons. We also were among the presenters of an educational webinar delivered to over 150 front line practitioners who work with children and youth. Feedback made it clear that participants gained new insights on the realities faced by children with incarcerated parents.

We participated in multiple consultations and on advisory groups to engage with different levels of government, with academics, and with like-minded organizations. We sent educational information and resources to many incarcerated people and chaplains across the country. And we gave financial support for several initiatives helping families and incarcerated persons: through letter writing to those on the inside, through restorative justice housing, and through providing relationships and support to people who’ve just been released from prison.

Your values at work in the world

All of these efforts toward justice and peace are yours. Please, [donate now](#).



In closing

At CFSC we're boldly testing nonviolent solutions every day. We know that this work reaches far beyond what we can convey in a short report.

We're always seeking to discern the truth and be moved by it to help those who need our solidarity and support.

This means that much of what we accomplish happens through relationships and quiet conversations. It doesn't happen in the public eye. It's not something we can easily explain.

Still, we hope that this *Annual Accountability Report* has given you a taste of just a few of the many accomplishments that donors like you have helped realize in the past year.

As a supporter of Canadian Friends Service Committee, you make a difference every single day.

Please **donate now** to stand up for justice and peace.