

# Network News

WISCONSIN NETWORK for PEACE and JUSTICE

AUTUMN 2025

[www.wnpj.org](http://www.wnpj.org)

*Shaping Our Future: We are collectively rebuilding our world, one community at a time.*

**WNPJ member organizations share their thoughts in this issue.**

## Fall Assembly of the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice

# Strengthening our bundle of twigs

By Dena Eakles

It's a simple adage attributed to the famed Shawnee orator and warrior Tecumseh, "A single twig breaks but the bundle of twigs is strong." It signals a critically important message. In his 45 years, Tecumseh developed a keen sense of survival and urged all tribes to work together to resist the expansion of settlers. He faced his life courageously and spoke of waking each day with gratitude. He died in battle. His dreams of unity and resistance were never fully materialized, yet he left his mark and is remembered as a human being of great wisdom and peace.

### WHY TECUMSEH, AND WHY NOW?

The settler mindset is alive and well. John Trudell referred to it as a virus. And in truth it is one to which we have all succumbed, to one degree or another. Now there is a great battle before us. It is not idle chatter to say that today humanity and the earth sit on a volatile precipice.

Therefore, it's incumbent upon those who have not relinquished the possibility of living on this precious earth in peace and harmony to unite. We must do more than resist. Today we must win.

Many of us have been in practice for this moment. WNPJ has upheld the passion for a peaceful and just world for over 30 years. If you take the time to review the 89 organizations who comprise our collective, you will find a diversity unparalleled. You will find courage, clarity, and actions woven into one beautiful tapestry. If you are ever feeling hopeless, look no further than our member organizations for the uplifting commitment to carry on. If you are in need of strategy, somewhere someone is engaging new and

concrete ways to "find a way out of no way". This is the power of our network.

It is in this spirit that we offer this newsletter, our weekly e-bulletins, our assemblies and our commitment to us, all of us. And we welcome other peace-minded warriors to become part of this network so that we can learn from one another. So that our bundle will be unbreakable.

Here is the challenge. We have learned to work alone. We have been trained to be in isolated silos and the divide and conquer of settler mind still resides within us. Now is the time to allow the walls of division to crumble, regardless of differences.

In the upcoming months, the WNPJ Board will be planning another week long Zoom Fall Assembly. You are invited to co-create and to participate. This is our time together to get to know one another, learn from one another and be victorious to end the virus of inhumanity

that threatens all of us. It is the time for peace and justice to prevail and for the earth to be allowed to heal and to care for us as we care for her. Let us put away the settler mind and become the human beings we were always meant to be.

And to that end, we invite members to have a seat at the table of the board.

For your organization to have a voice on the board will enrich all of us. If you would like to find out more about being

a board member, contact Judy Miner at [info@wnpj.org](mailto:info@wnpj.org).

To contribute to the WNPJ's Fall Assembly, October 20-23, either presenting or planning, contact Dena Eakles at [dena.eakles@gmail.com](mailto:dena.eakles@gmail.com) or 608 606 4450.

*The Assembly agenda is on page 10.*



[wnpj.org/post/2025-fall-assembly](http://wnpj.org/post/2025-fall-assembly)

# Worker cooperative incubation

*Cooperative enterprises are autonomous workplaces where workers co-own and manage the business democratically, and equitably distribute profit, losses, and responsibilities among its members. Cooperatives are a way to keep wealth within the community, and offer fair work opportunities to excluded workers, such as those who are immigrants or formerly incarcerated. At Worker Justice Wisconsin, we educate workers on cooperatives, and incubate new businesses or conversions in collaboration with an extensive local support network to lower the barrier of entry for entrepreneurship.*

## Cap Times: After sudden closure, Madison screen printers start their own shop

By Natalie Yahr Oct. 9, 2024

Immediately after workers at Madison screen printing company Crushin' It Apparel voted unanimously to be represented by a union, their boss announced he'd shut down that part of the business.

For Juana Montes and her nephew, Leonel Aguilar, the closure cost them their jobs. But it wasn't long before the two started talking about opening their own business.

They joined with friends, family and the Madison nonprofit Worker Justice Wisconsin to found Los Volcanes, a seven-person cooperative that offers alterations, screen printing and custom clothing, including sewing traditional Mexican outfits for folklore dances.

The cooperative has rented two artist studios at The Joinery, a shared woodworking and art space in Middleton.

"I've suffered a lot of bad experiences at work at Crushin' It," said Montes, an experienced and enthusiastic seamstress. "I decided that it would be better to organize, and thanks to this group, we're making the cooperative."

### CO-OP BORN FROM LABOR STRUGGLES

Workers at Crushin' It presented owner Jeremy Kruk with a list of demands in September 2022, asking him to meet to discuss the heat and working conditions in their south Madison workshop. Workers say Kruk yelled at them, refused to meet and fired them until a National Labor Relations Board judge told him that was illegal.

Two months later, after workers voted to be represented by the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District 7, Kruk fired them again.

"Due to the financial strains on the business, we've closed up those divisions and will no longer produce them. We sold or are in process of selling all of the equipment," Kruk told the *Capital Times*. "This door to my life

is now closed."

Kruk owes workers a total of about \$8,200 in unpaid wages, according to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Wage and Hour Division, which ordered him to pay that amount by July 20, 2023.

