Mennonite Central Committee Central States

Written by Executive Director, Michelle Armster

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The Central States region consists of 16 states in the heartland of the United States. Simply put, we are a swath that goes to the borders Canada (in the north) and Mexico (in the south). Currently, we have 4 programs:

**Indigenous Visioning Circle** (IVC) exists to support the strength and genius of Indigenous people as they address injustices of the past and present. We do that by educating MCC constituents/supports, supporting the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, and networking with other constituent groups/organizations.

Being called to welcome the stranger, **Immigration Education** is committed to building partnerships for direct services, facilitating *Know Your Rights* workshops, and organizing learning tours to explore the realities of South Texas Borderlands as one way of understanding the complexity of the issues surrounding immigration.

**Peace & Justice Education** is dedicated to educating traditional constituents/supporters on a variety of issues such as immigration, mass incarceration, stopping sexualized violence, the Doctrine of Discovery and other opportunities and ways that people can engage in the mission of MCC.

**Young Adult Program** recruits and provides opportunities for young adults to engage and participate in the mission and vison of MCC. The opportunities overseen by this position are Summer Service program, International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) participants who are assigned to our region, and collaboration with the HR Director to recruit at colleges and area youth events.

We have a robust **Material Resources Center** (MRC) in North Newton, Kansas where we host groups- both young and old - provide service opportunities, can meat, recycle clothes, shoes, cardboard and books. The Kansas Friends of MCC Comforter Blitz is annual highlight, as well as mini blitzes that are hosted in the MRC. Here are the figures of this past fiscal year for the MRC in North Newton: Volunteer hours: 8480.75; school kits: 13283; sewing kits: 100; comforters: 1807, blankets: 151; infant care kits: 822; relief kits: 1452; prisoner care kits: 271; returning citizen care kits: 173.

It is also worth mentioning our commitment to thrift. We have established a separate entity called Central Mennonite Thrift (CMT). CMT is the board that will provide governance and vision for all future MCC CS thrift shops. We have decided that Wichita, KS. will be the 1st CMT shop. We have found a location and are meeting with a realtor to help create the contract with the building owner. We are establishing an operations council, have good relationships with a local partner and CMT has a strategic plan!

But wait! There is more!

MCC CS loves to entertain and educate. Annually, we host a volunteer appreciation event and a Christmas Soiree. Quarterly, we host Lunch & Learn events with a variety of speakers. We also host many youth and college groups at MCC to learn about MCC and service opportunities.

Thank you for engaging with MCC in myriad ways in the past and we look forward to building our relationship with your church conference in the future.

Amani,

Michelle E. Armster