

Reports of NYYM Committees, Resource People, and Reps to Affiliated Groups

Liaison Committee

The Liaison Committee consists of the yearly meeting clerk, assistant clerk, the clerks/co-clerks of the three coordinating committees, and the general secretary. Other individuals are occasionally invited to participate when appropriate. During Summer Sessions when in person, the committee meets each morning and is generally expanded to include reading and recording clerks, the coordinators of JYM and sometimes the clerk of Sessions Committee. The yearly meeting clerk serves as clerk of the Liaison Committee.

The Liaison Committee also plans Coordinating Committee Weekend, usually held in late January at Powell House. The Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the yearly meeting clerk and usually meets monthly online. The Committee considers rising business within the yearly meeting and recommends items for the agenda of yearly meeting business sessions. The committee also discusses matters of concern to the yearly meeting that encompass the responsibilities of more than one committee or that do not fall clearly within the scope of any coordinating committee. It also reviews items of concern that arise that may affect the yearly meeting as a whole so that it can respond appropriately or refer concerns to other entities.

During this past year, there were an unusual number of recommendations from liaison to gathered Friends for consideration for approval, all of which were approved, as follows.

- Friends agreed to lay down Nurture Coordinating Committee and move its constituent entities to other CCs and some to liaison itself (minute 2019-07-29).
- The concept of the consent agenda, which was never fully self-explanatory, was re-named Seasoned Business Items (“SBI”) list, and its process details were spelled out as they had not previously been (minute 2019-07-41).

- With reference to “first readings” and “second readings”, Friends approved a proposal to allow possible summaries and to refer to first and second “presentations” in the event of extensive and/or complex topics, such as bylaws (minute 2019-07-40).
- Reading clerks, who had been nominated and named as officers of New York Yearly Meeting, are now volunteer positions named by Sessions Committee (minute 2019-07-57).
- The schedule of spring and fall gatherings was modified to enable committees to meet early, then coordinating committees, where committee proposals can be considered, and then business meetings, where reports or possible items for consideration for approval from the coordinating committees can be presented to gathered Friends.

At this writing, in May 2020, Liaison Committee is struggling, along with all other committees, boards, task groups, working groups and individuals, to determine best ways forward to serve our yearly meeting during the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope that our efforts will result in positive changes to our processes that will enable more Friends throughout the yearly meeting to participate in yearly meeting activities, including business meetings and other valued events, both during online Summer Sessions 2020 and thereafter.

Jeffrey Aaron, Clerk of New York Yearly Meeting

Leadings and Priorities Working Group

PART ONE: How did all of this begin?

At Fall Sessions of 2009, the clerk of Financial Services offered a report on behalf of that committee. How could we determine and approve a yearly meeting budget without first answering some fundamental questions? Who are we? How are we led? How do we support and follow the leadings God gives?

The yearly meeting, gathered in worship, asked the Liaison Committee to consider these questions. At Spring Sessions of 2010, that committee suggested that the questions posed were too big to be answered just by Friends in the room. The answers

should be gleaned from monthly meetings and worship groups. Once received, the answers should also guide our staff's work plan and the work of coordinating committees.

And so we set for ourselves the following work: to find out, from Friends in monthly meetings and worship groups, who the yearly meeting is as a whole and how it is led—and then to use this information to guide our budget, our staff's work plan, and the work of coordinating committees.

PART TWO: What happened next?

Even after the need for listening was identified, it took some time for Friends to discern next steps. A year passed before Friends gathered at Spring Sessions 2011 approved forming an “ad hoc Priorities Working Group.”

We minuted asking the following people to be part of the group: “the yearly meeting clerk, assistant clerk and general secretary, the clerk or a named representative of Financial Services Committee, Young Adult Friends, each coordinating committee, and each regional meeting.”

And we charged the group “(a) to gather the sense of the monthly and regional meetings and of individual Friends as to how the Spirit is at work among us and where it is leading us as a society of Friends in the immediate future; (b) to distill those insights and discern from them a proposed Statement of Leadings and Priorities that is both prophetic and workable; (c) to reflect these insights and priorities back to our constituent regions to ensure that the working group has discerned accurately; (d) to report its findings to the yearly meeting body and to lead the process for considering and approving the Statement of Leadings and Priorities; and (e) to design a process to assess the implementation of these priorities.”