Months later, Kruk appeared in videos posted to the Facebook page of "Thunder Bay formally known as Crushin' It." The videos, which identified Kruk as the owner of Thunder Bay, explained the company had rebranded and moved to Columbus, 22 miles from its former facility.

Under federal labor law, it is legal for an employer to shut down a unionized business because of union activity, but it is illegal to continue operating and refuse to negotiate. When asked by the *Cap Times* last year, Kruk said he was an employee, not an owner, of the new company.

Most of the members of Los Volcanes never worked at Crushin' It. Some are family members of Montes



and Aguilar. Others learned about the project through Worker Justice Wisconsin, the worker advocacy organization that "incubated" the cooperative.

Josefina Julian spent 13 years working at a local day care before losing her job last December. The idea of joining a cooperative where she could help make the decisions appealed to Julian. At her last job, she said, she didn't get sick time, and she couldn't choose when to use her vacation days.

"They don't understand that we're human beings too, that we have families, that our children can get sick and need our help," Julian said. "It's really difficult to work with people who sometimes don't value our time, so we decided to stop putting up with mistreatment, to be our own bosses and decide how to spend our own time."

Julian said she and many other Latinos stayed in bad jobs because they didn't speak enough English for other jobs, but the work was often so exhausting that taking classes in the evening seemed impossible.

### HOPING TO TURN A PROFIT

Initially, the future founders of Los Volcanes thought

PLEASE SEE PAGE 3



# Memorial Day with Madison Veterans for Peace



Madison Veterans for Peace Clarence Kailin Chapter 25 commemorated Memorial Day 2025 with an event at the Madison Masonic Center. With the spacious Grand Ballroom, 30 local organizations co-sponsored the event, with many tabling around the perimeter with information of interest to participants. John

Nichols provided the keynote speech, with music by Old Cool. Esty Dinur reminded people of the dire need to stop the genocide in Gaza, and Will Williams concluded the event. Red carnations were provided for placing at the Abraham Lincoln Brigade memorial a few blocks away. [madisonvfp.org](http://madisonvfp.org)

## Los Volcanes Cooperative

FROM PAGE 2

they'd become part of a Milwaukee screen printing cooperative, Shaky Hands. Members of Shaky Hands had read about the troubles at Crushin' It and contacted Worker Justice Wisconsin, inviting the unemployed workers to create a Madison branch of their cooperative.

Coordinating at a distance proved difficult, so the Madison workers opted to use what they learned from the Milwaukee veterans to start their own project.

"So we decided to look for a name to make our cooperative," Montes said.

With help from a free graphic design program called Canva and Frida Ballard, a worker cooperative organizer for Worker Justice Wisconsin, they created a design inspired by Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl, two iconic volcanoes in their home state of Puebla, Mexico.

The cooperative isn't making money yet, so no one is getting paid. Some members have other jobs, but all of them meet each Monday evening in the cooperative's side-by-side screen printing and sewing studios to update each other and make plans for the work ahead.

Those who can are encouraged to come at other times, too, to use the sewing machines, heat press and vinyl cutter.

"We don't have a budget yet, so obviously we have

jobs outside of the cooperative," Julian said. "When one of the people has some free time, they come here and start printing or sewing."

They're investing their time, they say, in hopes of making the project a success. Through word of mouth, people have already bought bags and shirts emblazoned with the group's logo. Soon they plan to create a website and open an online store.

"We're volunteering for now, trying to get more work," Montes said.

"We are available for any small business interested in our work," Julian said. "We want to start from there."

The former Crushin' It workers are still waiting to get paid, Ballard said. In April 2024, Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul sued Kruk for the more than \$8,000 in wages owed to workers.

In June 2023, the National Labor Relations Board ordered Kruk to take more than 30 corrective actions, including reinstating the workers and paying any lost earnings or benefits within 14 days, and ceasing from "equating employees' protected concerted activity to extortion and lying." That judgment comes with a penalty of 6% for every additional day until the debt is paid, Ballard said.

[WorkerJustice.org](http://WorkerJustice.org)



# Resist government cruelty — take up your cross!

On Saturday, August 2, a diverse coalition of faith leaders and concerned citizens of conscience marched up State Street to the Capitol, with an eight-foot wooden cross, in a powerful act of public witness and silent protest. The event — Resist Government Cruelty: Take Up Your Cross! — was inspired by Rev. David Couper, retired Madison Police Chief and Episcopal priest. “You don’t have to be religious to feel the weight of what’s happening in our country. To take up the cross is to stand with the vulnerable and say, ‘Enough.’ Enough cruelty. Enough silence. Enough complicity.”

Though steeped in Christian symbolism, the action brought together several hundred people of faith and conscience who believe in human dignity, justice, and



non-violence. Organizers said they were reclaiming the cross not as a symbol of domination, but as a symbol of moral courage—a sign of solidarity with the suffering and a call to resist injustice in all its forms.

Interfaith Peace Working Group  
[interfaithpeacewg.org](http://interfaithpeacewg.org)

## Help stop another preemption of local control!

**The Wisconsin Legislature threatens to make local ordinances regulating CAFOs illegal. We need all hands on deck to stop this!**

This is a call to support the efforts of Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network (SRWN) to protect local control at the statewide level.

