



Funds Distribution Report

Recipient Organization:
Whatcom Peace & Justice Center

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Organization's General Goals:

Whatcom Peace & Justice Center works to create a voice for peace and social justice in Whatcom County through partnerships with local community and religious organizations, direct action, public witness, and education on alternatives to violence and war. We call on our government and society to disavow policies of violence and seek a culture of peace.

Date of Award:	Level:
2019 Q2	\$500 to \$2,500

For more information, please read the attached report from Whatcom Peace & Justice Center.

8802 27th Ave NE
Tulalip, WA 98271
TulalipCares.org

Q2 2019 14.2

Grant report: Whatcom Peace & Justice Center

whatcompjc.org

September, 17 2020

Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic, the Whatcom Peace and Justice Center's (WPJC) education and outreach programs experienced a year of much growth. Through workshops, study groups, lectures, school visits, and other community events, we had direct contact with over 1,000 community members, and reached an additional 3,000 through online communications - thanks to the work of four new youth Peace Ambassadors and interns.

We are so grateful for the support of the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions Fund, which enables us to support our community's health, equity and sustainability by ensuring the inclusion of deaf community members at our meetings and events.

In the past year, a few major educational events helped bring tools and messages of peace and social justice to hundreds of people in Whatcom County:

- Our key event, 2019 International Day of Peace, was a success with over 200 people in attendance. The event was introduced by immigrant's rights advocate and emcee Victoria Matey-Mendoza. Lummi poet and writer Rena Priest

shared some words from a collection of poetry from all around the world. Aline Prata, WPJC's new Executive Director, was introduced to the community, Howard Harris Award was presented to Kerry Johson, and young performers from the community led us in song after we heard from WA Youth Climate Strike Organizers, who offered a first hand report-back from the Climate Strike we co-hosted together the day before. You can find the video of the event at:

<https://www.whatcompjc.org/2019idp>.

- In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we adjusted the International Day of Peace event to an online format, reaching over 300 people through youtube and social media for an intergenerational key-note dialogue, featuring Aaron Dixon and Walidah Imarisha - two of the most significant Black organizers in the Pacific Northwest! For this year's event, we chose to honor the calls against state violence across the country following the police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade, while calling upon our local community to confront local and global histories of white supremacy and anti-Blackness. This event was a record-breaking success and we received many emails from elders and youth praising the opportunity to learn a new and nuanced history of our region. You can watch the full program at: <https://youtu.be/l6pAN75dbOo>
- In October 2019, we recruited an intergenerational crew of volunteers to work together building a tiny home for a veteran experiencing homelessness in Whatcom County. This work was a partnership between WPJC and HomesNOW, which has provided our organizations and volunteers with an opportunity to learn from each other, meet our homeless neighbors, and share a meal funded by the Whatcom Community Foundation with Unity Village residents and organizers.
- Early in 2019, we co-hosted two peaceful vigils and an informational event about the threats of a war against Iran and how to advocate together for peace. The event brought hundreds of people, young and old, to the historical corner of Cornwall and Magnolia where the longest standing peace Vigil in the United

States is held weekly since 1967. The groups which co-hosted such actions decided to continue to meet forming a Youth Antiwar Study Group & Coalition which later continued to gather online to build relationships, collaborate and study together how to bring peace to Whatcom County and the world.

- In the first months of the pandemic, WPJC hosted a webinar about the humanitarian effects of U.S. sanctions on Venezuela and Iran in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcomed Prof. Dan Kovalik, a longtime researcher of the impact of US foreign policy in the globe, to lead the discussion. This event had an overwhelming turnout reaching about 100 and was attended and co-hosted by eighteen peace and justice organizations across the region, kicking off an ongoing series of monthly virtual discussions with the purpose of strengthening solidarity through a network of grassroots peace and justice efforts in the PNW. Many organizations involved in the webinar had previously brought Native speakers on Latin and Central America to the Pacific Northwest, and were encouraged by the possibility of continuing conversations focused on similar issues.
- In April 2020, WPJC hosted a photo-journaling workshop led by Native feminist and educator Talia London. Talia is Unangax (Aleut), born and raised on Lummi Nation; she is currently a PhD student receiving her degree in Social Justice Education by the University of British Columbia—she is passionate about co-constructing spaces with young folx to share narratives that counter colonial stereotypes about Native people. The event was focused on how to share personal narratives in the time of social distancing. This was our first virtual event in the initial stages of lockdown, and went very well considering the adjustment to an online platform.
- In 2020, WPJC also co-hosted, along with youth organizations, a Community Caravan for peace & justice against state violence. This event took place shortly after the murder of George Floyd, and the messaging included calls for international solidarity, food and land sovereignty, ending racism & mass

incarceration, and bringing peace to Palestine. This action strengthened our connection with youth groups we had already organized with, such as WWU Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights, while helping us establish a connection with Shred the Contract, whom we had collaborated with only once before for a letter-writing campaign to incarcerated folks at the Whatcom Jail. We are excited to have forged these connections, and that it has allowed us to collaborate with the youth leadership in Whatcom County in future events.

One-on-one conversations and small group learning constitutes much of the transformative work of WPJC. In the 2019-2020 school year, our Alternatives to Military Service program made a total of 15 school visits to public schools in Whatcom and Skagit counties before the pandemic started. During school visits, our volunteer team made up of veterans and other community members had 55 conversations with young people about their post-high-school options other than military enlistment. In January of this year, we also hosted the most well attended orientation for Alternatives to Military Service with over thirty attendees, including young people of color who were very interested in educating their younger peers about career possibilities. We also shared this information with youth at community events, including Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Conference, Climate Strike, Peaceful Solidarity Rally and the Bellingham Farmers Market.

We facilitated two main study groups and workshops related to peace this year: one on peacekeeping and de-escalation, a visit to Whatcom Community College to discuss “An End to Endless Wars” documentary with Veterans for Peace, and the other on “Undoing Border Imperialism”, using the book by Harsha Walia. Our office also hosted a letter-writing and a lobbying workshop that showed participants ways to be civically engaged and contact their representatives. Together, these workshops and groups reached 80 people.

The [REDACTED] awarded to WPJC from the Tulalip Cares fund went toward the cost of American Sign Language interpretation at our Board of Directors meetings, Board retreat, and International Day of Peace.