We heard progress reports from the Priorities Working Group in fall 2011, spring 2012, summer 2012, fall 2012, spring 2013, summer 2013, fall 2013, and spring 2014. Most of those progress reports are available in old yearbooks, online, or both, and they are public documents that everyone is welcome to read.

Between spring of 2011 and spring of 2014, the members of the Priorities Working Group did a lot of visiting. They visited 53 monthly meetings, 3 worship groups, and 5 prison worship

groups. Usually, the working group made these visits in pairs, with two working group members to each meeting. They asked everyone they visited the same three questions: Usually, the working group made these visits in pairs, with two working group members to each meeting. They asked everyone they visited the same three questions:

First, How is the Spirit alive in your monthly meeting? Second, What work, ministry, witness is your meeting called to? And third, How can the rest of the yearly meeting support you in that life?

The working group members took notes on the visits and sent their notes to meetings afterwards, to make sure they were accurate. Toward the end of the three years, the members of the working group distilled what they had heard to a series of six leadings and priorities. Those were:

We envision a yearly meeting deeply grounded in the practice of our faith.

We hear a clear sense from Friends that the core of all they do centers in their meeting for worship and their life as a community. In support of this, their primary focus, Friends seek help in spiritual deepening, in developing clerking skills, in understanding principles of meetings for business, in understanding the role of vocal ministry and afterthoughts, in practicing pastoral care and conflict transformation, in participation in first day school and adult religious education programs. We, the body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a priority for the yearly meeting the development of programs to teach and share our spiritual skills with each other, and to help meetings to revitalize themselves.

We envision a yearly meeting made up of strong, vital monthly meetings.

Meetings and Friends seek information and assistance with the necessities of operating a meeting, such as insurance, cemetery maintenance, fund-raising and advancement. We, the body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a priority for the yearly meeting the development of programs to help sustain our monthly meetings financially and to increase membership.

We envision a yearly meeting gathered together into one body.

Friends express a deep yearning for increased contact and connection with each other. Regular interaction among Friends throughout New York Yearly Meeting helps sustain and deepen our Society. We, the body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a priority for the yearly meeting the pursuit of greater contact and spiritual relationship among Friends.

We envision a yearly meeting that nurtures our children, youth, and young adults.

We hear Friends' call to focus attention on integrating our children, youth and young adults into the fabric of our community and to provide opportunities for them to experience and reflect on our spiritual practices. We seek to offer abundant opportunities and welcoming spaces for exploring and growing into the Light. We seek to make our monthly meetings a place where they can develop loving relationships with peers and adults, where youth are supported as they transition to adulthood, and where young adults are recognized for their gifts and encouraged in their participation in their monthly meetings and beyond. We, the body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a priority for the yearly meeting the nurturing of our children, youth, and young adults.

We envision a yearly meeting that supports and amplifies our witness.

Meetings and Friends look to the yearly meeting to be an active presence in the broader society for Friends' faith, values, ministry and witness. Through the yearly meeting, Friends can magnify our impact on our communities, nation and the world. Our collective voice speaks more loudly than those of individual Friends or monthly meetings. The yearly meeting affords the opportunity for Friends carrying common concerns to act in concert. We, the body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a priority for the yearly meeting the responsibility to be an active voice for Friends' faith, values, ministry and witness in the world, and to support Friends' active witness.

We envision a yearly meeting that is accountable and transparent.

Meetings and Friends express concern that the yearly meeting organization has not been fully accountable and transparent in its operations. We envision a yearly meeting whose structure and operations are well understood by all Friends, and which is a faithful expression of the leadings of those Friends that make up the yearly meeting. In approving this statement to guide our activities in the immediate future, we also bear a duty to assure that these Leadings and Priorities are faithfully implemented. We, the body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a priority for the yearly meeting the responsibility to hold itself accountable to the above priorities, ensuring their faithful fruition.

Many of those who were present remember Summer Sessions 2014, when we approved the Leadings and Priorities, as being difficult. It took several days for us to approve the six statements. Minute 2014-07-31 reads, “Friends approved the Statement of Leadings and Priorities as presented. It was noted that we have experienced conflict transformation—also joy and humility.”

This report won’t include why the approval of these priorities was difficult because we did not put the reasons in our minutes. That means there’s no objective record. Various Friends’ memories of the events are naturally quite different from one another.

We approved the priorities for five years. Therefore, our approval of the statement of leadings and priorities would expire at Summer Sessions 2019.