Our local communities have the legal power and responsibility to defend public health and safety. Current regulatory structures for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) have a singular focus on water quality, (and even that is lacking), leaving it up to local governments to protect public priorities including air quality, biosecurity, fire safety, disaster-mitigation, property values, road impacts, etc.

A growing number of Wisconsin counties and townships have put protections in place by passing Operations Ordinances. These are not bans, but through extensive study and public debate between area stakeholders Operations Ordinances put protections in place that



have passed in both liberal and conservative communities. They are a basic and appropriate exercise of our democratic process and local control.

Operations Ordinances raise the bar on industrial livestock operations by asking them to address community concerns and behave as good neighbors. Big Ag’s Madison lobbyists want to outlaw local ordinances, and they’ve tried this before: last year SRWN stopped the state from making these ordinances illegal through a concerted campaign that resulted in 800+ messages to the Governor! Good work team!

We need to pull together again. With your support, SRWN can retain our own lobbyist to help make our rural voices heard in Madison and protect our health and property. Grassroots action has gotten us far, but a lobbyist helps make sure we can be at all the right meetings, have an inside scoop on the Capitol as things develop, and can go into meetings with all the insights we need to be effective.

SRWN is a coalition of grassroots groups working to take our local voices to the state level in Madison. SRWN has a statewide goal of raising \$10k to retain a lobbyist; you can visit us at [SustainRuralWisconsin.org](http://SustainRuralWisconsin.org) to contribute to SRWN’s work protecting Operations Ordinances from current threats at the state level.

# The Practice of Hope, and LGBTQ+ Advocacy Today

## Dear LGBTQ+ allies:

I want to talk about hope, and what it means at this moment. As I continue to work and fight and continue with the everyday tasks of being a person amidst a period of increasing authoritarianism, I find myself returning to a quote from activist and grassroots organizer, Mariame Kaba: “Hope is a discipline, and we have to practice it every single day.”

In other words, the practice of holding on to hope and cultivating it is a deliberate act. It is not always easy, and there are certainly days when I feel anything but hopeful. But returning to hope, wherever we can find it, is what keeps us moving forward. We build hope and

connection is important. That even if we disagree, there is still the possibility of a dialogue. That my hesitation in attending the Fair Wisconsin Equality Day event was groundless. And that I’ll be back next time.” Susan’s story reminds us that it’s never too late to make your voice heard, and that our visibility and voices have the power to shift the tide.

## HEAR SUSAN’S STORY

HIV and public health advocates are drawing connections between attacks on LGBTQ+ health and attacks on harm reduction and unhoused people, in a statement by the Center for HIV Law and Policy on criminalization.



find it in each other as a way of reminding ourselves that a better world is possible, and it is our responsibility to seek it out, and to keep fighting. Here are a few of the places our team is finding hope this week:

Wisconsin’s Attorney General Kaul has joined a coalition of sixteen states in suing the Trump administration for targeting transgender youth. In a press release, Kaul stated, “The administration should be respecting individual liberty and equal rights, not shamefully targeting transgender people.” We’re finding hope in this reminder that we are far from alone in the fight for our trans community members.

## READ MORE

In this month’s edition of *Our Lives Magazine*, Susan from the Fox Cities writes about her experience connecting with elected officials at Equality Day this past May. Although she started the day having never written to a representative before, Susan writes that she finished the day, “knowing that state representatives want to meet with their constituents, and that establishing a personal

CHLP writes, “Our communities need resources, not more exploitation and extraction.... Disabled people have been and always will be the dreamweavers, world builders, and architects towards collective liberation for all of us.” I’m hopeful about how our ability to be in solidarity with those most marginalized opens up new opportunities for resistance, and a stronger movement overall.

## LEARN ABOUT CHLP’S WORK

There is no one way to fight back against authoritarianism and anti-LGBTQ+ violence. From legislative advocacy, to battles in the courts, to grassroots initiatives to ensure our community is fed, housed, and safe, LGBTQ+ advocates are resisting every day. Our resistance, and our hope, is our legacy and our future. Thank you for being in the fight with us.

*In community,*

Cait Mallery

Statewide Community Organizer, Fair Wisconsin

<https://fairwisconsin.com/our-work/>



## Bringing Spirituality and Environment Together:

# Faith in Place's Annual Environment and Spirituality Summit 2025

By Muhammad Shahzad Hussain

Faith in Place is excited to announce our Annual Environment and Spirituality (AES) Summit 2025, formerly known as the Green Team Summit. Each year, this gathering brings together faith leaders, environmentalists, and community members for insightful conversations on the intersections of spirituality, justice, and care for our Earth.

This year's Summit will take place September 29–30, 2025, featuring four inspiring sessions. Past Summits have hosted world-renowned voices such as Katharine Hayhoe, Leah Thomas, Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner, and Lama Rod Owens. Building on that tradition, the 2025 theme — “Strong and Connected” — will be reflected in powerful talks from this year's speakers:

- Rev. Dr. Randy Woodley — A Cherokee descendant recognized by the United Keetoowah Band, Dr. Woodley is a teacher, writer, activist, and farmer whose work uplifts kinship with land and community as essential to healing.

- Dr. Carolyn Finney — A storyteller, cultural geographer, and author of *Black Faces, White Spaces*, she explores the deep connections between people, place, and identity.

