

2019 MIDWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE | PROGRAM BOOK

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH

Registration Opens

8am

Social Networking & Light Breakfast

9am – 9:45am

Action Alley

9am – 5pm

Action Alley is a forum to learn about and take action on human rights issues and current AIUSA priorities, and a space for groups to creatively display their ideas and accomplishments.

Art Space

9am – 9pm

The Art Space is a place to come and put your creative juices to work! We will have canvas and brushes for you to design a banner for the national banner drop action on November 20th, Universal Children's Day, calling on US government agencies and corporations to stop locking up migrant children. Information on this action and materials will be provided. Feel free to drop in throughout the conference to work on your banner to drop in your community. "Artivism" is an effective way to draw attention to human rights concerns.

Welcome: Be Bold Act Now: Organize for Human Rights

10am – 10:30am

Power Sessions I

10:30am – 11am

Elections 2020: Walking the line of nonpartisanship

The 2020 election year will present many challenges and opportunities for Amnesty activists. This session will provide tools for staying informed and nonpartisan because human rights shouldn't be politicized.

How to Join Write for Rights to Change Lives and Make New Friends

Write for Rights is our annual letter writing campaign on ten important human rights cases. This year's cases are all youth activists facing abuses. Find out how you can take part and organize fun letter writing events that will help the cases, grow your network and make new friends.

Using Power Mapping for Your Organizing

To create the change we seek, we need to understand the power structures at play. A power map is a strategic tool that, properly done, can reveal power dynamics and leverage relationships and networks.

Welcome to Amnesty!

Are you a new Amnesty member? Are you wondering how to navigate this regional conference? Join our chat of "who's who" and learn about the structure of AIUSA and how and where exactly you fit into it, as well as a 30 second overview of each of the priority campaigns.

Power Sessions II

11:15am – 11:45am

Expanding our view of activism

Are there other means of creating social change outside of lobbying, writing letters, and marches? Could creative and non-traditional strategies for social activism create more inclusivity and effective means of engaging people in our communities?

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Navigating Confrontational Spaces

Not all spaces are Human Rights friendly. Join us in this session for ideas on navigating through the opposition. We will be using a special focus case where an AIUSA Student group was greatly restricted by school administration and how they proceeded to be effective anyways.

Self Care and Community Wellbeing

Maintaining self and community wellbeing is an integral part of sustainable long-term activism and avoiding burn out. Join us to collectively learn, brainstorm and connect with peers on best practices and build out wellness action plans beyond #selfcaresunday.

Breakout Sessions

12pm – 1pm

Art and Poetry Competition Against Enforced Disappearances

Victims of enforced disappearance are people who have literally been disappeared; from their loved ones and their community. Victims are often never released and their fate remains unknown. Join our art competition to spread awareness of enforced disappearances around the globe with an emphasis on Sri Lanka.

Building a Better Resolution Process

The National Resolutions Committee (NRC) will host breakout sessions to engage members in a robust, interactive discussion of our Membership Resolutions Process, and the role it plays (or should play) in making AIUSA a truly democratic organization based on shared leadership.

Stand Up, Fight Back! Stop the US Government and Corporations from Locking Up Children

The detention of migrant children is a stark reminder of our nation's hypocrisy in what it strives to stand for – a pillar of welcome and freedom – and what's actually happening – the cruel persecution of kids simply for seeking safety here. Join us for an interactive discussion and action fighting back against the Administration's hateful attacks and rhetoric; and getting corporations out of the business of detaining kids for profit.

Strategy Basics

In this session you will learn how to use the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart to develop issue based strategies. Using the example of the Background Checks SB42 we will map out how to create goals, identify targets and create tactics for your group!

Youth Training: Know and Claim Your Sexual and Reproductive Rights

When our rights are under attack, what do we do? Stand up- fight back! In this workshop, youth (14-24 yrs) will join together to learn from a peer trainer and each other about their sexual and reproductive rights and plan how they can defend against the increasing attacks against their rights.

Networking Lunch

1pm – 2:30pm

Poster Presentations (in presentation order)

2pm – 2:30pm

Inclusive Organizing to increase impact

The focus is on applying Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) in our organizing and activism. As a diverse movement that fights for the human rights of everyone, we have to make sure we walk the talk in the work we do and the way we work together to accomplish our goal.

Celebrating Urgent Action Network and Case Commitment Victories

Come see how you and our global movement has contributed to case successes throughout the years, including the release of prisoners of conscience and better conditions for human rights defenders. Participants will learn how they can engage with cases and lend their voices to future successes.

Looking for a Resource and an Inspiration? Meet Grassroots Leaders who are Making an Impact for Human Rights

This presentation will highlight the many ways in which our member leaders are making an impact for human rights. Questions that will be answered: Who are the member leaders within the Member Leadership & Training (MLT) unit? How can I connect with member leaders as resources? What are some success stories?