Whose responsibility would it be to make sure that we used the six priorities? We said the priorities would guide our budgeting, our staff work plans, and the work of coordinating committees. How would we make sure this happened? The final paragraph approved read as follows:

While particular committees may be well-suited for pursuing parts of this vision, these are the Priorities of the yearly meeting as a whole. We are all responsible for all the aspects of this work. The Priorities arise from considerable and consistent input from Friends across the yearly meeting. Their realization will require the worshipful and focused dedication of everyone within the yearly meeting, including all our committees and working groups, all our staff, and all concerned Friends and meetings. We are called to work together to make this vision a reality.

However, Friends continued to try to find some form of accountability beyond “we are all responsible.” The Priorities Working Group had suggested the formation of a group to provide such accountability, but we did not approve this. We spent time in worship together on this question in fall 2014 and in spring 2015. We were not able to approve next steps. We approve some implementation minutes specific to finances in spring 2015. At spring 2015, we also laid down the original Priorities Working Group.

In summer 2015, the Liaison Committee created a working group under its care. That group was charged to provide accountability and support as Friends implemented the priorities. The formation of this working group didn’t require approval because it was a working group under the care of the Liaison Committee.

The “Leadings and Priorities Support Working Group” spent about a year refining its charge. Then, it reported to the yearly meeting in summer 2016 and summer 2018. The group also published a few articles in *Spark*, the yearly meeting newsletter. This group was never fully populated. It always had far fewer members than its charge said it should have. The group formally requested to be laid down in summer 2019. The Liaison Committee laid down the working group as requested.

The same summer, the leadings and priorities statement, approved in summer 2014 for a period of five years, formally expired.

PART THREE: What good things emerged from this process?

There were some really good things that came from this process.

The PWG visits themselves were good experiences for the meetings, the PWG visitors, and the yearly meeting as a whole. One of the common responses to the PWG visits was a version of “great to see folks from yearly meeting—we want more!” The PWG made their visits in pairs, comparing their responses and impressions to give depth and breadth to the listening and to the reporting. More Friends became acquainted with one another. Yearly meeting had some “faces” attached to it. And meetings got direct responses and information about activities and processes of the yearly meeting. Most importantly, the

PWG visitors shared worship and fellowship as well as a discussion of practical matters. They got a more clear sense of how each meeting was really faring than can be gotten from reports or calls.

The work of determining and approving priorities was an on-going discernment process. The PWG reported regularly. Each time, we were compelled to consider what we are about as a yearly meeting. Who are we as groups of Friends and individuals who strive to create and live in community? This gave us a continuing call to be in discernment. Visitations to meetings were opportunities for discernment, both for the meeting and for the PWG. The presentation of the reports to the body of the yearly meeting were as well. The commitment to the ongoing discernment process was in itself useful.

In response to the second priority, about strong, vital monthly meetings, an Outreach Working Group was formed. The OWG did research, communication, development of outreach resources, grantmaking for outreach projects, and direct assistance to monthly meetings. From 2017–2019, eighteen monthly meetings participated in the Outreach Practitioners' Circle. This was a learning circle that met bi-monthly by video conference to support and nurture outreach in local meetings. In 2018, a series of focus groups and a survey formed the basis of a 60-page Outreach Report to NYYM. The reported documented a growing need for more effective outreach assistance and resources. To plan for a sustainable and ongoing response to this need, a diverse group of twenty-five Friends convened for a weekend of discernment. The discernment produced a three-year NYYM Outreach Action Plan. In 2020, several elements of the action plan are being implemented. An Outreach Coaching Network will assist local meetings at whatever stage of outreach they find themselves. A Storytelling Network will gather and disseminate Friends' stories of radical faithfulness. An Online Resource group will make outreach materials more easily available. A new Outreach Working Group will be formed to guide and coordinate outreach efforts in NYYM going forward. The group will also work with an Outreach Coordinator to oversee and support the Outreach Action Plan.

In response to the sixth priority, much work has been done by

the Treasurers and the Trustees as well as the Financial Services Committee to increase the transparency and comprehensibility of yearly meetings finances. The trustees finances are reported in the regular budget reports. Our financial procedures have been tidied up and written down, enabling consistent application; these documents are living documents and will be updated as needed.

Ministry Coordinating Committee began its internal budgeting process with a question. “How is our work benefitting Friends in local meetings?” This change was a response to the second priority, about strong, vital monthly meetings. It was also a response to the sixth priority, about being accountable and transparent.

