

Executive Director Report Convention VFP2020

Managing Staff

- The entire staff team has daily zoom check-ins during the work week to overview tasks and needs.
- We have brought back Casey Stinemetz to assist with administrative and membership coordinating tasks part time. We also hired a part time Resource Development Director Hazel Diaz.
- We are closing down the current office site and moving to a shared-space/work from home model that will reduce our monthly overhead by almost \$1000/month.
- Job descriptions are being evaluated and adjusted to represent current responsibilities.
- Items to Note:
 - Staff have not received raises in over 3 years not to include health insurance and cost-of-living standard increases.
 - Likely need an outreach/program organizer

Budget

- Developed a budget that did not exceed expenditures, creating a net positive. (Previous years were not) Successfully implemented a plan that allows for a decrease in expenses and continued fundraising for income. Despite COVID adjustments we have been successful in going from having more income versus expenses most of the last 7 months, where there were ZERO months we made profits in the previous 7 months.
- The online convention generated a lot of income, not only through registration but also through new members. This income will assist with payroll throughout 2020 and building campaigns and resources to drive our mission. VFP over-spent by \$70,000 on convention in 2019. Previous convention costs have outweighed the income of convention. We applied for the COVID stimulus Payroll Protection Loan which helped the office get through the first few months of the health crisis.
- We started an additional checking account for the restricted funds for easier tracking and payments for our earmarked donations.
- The Deported Veteran Advocacy Project is now self-sufficient, after a year of receiving a monthly stipend from VFP National. has reduced the amount of financial support for The GoldenRule
- VFP took on responsibility for the fiscal sponsorship of Courage To Resist.
- Changed to a new online store-Printful that will result in added savings and staff time. The new service will print on demand, reducing unneeded stock and creating more cost effective ways to ship items.

- We are seeking more ways to cut costs on printing and mailing by using digital content instead of shipping printed material. We will still send mail to individuals who prefer mailed resources, but we will cut down on how much we send. Saving money and reducing waste and climate damage.
- The annual convention was moved to an online format since we were unable to gather in person and travel due to health concerns. A quick decision was made to move forward with a virtual convention. Because of budget concerns and current fiscal capacity, an enormous amount of staff time and energy was invested to organize and execute the convention. Many staff members have worked extensive hours and many weekends to prepare the site and coordinate with presenters. Because of this sacrifice we have gone from a 2019 net loss of over \$60,000 in Spokane to a projected gain of positive \$40,000 for the 2020 online convention.
- We hope these assets and reductions of overhead will help sustain VFP operations through the year. It is unclear how the economy and current events might impact dues and donations.
- (SEE ALSO THE FINANCIAL REPORT)

Board Support

- The VFP office acts as a resource for the board of directors to include advice on policies, management, and communication.
- Policy Procedures have been posted on the website under > governance
- Scheduling and completing logistics for board meetings and business.
- Helped create a delegation committee to provide oversight on delegations to ensure they are inclusive, guided by all delegates and prepared to visit countries and cultures with an open mind and less colonizing mission.
- Stronger connections to our Advisory Board is developing including a new advisor Jane Fonda and involving Advisory Board members in our convention.
- Conducted a board and ED assessment for the first time in recent history.
- Items to Note
 - We intended to develop more education and professional development training and tools for the board

Chapter/Member support

- Set membership and leadership development a main goal for the year and subsequent years. This year has focused on evaluating current processes and points of entry, prioritizing relationship building and recognizing that a member's "first touch" with the organization has to be meaningful. Therefore many items listed below are focused on tightening up foundational processes of new membership and relationship building.

- Veterans For Peace is experiencing a growth of membership. This growth has been steady since 2018. However in the last six months we have seen a large rise in post 9-11 veteran members.
- “At-Large” members are now referred to as “Independent” members and we are seeking more ways to activate them to participate in VFP campaigns, including a regular monthly call and bi-weekly emails, similar to the Chapter Contacts call/emails
- Embarked on a large project of updating our Chapter Contact information, since this is the first place new members seek to join and engage. After contacting or trying to contact dormant chapters we removed about 40 chapters from the rolls. We will be able to add those chapters back with former designations if we can establish leaders in those areas. This allows us to treat new members in those locations as independent members and know there is not chapter contact there available.
- The office is building additional resources to educate members and chapters on how to build intercultural awareness and create equitable organizing spaces.
- We look at new ways to use the chapter contacts monthly meeting to be a resource for chapters.
- Members came together in Nevada in January and formed a membership caucus focused on increased accountability and education and emphasis on inclusivity.
- Items to Note for Future:
 - We are looking at ways to rebuild regional organizing to have better support to dispersed geographic members and chapters.
 - Would like to grow a system to organize veterans nationally that can include chapter members and independent members.
 - We instead concentrate on membership onboarding, processing and outreach in a Fall membership drive.
 - A larger better coordinated Membership Committee with leaders who represent the demographics we want to recruit would help in increasing our post 9-11 membership.

