

2020 Powell House Co-Executive Director Advance Report

If this report had been written before March 12, 2020, it would have named the following as highlights of our year at Powell House: Program highlights from youth, adult, and intergenerational retreats, the installation of a new database and fire alarm system, upgraded internet, staff transitions, and the completion of a feasibility study for a future capital campaign. All are still a part of our story for this year, but our attention and focus shifted dramatically with the arrival of the COVID 19 pandemic. We closed for what we expected to be a few weeks on March 12. Little did we realize that it would be at least 5 months before we could even begin to consider resuming onsite visits to this beloved and important location. The good news is that POWELL HOUSE IS STILL HERE!

As we began to live into the reality of an extended closure, our first focus was to transition to a virtual platform for our programming. With the help and creativity of Emily Provance—who has sojourned here during the pandemic, we've been able to offer 2 programs most weekends that have attracted participants from across the wider Quaker circle, as well as from NYYM. Chris and Mike were also able to begin a weekly gathering and check-in with each age cohort of the youth program, culminating with a virtual EarthSong weekend that included our new Incoming Youth Directors Martin and Sarah Glazer.

Additional energy and effort was expended in navigating the application to assistance programs and loans that could help staunch the loss of income because of the cancellation of all onsite programs and rentals. Another significant effort involved establishing new ways of asking for and receiving contributions that helped enable us to continue to pay our staff and our utilities through our closure. We also received a very positive report from our feasibility study and are considering the timing of our future capital campaign, so that it can both support our planned facility upgrades and invigorate new programming initiatives.

In summary, this has been quite a year, with so many unexpected twists and turns. There is much uncertainty and hard work ahead. But, most importantly, through the support of so many folks-- from volunteer database transition support, to a superlative search committee effort for new youth directors, to all the financial support given-- we know that Powell House will continue to prosper, as we move into a new era of enjoying the traditional much-loved PoHo activities through new and innovative ways. POWELL HOUSE IS STILL HERE and WILL NEVER GO BACK!

With much love and appreciation for this place and this work!

Regina Baird Haag and Dennis Haag, Co-Executive Directors
Elsie K. Powell House, Inc.