A lot of different pieces of work have risen in response to the fourth priority, about nurturing our children, youth, and young adults. We had Gabi Savory-Bailey serving as young adult field secretary. We hired Melinda Wenner Bradley as our Children and Youth Field Secretary. When Gabi and Melinda both left their positions, we hired Emily Provance, and later Marissa Badgley, as interim Young Adult Field Secretaries. Also, the Youth Committee was revitalized. The Vital Meetings Project provided concrete support for local meetings in developing stronger multi-generational communities. We held many young adult retreats and family gatherings. We provided training for Friends in local meetings to help with engagement and support of our younger generations. Most recently, we’ve launched a young adult mentorship program.

There are other things that New York Yearly Meeting does well that connect directly to the priorities. However, many of those things are continuations of work that had already been happening, so they’re not included here. Some other things might have been a result of the priorities process, but there don’t seem to be directly identifiable connections. Sometimes, when a certain concept is sort of “in the air,” it has indirect effects that aren’t easy to track. That could have happened in a variety of ways after we named the six priorities.

PART FOUR: Should we do it again?

The questions we started with haven’t gone away. Who are we?

How are we led? How do we support and follow the leadings God gives? These questions are at the heart of moving forward together—in our budgeting, in our staff work, in our committee work, and in becoming a more fully inclusive community.

Nevertheless, the Liaison Committee is not recommending that we repeat the priorities process.

PART FIVE: But if the original questions still exist, why not repeat the process?

There are some real limitations to the priorities process as a way of answering the key questions: Who are we? How are we led? How do we support and follow the leadings God gives?

For one thing, the distillation process that follows listening to Friends across New York Yearly Meeting led to priorities that were very broad. This is natural. Lots of diverse input, when blended into a few statements that include as much of that input as possible, becomes less specific in the process. But broad priorities are difficult to use as guidance for a budget, a staff work plan, or direction for coordinating committees. When priorities are broad, it seems like almost anything can fit them.

We also know that we exist in a state of continuing revelation. A process that takes as much as ten years isn't quick enough to respond to changes in how we are led as a people. What we really need within our structure is enough agility to respond to new leadings and new Friends.

And finally, the priorities process mostly didn't include consideration of state of the meeting reports, meetings for discernment, and staff members' discoveries/perceptions. It was supposed to. But in practice, that was very difficult to do. And there was no way at all to incorporate new information and alter the priorities after they had been approved.

PART SIX: Then how do we address the original questions?

As Friends, we will probably always be asking the same questions: Who are we? How are we led? How do we support and follow the leadings God gives? This, in itself, is a sacred charge.

These questions were originally formulated in 2009 by a group that was preparing our budget. Going forward, we must

continue to ask these questions as we develop our budgets, and even as we develop the processes by which we will develop our budgets.

How do we have group discernment to determine the best financial support for the leadings God gives? How do we know if our budget is a reflection of who we are? And in both of these questions, who are “we”? Does “we” include all of New York Yearly Meeting, or does it include only those who are able to be in the room when discernment is being done?

How do we support and follow the leadings God gives in times of apparent scarcity of resources? Do we have sufficient trust in one another, and sufficient flexibility, to respond to continuing revelation?

The work of our staff, and the work of our committees, is meant to be in service of all the Friends of New York Yearly Meeting. But most Friends are not in the room when corporate discernment is being done. We must find practical ways to widen our definition of “we.” The responses to these three questions—Who are we? How are we led? How do we support and follow the leadings God gives?—must be gleaned from Friends throughout New York Yearly Meeting.

The Liaison Committee recommends that committees, working groups, task groups, and staff pay attention to the state of the meeting reports and other communications from local meetings. We can use this information to guide our work. We recommend that staff, committees, and groups focus on finding, developing, and providing resources that are directly useful to Friends throughout New York Yearly Meeting. This would include representatives to organizations beyond New York Yearly Meeting. We recommend that these representatives seek as many mediums and venues as possible by which to report back to local and regional meetings after attending gatherings of the respective organizations.

As we move forward, we’ll also need to continue our work of being as inclusive as possible in the gatherings of New York Yearly Meeting. Limited participation in corporate worship does lead to limits on our discernment. Our ability to serve all Friends is restricted when we do not have a diversity of races, classes, ages, abilities, gender identities, and other identities within the group participating in discernment.

The yearly meeting is already taking some steps toward becoming more inclusive. We've been using Pay-as-Led for sessions and other gatherings. We've established a Differently Abled Friends and Allies Working Group. We've increased our use of task groups and working groups to create more flexible opportunities to serve. We've established Whisper Buddies to support Friends who are new to our gatherings.