Human Rights Discussion Groups

2:45pm – 3:30pm

In the Crosshairs: Women human rights defenders under attack in the Philippines

Women human rights defenders in the Philippines are under attack. They are being harassed, labelled as terrorist, intimidated, put in jail on trumped up charges, threatened, and even killed. Learn what concrete things you can do to help human rights defenders like Senator Leila de Lima and others.

Outsourcing Responsibility: Holding the Defense Sector responsible for Human Rights Violations

We will give an overview of Military, Security and Policing and Business and Human Rights campaigns (from Hong Kong to extractive industries) and focus in on "Outsourcing Responsibility" campaign targeting governments and weapons producers involved in the sale of weapons to human rights abusers and how you can take action.

Sponsoring a Refugee Family: Speaking from Experience

Members from the Chicago, Minneapolis and St. Louis local groups will share their experiences sponsoring a refugee family. Any groups interested, planning to or just starting to sponsor a family are invited to attend.

What would Eleanor Roosevelt say? Are human rights still universal and indivisible?

In July, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced a new Commission on Unalienable Rights, which purports to distinguish between the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and what it describes as "ad hoc rights" articulated in subsequent years.

Poster Presentations (in presentation order)

3:45pm – 4pm

Foundation Building at Amnesty International USA

Overview, Purpose and Highlights of the Door-to-Door Fundraising Program.

Your Actions Change Lives: Write for Rights Victories You Helped Make Possible

Celebrate the people you have helped by writing letters during Write for Rights, our largest annual global campaign - people like Phyoee Phyoee Aung, a youth activist and prisoner of conscience who was freed from prison in Myanmar.

Breakout Sessions

4:15pm – 5:15pm

Activism and Sport: Organizing around International Events

Bahrain hosts a Formula 1 Grand Prix every spring, presenting an opportunity for creative organizing. Participants will brainstorm and develop ideas for campaigning around the 2020 Grand Prix.

Creative Activism

Whether you are new or a veteran activist, you will inevitably find yourself asking "How can we do this action in a fun and inviting way?". Activism Idea Fatigue is real and we want to come together and try and set up a means for brainstorming, troubleshooting and implementing creative actions. Whether you are building an art installation or a photo booth or even want to reinvent a tabling event, this is the workshop for you.

Fighting Gun Violence in Ohio

Description coming soon.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is the method by which AIUSA Board, staff, and member leaders guide our work. There appears to be a consensus that we can do better, including show more respect and trust, be more inclusive, communicate more clearly, resolve conflicts compassionately, and have clearer guidelines about decision-making and accountability. We will discuss the current status of this initiative, including the interim Code of Conduct, and brainstorm ways to move it forward.

State-Level Advocacy to End Gun Violence

This lobbying workshop will use the framework of state-level advocacy on gun violence legislation to introduce new lobbyists to the process of effectively influencing state legislatures and to empower experienced lobbyists to get involved in EGV legislation in their statehouse.

Be Bold Act Now: Organize for Human Rights (Activists Recognition & Keynote)

5:30pm – 6pm

Keynote Speaker: Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh, also known by her blogging pseudonym, Mẹ Nấm (Mother Mushroom); Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh co-founded the independent Vietnamese Bloggers Network in December 2013. She is a mother of two children, who has on numerous occasions faced harassment, arrest and interrogation for her peaceful activities, and has been prevented from travelling overseas. She has advocated for human rights and justice for more than 10 years and is a popular and well-known blogger.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH

Light Breakfast

8:30am – 9am

The Climate Crisis & Human Survival: What Can We Do?

9am – 9:45am

In this session, we will discuss the scope of the climate crisis (how bad it is now, how bad it could get and how it impacts human rights); what Amnesty's solutions are; and your creative ideas for how we can best campaign to protect our planet.

Community Caucuses

10am – 11am

Local Group Caucus

Local Groups have been at the heart of Amnesty activism since the movement was born. The commitment, dedication, and creativity of Local Group members meeting consistently every month has led to the release of thousands of prisoners of conscience, changes in law and policy, and transformative moments in peoples' lives. Join others whose commitment to human rights runs as deeply as yours.

Youth Caucus

Young people have been at the heart of Amnesty activism since the movement was born nearly 60 years ago - and continue to be at the forefront of change! From high school halls to the halls of power, from dorm rooms to boardrooms, and from classrooms to community centers, youth leaders are lifting their voices to demand a world where everyone's human rights are respected. The Youth & Student Caucus is the space for young people to come together to share challenges, brainstorm ideas for action, and learn more about Amnesty and running effective chapters. Come caucus with your peers, get one-on-one support for your group, and help shape the future of the organization. Note: We value and respect our faculty advisors, educators and other adults allies in their work with young people, but hope to have this space for youth and students to connect directly with one another.

Voting Plenary

11am – 12:30pm

Closing Action

12:30pm – 1pm