



July 2023 Newsletter



A message from Nada:

Has July been hot enough for you? The head of the United Nations has aptly warned us that “the era of global warming has ended” and “**the era of global boiling has arrived.**” We must not despair but must double down on our efforts to mitigate the worst of the impending impacts, especially for under-resourced communities.

Below you will read about what some folks in our network are doing to move us towards a more sustainable and livable future, including an update from the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, NY.

We also include updates from WCPR with yet another tragic police killing in New Rochelle of Jarrell Garris even though we now have Project Alliance protocols in place. Concerned Families of Westchester and Restorative Justice Westchester also include updates for us.

I hope you are all taking some time for rest and rejuvenation and I look forward to connecting with you soon.

Sending you all my very best wishes and appreciation,
Nada

Conservation and Climate Change in the Occupied Palestinian Territories at WESPAC

Please join us on August 14th at 7pm at the WESPAC to hear from Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh and his spouse Jessie Chang speak about climate change mitigation efforts and biodiversity conservation in the Palestinian Territories under military occupation. RSVP at wespacfoundation@gmail.com and read more below:

Conservation and Climate Change in Occupied Palestinian Territories

A presentation at WESPAC with Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh and his spouse Jessie Chang.

**Monday August 14th,
7 PM**
at
WESPAC Office
77 Tarrytown Road,
Suite 2W
White Plains, NY 10607



Please **RSVP** to
wespacfoundation@gmail.com.
Light refreshments served.

This event is free and open to the public. Contributions to support the Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability will be requested.

Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh and Jessie Chang



Qumsiyeh was born in the Shepherds' Field near Bethlehem in a Christian Family. He is founder and director of the Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability (PIBS) at Bethlehem University (<http://palestinature.org>). He has published over 170 scientific papers, over 30 book chapters, hundreds of articles, and several books on topics ranging from cultural heritage to human rights to biodiversity conservation to cancer. See more at <http://qumsiyeh.org>

Chang was born in Taiwan. Her family took refuge there from mainland China in 1948 (same year of the Nakba). Since co-founding the Institute, she has volunteered her time 12-15 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year overseeing finances, other volunteers, garden work, and public relations. After 16 years of waiting she received her Palestinian ID card and passport.

Both Qumsiyeh and Chang donated their money and are full time volunteers at PIBS.

Vigil for Jarrell Garris 07.27.2023

WESPAC members participated in a WCPR organized vigil on July 27th, 2023 in downtown White Plains to honor the memory of Jarrell Garris who was shot in a police encounter in New Rochelle. Here is a clip of Kenneth Chamberlain, Jr. speaking at the vigil: <https://youtu.be/zhgAeKoqGH0> and here is the Channel 12 coverage: <https://bronx.news12.com/advocates-families-hold-vigil-for-those-lost-to-police-violence-in-white-plains>



AJ Woodson with Black Westchester reads the NAACP statement at the WCPR vigil in memory of Jarrell Garris.

Concerned Families of Westchester (CFOW)



Concerned Families of Westchester is a peace & justice group organized in the wake of the 9/11/2001 events. We are based in the Rivertowns, from Yonkers up to Tarrytown. Each Saturday we have a vigil/demo in Hastings. We also have a weekly newsletter (<https://cfow.blogspot.com/>) and a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/705894016129650>), and we meet frequently via Zoom. This month several of our vigils and educational efforts urged negotiations and a ceasefire in the war in Ukraine. Other actions protested the imminent extradition of Julian Assange to the USA, with a great banner (pictured) demanding his release from prison. Please join our vigil any Saturday at noon in Hastings to demand peace & justice!

Restorative Justice Westchester (RJW)



RJW and CLUSTER hosted our third Restorative Justice Circle Keeper

Training in July. Sixteen participants from across the county have joined our growing community of Restorative Justice (RJ) practitioners. RJW supports and advocates for RJ in our communities, courts and schools.

RJW offers many volunteer opportunities, and would love your help to make healing the norm when conflict and harm occur. Read about our volunteer opportunities here: [RJW Volunteer Opportunities](#)

What are WESPACers doing to mitigate the climate crisis?

Ceil Lavan:



The Sisters of St Dominic of Blauvelt, NY, have addressed the climate crisis for years and in 2015 took a public corporate stance on Climate Change. Most recently we are participating in the **Laudato Si' Movement**, which is a 7-year, international process which promotes **Pope Frances' encyclical on Caring for Our Common Home: Hearing the Cry of Earth and the Poor**. Laudato Si' takes an intersectional approach, which supports the work of WESPAC and justice workers worldwide. In the spirit of intersectionality we have public Corporate Commitments against white supremacy, the death penalty, war, nuclear arms, human trafficking and for immigrant rights / immigration reform and the rights of women.

We have a 3 acre organic farm (**Harmony Farm**) and the start of a **solar panel farm** in Goshen, NY. Our sisters and associates are composting and taking practical steps to use less energy and water and to reduce pollution. **Political action is an important part of our work for justice.**



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