The Liaison Committee recommends that all of us continue to educate ourselves about inclusion through the lens of race, age, class, ability, gender, and other identities. We recommend that Friends ask themselves, consistently, how the work they are doing (and the manner in which they are doing it) supports our becoming a more actively inclusive faith community. And we recommend that Friends hold in discernment a recent minute from the Witness Coordinating Committee:

“Our Creator calls for us all to treat each other with justice and equality. Following our testimonies and leadings of Spirit, we therefore affirm that NYYM must consider all budgets and policy decisions through a lens that looks at structural racism and our leading to become an anti-racist and multi-cultural faith community.”

Oakwood Friends School

July 2020

“Serious illness has twice interfered with our schoolwork. Earlier this year about two thirds of our whole school were stricken with the influenza and later in the year we had four cases of scarlet fever. We are glad to report complete recovery in all the cases. In spite of long periods of quarantine, and broken work due to changing of teachers, the pupils made good showings in their examinations’.—Oakwood Advance Report to New York Yearly Meeting, 1918-1919

This year we mark a century of learning on the Poughkeepsie campus, having moved here in 1919 from Union Springs, New York. Oakwood Friends School has a centuries-old tradition of leaning into uncertainty, building community, and supporting a diverse population of learners. While necessity drove us to physically distance ourselves this Spring, we explored multiple

ways to shorten the gap between us academically, socially, and emotionally.

The year began with the community gathering in worship on campus. A beloved faculty member passed suddenly just prior to the start of his 40th year of teaching. Hundreds of former students, friends and colleagues joined the current Oakwood community in reflective silence and shared experiences. With the meeting room proving too small, the service was moved to the gym and theater, where we witnessed the impact a transformative teacher can have on their students and where the love of a strong community can strengthen us all.

This positive message carried throughout the fall and winter terms as students and faculty applied their learning inside and outside the classroom. The service-learning-through-the-arts program shared music with the larger Hudson Valley, performing for people from age two to a hundred and two. Our four-season greenhouse remains a focal point of our Middle School sustainability curriculum, where valuable learning mixes with an abundance of kale, spinach, tomatoes, and carrots. We welcomed Drew Smith, Executive Director of Friends Council on Education, for a hands-on workshop for parents on Quakerism, Friends Education, and conversations about how to better connect our students and families to the Quaker testimonies. Our students travelled to Costa Rica on educational exchanges. They travelled to Montreal and joined 1200 students from around the world for an annual Model United Nations conference. Our 10th graders travelled to New York for Youth Service Opportunities Project. We celebrated the Year of the Rat, with our international students, inviting several of their parents who were in the United States this December to join us on campus for a day of cooking, eating, and sharing. Our young alumni talked with our students about leading lives of consequence and how to put their Oakwood education into action. Recent graduates from the 1990's and 2000's discussed their work with Rural and Migrant Ministries, migrant farmworkers rights, ethical and sustainable commerce, and environmental education initiatives within the Hudson Valley's public-school systems.

While recognizing the strength of a socioeconomically, culturally, spiritually, and racially diverse community, we also

reflected deeply on our individual understanding of, and participation in, anti-racist work. Members of the Center for the Study of White American Culture met with faculty and parents during a series of winter term workshops. Challenged to confront racism within our society and within our school community, we recognize that this work is ongoing and central to the school's mission. We are encouraged by the efforts of our current faculty, students, and the rising student leaders.

As the winter transitioned into spring, the realities and severity of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent. Indicative of the diverse community of learners, Oakwood has students and families located on six continents, all affected. Ever creative and resilient, faculty and students transitioned quickly to new modalities of distance learning. International students who could not travel home were cared for in the dorms and within the community. Alumni gatherings became virtual, allowing for hundreds to connect who otherwise could not come to campus. Virtual arts lectures and social justice lectures were attended by community members around the globe with graduates from the 1940's joining into conversations with current students. Meeting for Worship also shifted to the digital realm. Every Wednesday after lunch, students, faculty and staff joined in quiet reflection. These meetings helped to ground our community during highly uncertain times.

In the wake of the horrific acts of racism on display with painful frequency throughout our country, we gathered for evening prayer vigils, virtual gatherings and faculty and student discussions. Members of the community joined in protests from Albany, to Poughkeepsie, Beacon, New York City and beyond. Students and faculty have continued these discussions past graduation and into July, reminding us all that this work is never over and needs to be better woven into the daily language, action, and curriculum of our school program.