(SEE ALSO THE MEMBERSHIP REPORT)

Communications

- The vast majority of 2020 has been spent on the online convention, learning and deciding on technology, creating guides and member support to help them through that process. We planned multiple webinars and social events and meetings prior to the convention so our members would become familiar with online technology.
- Strategic coalition partnerships has increased visibility on shared webinar activities
 - Racial Justice Has No Borders webinar had over 145K views
 - Putting People Over the Pentagon had over 131K views
 - Webinar on Nellis had over 3K

- **VFP members launched a new weekly series: StandDownLive**
 - **Building regular and increased viewership**
 - **Averaging 2k, with some going well beyond 3k**
 - **Reaching new audiences of active duty and recently separated**
- **Online webinars**
 - **We continue to feature webinars drawing from our vast knowledge of our members. We have had webinars such as one focused on honoring Dr. King's legacy, a book discussion with Nguyen Phan Que Mai and Matt Hoh, etc.**
- **Social Media**
 - **Instagram: 7,603 followers (up over 3K in the last year)**
 - **Demographics: Average age range: 25-44**
 - **Gender (please note that instagram only shows insights for two genders-men and women): 49% Women and 51% Men**
 - **This is platform is the largest opportunity for growth right now**
 - **Twitter: 33.8K followers (up 10K from last year)**
 - **Demographics: unavailable at this time**
 - **Facebook: Likes- 98,065, (up 3k from 2019) Followers-101,544 (up 6K from 2019)**
 - **Demographics: Average age range: 54-65+**
 - **Gender: 43% Women and 57% men (FB also only has insights for two genders-men and women)**
- **Salsa database-first full year**
 - **Increased the number on online donations**
 - **Allows targeting based on interest-which has allowed for targeted messaging towards folks interested in specific subjects, ie Deported Veterans, SOVA, etc**
 - **Sign ons and action items have allowed for continued list building.**
- **The Board formed a new Communications Committee that can help support statements and messaging from the national office.**
- **ENews-highlighting news every other week within the organization.**
 - **Now available to share each issue on social media (thanks to Salsa's upgraded system)**
- **We chose to discontinue PeaceInOurTimes because the managing editor was a restricted/now expelled member and no other editor was willing/able to take on the managing editor role.**
- **The 1st issue of the new VFP national paper "Peace Sentinel" is nearly ready for print**
- **In order to modernize internal communications we canceled AFP-ChapterContacts and VFP-Biz yahoo group listservs. We will be developing a platform that members can login and communicate and organize more effectively.**
- **I decided to reject an ad for Peace and Planet News because the managing editor was expelled by VFP.**

Fundraising

- VFP has been benefiting from a new Resource Development Director with an emphasis on recurring donors to build a monthly predictable income.
- We renewed a membership to Foundationsearch that was a barely used resource in the last few years.
- VFP gained a grant for work opposing US base expansion in Nevada (a project that has successfully built relationships in the southwest, reaching new members and creating partnerships with many indigenous and environmental groups)
- Giving Tuesday and other online efforts to fundraise continue to increase. Our online donation efforts will only continue to increase as more and more people give online and not by check.
- We continue sending out our regularly scheduled appeals, (3 or 4 a year) and including a donation envelope in the newsletter (implemented in 2019 and bringing in increase donations)
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- Board members have taken on efforts to increase the number of Lifetime Members
- We are projecting our online convention to be a hugely successful fundraiser for VFP and are looking at creative ways we replicate smaller versions with the software over the next year.

(SEE ALSO THE FINANCIAL REPORT)

Program

- Joined the Anti-Drone protests in Creech Air Force Base with CodePink
- Part of a coalition to oppose the Training and Testing Range at Nellis AFB
- We backed the Remove The Stain campaign to rescind the Medals Of Honor that US Cavalry received for the Massacre at Wounded Knee
- Was arrested in a climate action protest with Jane Fonda and Fire Drill Friday
- VFP became a partner in the PeopleOverPentagon coalition to reduce the military defense budget.
- Started to grow an Afghanistan veteran and Afghan diaspora led group to demand accountability for the corruption revealed in the Afghanistan Papers
- SOVA became the newest board approved National Project.
- Helped organize a large Racial Justice Has No Borders online program that supported an end of the current AUMF and a need to end sanctions as an extension of war.
- Had built relationships and organized multi day actions in El Paso and Las Cruces to partner with local front line organizers and Rage Against The Machine to challenge immigration, border oppression and deportation policy, that was cancelled due to the health crisis
- VFP responded to the health crisis with support for the UN call for a Global Ceasefire and echoed calls for Healthcare not Warfare.
- Created resources and guidance for VeteransForBlackLives

- **VFP called for a military StandDown and worked with service members seeking to avoid mobilization and domestic deployment.**
- **Participated in Portland Armistice Day event**
- **The office supported chapter wide Memorial Day actions however I chose to back out of the NYC/VietnamFullDisclosure Memorial Event because it included a member that was expelled by VFP.**