- Lyanda Lynn Haupt — An award-winning naturalist, ecophilosopher, and author of *Rooted*, *Crow Planet*, and *The Urban Bestiary*, she invites us to rediscover wonder and attentiveness in our relationship with the natural world.

- *Keynote Speaker*: Robin Wall Kimmerer — A renowned scientist, author, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Dr. Kimmerer has inspired readers worldwide through her bestselling book *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

At Faith in Place, we believe that today's environmental crisis is, at its heart, a spiritual crisis of disconnection—from faith, from one another, and from the Earth. The AES Summit seeks to heal those connections by inviting us to reflect, learn, and act together.

Each of this year's speakers will bring a unique lens to the theme: from Indigenous understandings of resilience and care (Dr. Woodley), to the stories of the Earth that hold us (Dr. Finney), to practices of kinship and wonder (Lyanda Haupt), and finally to the reciprocal strength between humans and the natural world (Dr. Kimmerer).

The Summit will be held online, with special watch parties for the keynote session on September 30 across

Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Wisconsin locations include:

- Milwaukee — Solomon Community Temple UMC, 3295 North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
- Madison — Friends Meetinghouse, 1704 Roberts Court
- Fond du Lac — Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes 320 County Road K
- La Crosse — First Congregational Church UCC (2503 Main Street

If you're not near these sites but would like to host a watch party in your own congregation or community space, please contact Laura Lane ([laura@faithinplace.org](mailto:laura@faithinplace.org)) or Muhammad Shahzad Hussain ([shahzad@faithinplace.org](mailto:shahzad@faithinplace.org)) for more details.

To prepare for the Summit, we encourage participants to read or listen to Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* and her latest work, *The Serviceberry*. Both are available on Audible and Libby, narrated by the author herself.

Please visit AES Summit to learn more about the event and for free registration. And join us as we come together—strong and connected—to nurture our spirits, communities, and the Earth.

<https://aes-summit.org>

2025 ANNUAL ENVIRONMENT & SPIRITUALITY SUMMIT

## Four Unique Perspectives

ABOUT THE SUMMIT

This year's Summit will explore the theme of 'Strong and Supported,' offering four sessions each diving into ways we can give and receive healing to the Earth around us and create a healthier and more just world.

Rev. Dr. Randy Woodley	Dr. Carolyn Finney	Lyanda Lynn Haupt	Robin Wall Kimmerer
Session #1	Session #2	Session #3	Keynote Session
Sep 29, 2025 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM (CT)	Sep 29, 2025 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM (CT)	Sep 30, 2025 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM (CT)	Sep 30, 2025 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM (CT)

## SEPTEMBER 29-30, 2025

ABOUT THE HOST

Faith in Place is dedicated to empowering people of diverse faiths and spiritualities to be leaders in advancing environmental and racial justice, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities.

FREE REGISTRATION: [AES-SUMMIT.ORG](https://aes-summit.org)

Virtual Summit

Register online for free: [aes-summit.org](https://aes-summit.org)

Faith in Place

# Support our allies who are Afghan refugees

By Robert W. Thomson and Tom Morgan

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem has called for the removal of Temporary Protected Status for nearly 12,000 Afghan refugees currently in the U.S. and has ordered their return to Afghanistan, citing the country's "improved security situation."

Temporary Protected Status can be granted by the Homeland Security secretary to people of various nationalities who are in the United States. In theory, they can't be deported and can work legally but don't necessarily have a path to citizenship.

In May, the Department of Homeland Security wrote that "the secretary determined that, overall, there are notable improvements in the security and economic situation such that requiring the return of Afghan nationals to Afghanistan does not pose a threat to their personal safety due to armed conflict or extraordinary and temporary conditions."

This characterization of the situation contradicts a recent United Nations description of Afghanistan as a country that "continues to deteriorate." Noem's words also fly in the face of a warning on the U.S. State Department website that lists the dangers in Afghanistan as "civil unrest, crime, terrorism, risk of wrongful detention, kidnapping and limited health facilities."

## UPHOLDING OUR PROMISE

More to the point, the people Noem wants to deport were Afghan citizens who consistently supported and assisted U.S. troops during the war there from 2001 to 2021. Many Afghans in the U.S. today were our allies who stood with America during that brutal conflict.

"Since so many of those losing their protections served alongside U.S. forces, we should honor that service by upholding our promise to provide safety and ensure that they have an opportunity to thrive here. We urge Congress to protect Afghans by providing them permanent status — a commitment that is long overdue," said Jennie Murray, president and CEO of the National Immigration Forum, a nonprofit organization.

"This suspension abandons Afghan interpreters, contractors and their families who made unimaginable sacrifices to support and protect American service members abroad," said Naveed Shah, U.S. Army veteran and political director of Common Defense, a veterans' organization.

And from Lt. Col. Mark Belinsky (ret.) of the Military Officers Association of America: "[We] continue to advocate for the protection of our Afghan allies, asking Congress and the Executive Branch to prioritize their

resettlement and ensure a clear path to citizenship."

In addition, Matthew Shuman, chair of the American Legion Security Commission, said: "Our Afghan allies have stood alongside America's service members ... and then earned the right to call America home, seek citizenship and fly the American flag on the front porch of their own home in our beautiful nation."