And yet the Oakwood community, adapts, supports, and moves forward. Recently, we welcomed the newest members to the Oakwood family, with two couples in our humanities department welcoming healthy baby girls onto the campus. Our seniors celebrated a virtual graduation. And although they could not be physically present on campus, they were connected

in spirit, through video, and song. The Middle School program, expanding to include a 5th grade next year, is the largest in twenty-five years, and the Upper School program, despite a shift in international student population, remains vibrant and strong.

Close to 100 years ago, Oakwood's long-tenured Head of School, William Reagan wrote, "In the 1920's the winds of change were blowing. The turmoil of war and violence of depression were an unsettling influence on this country and elsewhere. Table ideas were under attack... yet we think of love of all people and vision of new problems taking the place of old.... (at the heart of an Oakwood experience is) a more intimate contact with persons of insight and experience." He went on to acknowledge that the Oakwood community, flaws and all, aspires to be part of the change we know to be possible. And as we complete the 224th year of this journey in Quaker education, nurtured and supported by New York Yearly Meeting, we look forward to the challenges and opportunities before us.

Chad Cianfrani, Head of School

Reports from Representatives to Affiliate Groups

Friends General Conference

Friends General Conference is an association of 16 yearly meetings—Pacific YM joined last year—and 14 directly affiliated monthly meetings. A small staff and many volunteers are involved in a wide variety of projects and activities at FGC. There isn't room here to give more than tiny tastes of all that's going on. Lots of information is available at www.fgcquaker.org.

The following 5 goals indicate areas in which FGC would like to grow, and is working on raising money to do so.

1. Ensure long-term vitality of the FGC Gathering
2. Move FGC toward greater wholeness as a spiritual community as we transform FGC into an actively anti-racist organization.

3. Improve and increase resources to help yearly and monthly meetings feed the spiritual hunger of Friends
4. Strengthen opportunities for Quaker youth and young adults to participate in and contribute to Quaker community at all levels
5. Enhance our ability to connect Friends and serve yearly and monthly meetings.

The annual Gathering is FGC's best-known program. In March, when the spread of COVID-19 made clear that it would be extremely unwise to continue planning for a Gathering in the usual format, staff and a small group of volunteers embarked on a huge effort create a virtual Gathering. Encouraged by the success of Pay as Led in New England and New York Yearly Meetings, staff decided to experiment with Pay as Led for the virtual Gathering. As I write this, the Gathering is beginning with over 900 people registered. Clearly this is something people want. Time will tell how successful this experiment will be. Perhaps it will change the shape of future Gatherings, even when again it becomes safe to travel to a large meeting,

FGC continues to prioritize efforts toward anti-racism. The query approved by Central Committee in 2018 is brought to all meetings for business, and all committees are encouraged to include a response in each of their reports. This is that query:

How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?

In addition, FGC continues its partnership with the White Privilege Conference, and provides a substantial discount for Friends who register through FGC.

The online Spiritual Deepening Library contains a multitude of resources for meetings, on a wide variety of topics. Check it out at www.fgcquaker.org/SDlibrary.

Several upcoming eRetreats will afford opportunities for spiritual growth in the company of Friends from across North America:

- Building a Meaningful Life: Dates to be announced (Postponed from Spring)
- Aging, Death, & Dying: September 13 - October 9, 2020

- Weaving a Wider Welcome: September 27 - October 23, 2020
- Understanding & Healing White Supremacy: October 25 - November 20, 2020

QuakerBooks is a resource for Friends and Meetings. In addition to books and e-books they have suggestions for reading groups, religious education materials, and more.

The Gathering includes an intentional community of Adult Young Friends which includes a pre-Gathering retreat, affinity groups, and (when the Gathering is in-person) a housing cluster. FGC sponsors an annual training in Clerking and Recording Clerking skills for High School and Young Adult Friends.

There are periodic opportunities for Yearly Meeting Clerks and General Secretaries to meet with each other and exchange ideas and concerns.

Six Friends currently represent NYYM on Central Committee, the governing board of FGC.

(According to the FGC Organizational Guide, NYYM is entitled to 12 representatives.)

Karen Snare, Clerk

Friends United Meeting

No report submitted.

