

## **White Privilege Conference Task Group**

### **Final Report — Summer Sessions 2016**

At Spring Sessions 2015, the New York Yearly Meeting heard an invitation from Friends in the yearly meeting working on issues of racism to join the White Privilege Conference (WPC), to be held in April 2016 in Philadelphia. We also heard an invitation from Friends General Conference to join them as a co-host organizer of the WPC. A task group was appointed by the Witness Coordinating Committee to facilitate NYYM participation. We report a task successfully completed: more than 100 Friends (12 of them teen Friends) from New York Yearly Meeting attended the conference, joining roughly 400 more Friends from around the country, out of a total Conference attendance of 2500.

The Task Group that worked to generate interest, secure financial help and arrange for coordination of efforts with Friends General Conference and the White Privilege Conference, agreed that we wanted to give you a report here at Summer Sessions as we lay ourselves down. This is not a report on the conference per se, but one that encourages moving forward with the work of anti-racism and racial justice with renewed commitment in both our Faith and Practice.

In July 2009, New York Yearly Meeting approved a minute urging Friends "to examine racism and white privilege" and "to seek justice, healing and reconciliation within our Yearly Meeting."

Our work on this concern endures with individual Friends, local monthly meetings and Yearly Meeting committees engaged in racial justice activities. We affirm that New York Yearly Meeting is committed to an ongoing engagement with racism and white privilege as issues that deserve our deepest spiritual attention and our informed action as agents of social change.

NYYM already has structures doing anti-racism work: the Task Group on Racism, the working group European American Quakers Working to End Racism (EAQWER), Black Concerns, Prisons and Indian Affairs Committees. Those who are a part of these ongoing groups find them not always comfortable, but usually respectful, supportive and joyous. We encourage Friends to join these groups as well as join, create and help foster new upwellings in their own Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. EAQWER is holding an Interest Group at Silver Bay, and there will be a Powell House Retreat called "Beyond the White Privilege Conference," November 4-6, 2016.

Part of racial justice work is raising funds to finance the work. This was true in organizing for over 100 Friends from NYYM to attend the White Privilege Conference. In 2015, several committees under WCC donated from their Sharing Fund monies to contribute the \$3000 requested by the White Privilege Conference from us as a co-host. In 2016 the Yearly Meeting raised \$995 in a dedicated fund to support attendance. These funds were distributed through a financial subcommittee set up by our Task Group. Again, WCC committees devoted some of their Sharing Fund allocations to support attendance, and WCC helped Friends through its Witness Activities Grants. Monthly meetings helped individual Friends. Additional support was provided by FGC to Quakers needing financial help. Many Philadelphia Friends provided hospitality as well.

We are in a time of increasing division. May we as Friends commit to the hard but essential and healing work that creates not separation, ignorance and fear but rather love born of understanding and compassion.

We thank the Yearly Meeting for the growth of strength and courage that serving on the WPC Task Group brought us, and look forward to the ongoing work of eliminating racism in NYYM.