The American Legion joined other Veteran Service Organizations on Feb. 8, 2024, in calling Congress to mandate support and assistance for our wartime Afghan allies. Specifically, the Legion is asking Congress to establish a path to permanent legal residency for the Afghan allies who supported American troops in Afghanistan.

By turning its back on the Afghans, the Trump administration not only jeopardizes the lives of our allies but also undermines trust in America's commit-

---

Don't deport them. Many assisted U.S. troops during the war in their home country. DHS Secretary Noem's characterization of improved conditions there is not backed by evidence.

---

ment to its military ethos. Sending them back would be a stain on America's honor and a direct violation of the trust these individuals placed in our nation and its service members. "Leave no one behind" is a core principle and creed within the U.S. military, emphasizing the commitment to account for every member of a unit after battle. This principle extends beyond combat and into everyday life, emphasizing the importance of supporting and assisting fellow service members in need.

This principle should certainly extend to America's allies. We call on our representatives in Congress to support our Afghan allies, not deport them.

We should all be ashamed.

*Robert W. Thomson is a retired U.S. Army major, and Tom Morgan is a retired U.S. Navy lieutenant. Both live in Duluth. Their views are endorsed by the League of Women Voters of Minnesota, the Duluth chapter of the American Association of University Women as well as the Twin Cities and Twin Ports chapters of Veterans for Peace. [VeteransforPeace.org](https://VeteransforPeace.org)*

*Thanks to Phil Anderson of the Twin Ports VFP chapter, also a WNPJ member, who sent out an alert and a petition about this to all the VFP Chapters in Wisconsin.*

*A sample letter to members of Congress is on page 13.*



# Family Farm Defenders stands with farmworkers, calls attention to the true causes of our immigration crisis

*By John Peck, Executive Director, Family Farm Defenders*

Since our organization, the Family Farm Defenders (FFD), began in the early 1990s, we knew that the fate of food and farm systems around the world are inexorably linked to one another. We witnessed how free trade deals uprooted people globally, depressing prices for all farmers thus destroying rural communities worldwide. Visits our members have taken around the world, including to Mali, the European Union, Brazil, and Mexico, among other places, have helped us understand the realities of farmers and farm workers, and how the health of our planet and one another are intricately linked.

This knowledge grounds our strong opposition to the Trump administration's program of mass deportation. Facts and reporting show that the administration's claim that they are "going after the worst first," is a lie. We know that the mass, indiscriminate arrests of migrants,

view migrants—particularly farm workers—as critical inputs to their businesses as well as the food processing and distribution industry. We, too, understand that representation.

It is a fact that there are more farm workers now than there are farmers (between two to three million of the former, under two million of the latter), and that without these laborers, about half of whom do not have legal authorization to be in the country, US farming would be in dire straits. Accordingly, some organizations promote visa reform, including plans to increase the H2A program, while others seek legal pathways for fish processing workers, and some advocate for undocumented people to receive driver's licenses so that they can get to work safely.

But we emphasize that farm workers are more than inputs for businesses. Workers are members of our

communities who have families and children. We share a common humanity regardless of where we were born, or the color of our skin.

As people born in this country, citizens have done nothing to gain that privilege. We have passports that allow us to travel the world, while most others on this planet risk their lives to come here to work in dangerous, poorly-paid jobs just to have a chance of making a better living for themselves and their families. To tell migrants to "do it the right way," or "like our ancestors did," simply doesn't make sense, because most do try to "do it the right way."

We know the reasons why migrants, many of whom lack legal status, come to the US—global

economic shifts and violence that they are not responsible for. The immigrants picking lettuce in California or milking cows in Wisconsin did not

sign NAFTA when it came into force in 1994. Still, they felt its impact as their domestic markets were flooded with cheap goods, losing their way of life and ability to farm and feed their communities.

To speak of law and order in this context is nonsense; the laws migrants break when they cross the border—many of whom came in the 1990s and 2000s—were passed in the 1950s and 1960s, at a time when migration to the US was virtually nil. The lack of real legal reform since then is the fault of our politicians, not immigrants.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 9



"No Hate in the Dairy State" — Family Farmers and Farm Workers Unite to Defend Immigrant Rights at WI State Capitol

including of farm workers and day laborers, silences workers by terrorizing them.

Not to help the country, mass arrests and detention lines the pockets of executives in the private, for-profit immigration detention complex, led by corporations like Geo Group and CoreCivic. Always central to Trump's racist and dehumanizing rhetoric concerning migrants, his administration's plans are different this time for their scale and intensity.

Meanwhile, most farm groups also denounce the plan to engage in mass deportations, because they



# Farmworkers and the immigration crisis

FROM PAGE 8

A comparison to the Fugitive Slave law of 1850 is apt: just prior to the civil war, Congress' passing of this law required that escaped slaves had to be returned to their owners if they made it to free states. As part of the abolition movement, many immigrant farmers and workers, along with local officials, actively resisted federal agents who were kidnapping people in their community.

Similarly today, FFD supports the right of private citizens and government officials *not* to cooperate with ICE or other federal entities who are engaged in abusive and violent deportation activities.

Slavery and farm work in the US are not the same, although at times that may be the case. Instead, the larger point is that our laws need to be reformed. The reason people are in the US is not some nefarious plot to commit crimes, but to improve their economic realities.