Friends World Consultation Committee (FWCC)

FWCC rejoices that NYYM took up the call to action on climate change and in 2019 began the process of divesting NYYM funds from fossil fuels. We hope that the rest of the funds will be divested as soon as possible.

NYYM's FWCC committee is proposing a regional gathering on Environmental Action for Fall of 2020. We invite Friends from the East Coast (and beyond) to join us in researching and planning the event. Please reach out to the clerk if you are interested. The event will be virtual, with the possibility of an

in-person component at the Center for Racial Justice in Ithaca if gatherings of that sort are considered safe at the time of the event. We hope to engage Quaker youth activists as speakers for the event.

Thanks to Friends in the Delaware Valley, FWCC Section of the Americas is offering Yearly Meetings in the Americas grants of \$1,000 for pandemic relief, specifically to help meetings with technology concerns. Money can be used for Zoom accounts, staff time for training, internet connections, monthly and regional meetings needs, or any other technology resources the Yearly meeting determines necessary. Please contact Robin Mohr (robinm@fwccamericas.org) with inquiries. If there are multiple requests across the yearly meeting can we ask the yearly meeting office to coordinate applications for funds?

FWCC is also offering grants to strengthen the network of Young Adult Friends around the world. If you are 18-35 and have ideas for helping Young Adult Friends experience deep spiritual fellowship on an international level please consider applying. You can find the application at fwcc.world/fwcc-news/yaffund or email faithb@fwcc.world if with questions.

In February of 2020 FWCC world office hosted an online Sustainability Conference attended by more than 300 Friends from all over the globe. For information on that gathering and other resources for helping our planet please check out Sustainability Resources at <http://fwcc.world/sustainability/resources>.

The FWCC Section gathering is planned for the spring of 2021 in Florida. The FWCC world gathering is planned for 2023 in South Africa. We encourage Friends interested in worshipping with and learning from Quakers from all over the country and the world to find out more about FWCC. Please contact our clerk to come to our next meeting.

Sylke Jackson, Clerk of Friends World Committee for Consultation (Committee of NYYM)

Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee

With this report, we are changing the reporting period from the calendar year to the period from May 1 to April 30 of each year. For this report, as the first one that is not congruent with the calendar year, we report on all of 2019 and on 2020 through the end of April. The next advance report will cover the 2020 summer meeting and the 2021 winter meeting.

In the period of this report, Meetings for Discernment were held at Poughkeepsie Meeting on February 23, 2019, at Silver Bay during Summer Sessions on July 23, 2019 and at Ithaca Meeting on March 7, 2020.

There were two notable changes in these meetings from others in recent years. The first is that more young adult Friends than usual attended these meetings. The second is that the query for the summer meeting addressed a matter that was currently under consideration for action by the yearly meeting. And these two changes are connected.

Our February 2019 meeting was held on a Saturday and the organizers of the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series arranged to hold one of their workshops at Poughkeepsie Meeting the following day. This made it easy and inviting for young adults coming to the workshop to come for Discernment as well, enriching the worship and fellowship on Saturday.

The summer meeting centered on the query “what does membership mean to you?” This is directly related to a proposal that was under consideration by the Yearly Meeting to create an additional pathway to membership. We had not previously attempted to labor over a specific issue through the Meetings for Discernment process, but the Steering Committee agreed that it was appropriate to do so at this point in our development. And, while the proposed new pathway would not solely apply to younger Friends, the suggestion originated with concerned young adults for whom membership through a monthly meeting is not readily achieved. Knowing that we may each have a different portion of the Light, our discernment together was deep and open. Some reported that they understood the feelings and needs of others when before they had not been able to and

some reported feeling heard when before they felt excluded. The Meeting for Discernment was an opportunity, well-used, to listen, to speak, and to open to one another. At the following Fall Sessions, a proposal for an additional pathway to membership was approved by the body.

The winter 2020 Meeting for Discernment was scheduled for February 29, 2020 but due to a significant snowstorm, it was postponed to March 7, 2020. The meeting focused on the theme Seeing and Being Seen in Community: Reflections on Friends Experiences of Power and Authority and offered queries to begin this exploration: When have unequal power dynamics gotten in the way of your/our best spiritual discernment? When have you felt powerful? When have you felt powerless? In one response, a Friend asked, “How do we call out something that is wrong and have it said with love?” Friends reported experiencing deep worship and supported the use of the Meetings for Discernment as a place for laboring together on complex issues.