Moreover, the US depended on importing farm labor for over twenty years with the Bracero program (1942-1964). Before that, workers crisscrossed the border freely, as did Indigenous people.

With the US's system's roots in the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act, the H-2 program only really begins with the 1986 Immigration and Reform Control Act when then-President Reagan created the H2A program for farm workers. But since its inception, this program has woefully understaffed farms—with just under 400,000 workers coming in 2024. Moreover, this program is rife with abuse, as various farm worker organizations have researched and noted. Farm workers also have their pay determined before arriving, with no rights to form a union or complain about working conditions.

Various legal reforms are possible in this context, including providing a path to citizenship for undocumented workers, reforming visa programs and the asylum process to end abuse, and assuring the right to workers to form unions and collectively bargain over wages and improving work conditions.

We also know that migrants crossing borders are not individuals seeking to commit crimes, but instead people trying to escape from a combination of social factors. Accordingly, we:

- Call for ceasefires at places where wars are currently waging, including with ending the use of food as a weapon, and
- Demand trade deals, global and/or regional, that respect worker and farmer rights, giving people the chance earn a dignified living where they live, rather than being the victims of corporate globalization.

Family Farm Defenders respects the principles of food sovereignty, which includes striving for dignified work

conditions for everyone in agriculture. Our government violates these principles when they terrorize workers with the threat of deportation, family separation or a return to the violence they hope to escape through migration. As our changing government policies show, they do not care about the dignity of workers or farmers (as their export-first, slapdash agricultural policy makes clear). We will do everything within our power to defend the dignity of farmers and farm workers.

## BECOME A MEMBER OF FAMILY FARM DEFENDERS

Family Farm Defenders depends upon the support of generous individuals and their financial contributions in order to continue our work. The benefits of membership include a subscription to our quarterly Defender newsletter, the power to help make decisions at our annual meeting, as well as the opportunity to participate in our monthly conference calls. We realize that not everyone can afford to make a donation, so we welcome requests for membership even from those who can not make a financial contribution. Family Farm Defenders is a registered 501 (c) 3 nonprofit, so any donation you may make is also tax deductible.

There is a membership form to download, print out and mail to us with a check (all membership donations are tax deductible!) — see [familyfarmers.org](http://familyfarmers.org)



**URBAN TRIAGE**  
**UNHOUSED YOUTH INITIATIVE**

**WE'RE HERE TO HELP!**  
Our **Unhoused Youth Initiative** supports unsheltered & unaccompanied young adults ages 17.5-25 who need housing and services.

**HOW WE CAN HELP:**

- ✓ Rapid Rehousing
- ✓ Scattered Transitional Housing
- ✓ Emerging Adults Transitional Housing
- ✓ Supportive Services
- ✓ Case Manager/Peer Support

**SCAN HERE** for more info!

If you have any questions or would like more information, please email [info@urbantriage.org](mailto:info@urbantriage.org).

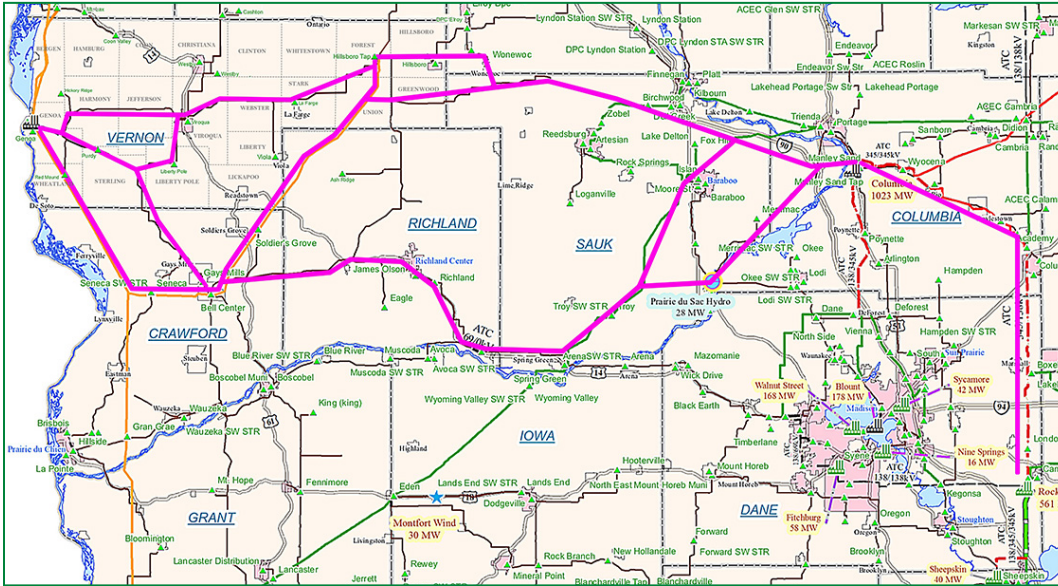
# Largest transmission lines in the state proposed for southwest Wisconsin

New electric transmission lines are being proposed that would cut across Crawford, Vernon, Sauk, Columbia and Richland Counties. All existing transmission lines are being considered for potential siting.

If you would like to be kept informed on this issue and opportunities to keep this process as democratic and transparent as possible, or if you have expertise/experience that might help this effort, please contact Dena

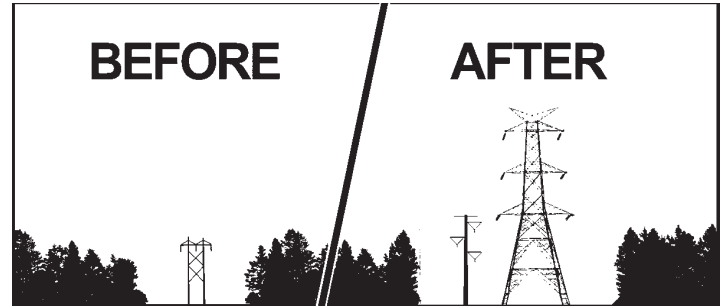
Eakles at [Dena.eakles@gmail.com](mailto:Dena.eakles@gmail.com) or Rob Danielson at [typ@mwmt.net](mailto:typ@mwmt.net) or Crawford Stewardship Project at [contact@craftwardstewardship.org](mailto:contact@craftwardstewardship.org).

Please see the UPDATED map with some of the many potential routes between the current Mississippi River crossover point (Genoa) and the (first) final destination Columbia (Portage). Several options and routes are not yet on this map. For example, the project could also follow the existing 161 kV line NORTH out of Genoa to La Crosse and then follow interstate 90 to Portage.



One possible route shows the line following an existing transmission corridor, replacing the current 70-foot towers with new 200-foot towers, making it the largest transmission line in Wisconsin.

This project is still in the discussion phase and being questioned, local voices can make a difference. Crawford Stewardship Project and others are gathering information to determine impacts and to identify both stakeholders and decision makers. We will begin engaging local communities in the coming weeks to ensure local stakeholders have a seat at the table as discussions and decisions unfold.



Existing 161,000 Volt (161 kV)  
Wooden "H" Pole Transmission Line  
Genoa - Gays Mills - Hillsboro  
70' High - 100' Wide Corridor

Double 161 kV / 765,000 Volt (765 kV)  
Steel Transmission Lines  
Genoa - Gays Mills - Hillsboro  
95' / 200' High - 200' Wide Corridor

## WNPJ's Fall Assembly will be via Zoom, giving access to people throughout the state.

### AGENDA • [wnpj.org/post/2025-fall-assembly](http://wnpj.org/post/2025-fall-assembly)

As with the Spring Assembly we are opting for one hour evening times — four events **October 20, 21, 22 and 23**. Each evening will have one or two guest speakers and time for discussion on the most pressing topics of our time.

### BOARD NOMINATIONS

There will be nominations and elections of Board members and for a Treasurer. This will be made available for all members to participate in via email.

The deadline for nominations is October 6. Send your interest and one paragraph about why you'd like to be on the Board to [info@wnpj.org](mailto:info@wnpj.org).

### PRESENTERS

If you would like to present on a topic during the Assembly week, please contact [dena.eakles@gmail.com](mailto:dena.eakles@gmail.com).

We look forward to engaging with all of you on the great work you are doing and to align with our goals in the future. Also expect some new videos!

— *The Board of WNPJ*



# News from Madeline Island

By Skabewis (Paul DeMain)

A resource delegation was recently organized by the Wisconsin Historical Society and Madeline Island Museum and held a three-day sprint around the Chequamegon Bay region, wild rice beds and islands while

The reconstruction of the 120-year-old canoe was led by Kevin Finney of the Great Lakes Lifeways Institute and his partner Kaesha Baloch, while the new birch canoe construction by Red Cliff elder Marvin Defoe was sponsored by the Madeline Island Museum and private island donors.

These birch canoes, along with previously constructed canoes and dug-out will be on full display at the Madeline Island Flicker House on Madeline Island the last weekend of September leading up to the annual recognition ceremonies to Chief Buffalo and the Treaty of 1854 on September 30 of each year.

For more information see [www.flickerhouse.org](http://www.flickerhouse.org).



Buffalo Journey Historic discussion group

discussing Ojibwe Chief Buffalo's historic trip in 1852 to Washington D.C. to secure a new Treaty.

The Treaty of 1854 allowed the Ojibwe to stay in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, while confined to reserved land areas but retaining the right to hunt, fish and gather on their former lands in the ceded territory.

The information and resources gathered will be utilized in a new exhibition at the newly constructed State Historical Society Museum on the Capitol Square in Madison, Wisconsin.

New and interesting projects have been launched on Mooningwanakaaning (Madeline Island) this year through the cooperative effort of several non-profits and organizations on the island.

Native American Educational Technologies, Inc (NAET) overseen by Paul DeMain hosts many of the project leaders and volunteers, in cooperative with the Madeline Island Museum whose Executive Director is the former Chair of the Bad River Reservation.

NAET is also affiliated with the Manitou Makoonse Gitigan (Little Spirit Bear Garden) overseen by Dr. PennElys Droz and where Indigenous agricultural projects are revitalizing ancient brands of white flint corn, beans, squash, herbs and medicines. The Gitigan is now hosting a tiny house model build as well.



The new birchbark canoe taking shape under the guidance of Red Cliff elder Marvin DeFoe and many volunteers stopping by each day this summer.

---

## Mothers Against Gun Violence

# “I pray for the day these tragedies end.”

Mothers Against Gun Violence was born out of unimaginable loss. Its founder, Debra Gillispie, lost her only son, Kirk Patrick Bickham Jr., and his two friends, Deshawn Winbush and Carl Hall, to a felon with a gun.

Debra first learned of her son's murder not from a police officer or a family member but from the evening news. She heard the chilling words: “Three men were shot. Two are dead. One is in critical condition. It must have been drug or gang related.”

What a devastating way for a mother to discover that her child's life had been stolen. In that single broadcast, the boys' humanity was stripped away. Because they were young Black men in Milwaukee, the media assumed the worst. No sympathy. No compassion. No call for community support. Instead, coded words painted them as guilty of their own deaths as if they “deserved what they got.”

Debra refused to let that be her son's story. She fought tirelessly to reclaim his narrative demanding that his life be remembered with dignity, not dismissed with stereotypes. That fight grew into a mission: to help other families do the same.

Through Mothers Against Gun Violence, Debra has dedicated her life to elevating the voices of survivors of gun violence through art, storytelling, and media. Each time a survivor shares their truth whether through an interview, a play, a news special, or on a Voices of Gun Violence Interactive Bus Shelter they are validated. Their stories matter. Their loved ones matter.

But Debra's journey of loss did not end there. Years

later, she faced another unbearable tragedy. Her last child, her daughter, Daylesha Bickham, died from fentanyl poisoning. For a long time, Debra stayed silent. Honoring her grandson's wish not to have his mother's story told. Then, three years later, he called his grandmother with words that opened the door: “You can talk about my mom now.”

## Mothers Against Gun Violence



With that blessing, Debra joined co-organizer Heddy Keith to hold Wisconsin's inaugural National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day in Milwaukee on August 21, 2025. Together, they received proclamations from the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, and the Governor recognition of a day that will now stand as a reminder of lives lost and communities still fighting to heal.

Debra shares: “Every August 21, I hope to honor my daughter and the Wisconsin families who have lost loved ones to fentanyl poisoning. And every day, I pray that my work will not be needed forever. That one day, I will no longer have to advocate against fentanyl, or record the stories of survivors of gun violence. I pray for the day these tragedies end.”

[magvwi.org](http://magvwi.org)

---

## Join Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice!

**Suggested annual dues:** \$35 Individual • \$52 Sustaining • \$45 Family • \$10 Fixed Income

\$50 Organization without paid staff • \$75 Organization with paid staff • Benefactor: any amount

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization's name, if an organizational membership \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I am ☐ renewing, or ☐ a new member • Phone \_\_\_\_\_ • Email \_\_\_\_\_

Join or renew online at [wnpj.org/membership](http://wnpj.org/membership), or send checks payable to **WNPJ, PO Box 727, Madison, WI 53701. Thanks!**



---

# Sample letter to representatives on Afghan refugee deportation

Mailing and/or e-mail addresses can be found on your Representative's or Senator's website.

*Representative or Senator [Name]:*

I am [we are] contacting you about the current administration's actions to deport Afghan refugees. I urge you to oppose this harmful, unnecessary, counterproductive, and shameful policy.

In May the Department of Homeland Security announced that "Temporary Protected Status" for 11,700 Afghanistan refugees would end in July and Afghan refugees would be subject to deportation. DHS Secretary Kristi Noem said that there have been "improvements in the security and economic situation" and that "requiring the return of Afghan nationals to Afghanistan does not pose a threat to their personal safety..."

But this is not true. Knowledgeable sources familiar with the actual situation refute Sec. Noam's claims. The U.N. Refugee Agency says Afghanistan "continues to deteriorate." The U.S. State Department website lists the dangers in Afghanistan as "civil unrest, crime, terrorism, risk of wrongful detention, kidnapping and limited health facilities."

An estimated 195,000 Afghans have immigrated to the U.S in the last two decades. Years of war and political instability drove this immigration. Under President Biden 76,000 came with "humanitarian parole" status after the U.S withdrawal in 2021. To put these numbers in perspective, in 2022 this represented 0.4% of the U.S. immigrant population.

Many of these refugees cooperated with, or worked for, U.S. or other foreign governments or NGO organizations. Many supported U.S. intervention, occupation, nation building or combat operations. They were our friends, allies and, in some cases comrades in arms.

A core principle in military training is that you never leave anyone behind on the battlefield. It is a key "military value." You don't abandon people in danger without doing everything possible to bring them to safety. Deporting Afghan refugees will likely result in their death or incarceration.

This is not just a policy issue. It is a moral issue. Many of these people risked their lives to support our mission or protect our troops and they deserve to have the promises made, or implied, kept. They stood by us and now we should stand by them. The refugees who fled the chaos of war (for which the U.S. is significantly responsible) or the oppressive, despotic Taliban regime, also should be allowed to stay in the United States. Providing refuge for people "yearning to be free" is an American tradition and core value.

By turning its back on the Afghan refugees, the Trump administration not only jeopardizes the lives of our friends and allies but also undermines trust in America. Sending them back would be a stain on America's honor, integrity and the reliability of our promises and commitments. Deporting Afghan refugees will destroy our credibility and weaken future efforts for international cooperation

I [we] urge you to stop the deportation of Afghan refugees and to ensure that our Afghan allies and their families receive the protection they deserve.

*Signed . . .*