Beyond the timing and topics of the meetings, in this period the Steering Committee made a greater effort to reach out, for Friends to serve as clerks, to Friends who had not been called on before to clerk a session and whose gifts could become more widely known and appreciated by their clerking such a session. The Steering Committee learned (again) how this kind of recognition lifts up the individuals and the meeting as a whole. We will continue to hold this as one of our objectives in seeking Friends to clerk Meeting for Discernment sessions.

We will be holding our first virtual Meeting for Discernment as our summer 2020 meeting, because we will be unable to meet in person due to the need for physical distancing caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will miss being together but we recognize that this may provide an opportunity to improve access to Meetings for Discernment in the future. And we expect to continue exploring how these meetings can have spirit-led practical uses for the yearly meeting.

Finally, we note that a minute approved in 2014 (2014-07-24) reads in part that “...Friends approve the extension of Meetings for Discernment for an additional six years, at the end of which Friends will consider how and whether Meetings for Discernment are serving Spirit’s purpose for New York Yearly

Meeting....” We anticipate bringing a recommendation on the future of the Meetings for Discernment to the yearly meeting body at Summer Sessions 2020.

Caroline Lane and Elaine Learnard, Co-Clerks

MINISTRY SECTION

State of Society Report 2019

The timeframe for some Meetings to prepare the 2019 annual State of Society Report started just before and after the turning of the year, for some in December and others in January. For many they initiated their process prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and completed their reports as its reality settled into our communities and Meetings. We are sad in particular the shutdown meant that we were not able to support our prison worship groups to complete and provide reports.

To read the documents, to discern what to lift up, what to highlight, and what to summarize felt daunting in the face of all that was swirling around us all day after day. A wise Friend invited us to consider that perhaps we might want to do something different which led to the format of this year’s report.

What follows are statements and ideas that in some way capture a theme, a concern, a joy, a practice from different Meeting’s reports grouped as the committee under headings reflecting relevant topics. These threads form a tapestry of wisdom and experience from across New York Yearly Meeting gathered together from 35 meetings. They each stand on their own and together weave a message of how Divine guidance continues to speak to and through us as we face conflict, grief, joy and the individual and collective witness and service we offer in the world.

You may also encounter some of these same threads woven into the framework of other documents and reports during the 2020 Summer Sessions. And we invite all Friends to take the opportunity to read through each of this year’s State of the Meeting reports which will be made available in a folder on the NYYM website. You may be surprised, delighted, inspired or dismayed, yet in the end amazed at the power of Love made visible throughout each of them.

Worship and Ministry

We are outgrowing our space, sometimes using all our chairs.

Our attendance at worship is higher and more consistent, we are able to provide a vibrant midweek worship and worship sharing meeting, and we maintain a much adored first day school program for our small group of children.

Our meeting is growing into faithfulness.

With attendance so low, we felt the stress to our spirit had reached an acute level, and some action needed to be taken to provide relief....we decided to continue as a monthly Meeting at this time, rather than becoming a worship group, but we will limit what we try to do. Rather than have no one or a single person attend a scheduled meeting for worship, we now try to keep in better contact with one another and schedule worship sessions less often than weekly, announcing them to the community through our website. We have not held regular monthly business meetings, or Religious education meetings.

The importance of silent worship is a highlight for [our meeting]: settling in, feeling enveloped in the space. The corporate nature of expectant waiting blankets and enriches our spirits.

Online worship continues and there are people joining us from other states and even other countries.

We have powerful ministry, sometimes even when the meeting is silent.

We began reading and discussing the New Testament gospels, and found that rereading them helped in the search for the life of the spirit, as well as finding new meaning in the familiar.

Prison ministry is also vibrant in our meeting if not new. It is about relationship and ministry.

New attenders and new members come with change. Their addition to worship in all forms brings new experiences and new perspectives, so while our practices may generally remain the same, the life of the meeting remains fresh, shifting in response to who is present.

Our meeting has a diverse group of members and attenders,

including folks who express a deep faith in the divine, those for whom activism is a guiding spirit, and those who come in order to care for and be with other members of the community.

Our Meetings for Worship have been consistently warm and graced by Divine Presence. We have been blessed with meaningful ministry and often gathered in deeper silence this year. Although we are fewer in number these days, we feel the Spirit moving among us and we are grateful.

Minute: We believe adult Quakers hold their faith by conviction. Obtaining conviction means that experimentation and discernment are necessary. We support young people in our meeting in developing their spiritual lives throughout their childhood. In our meeting, children were designated as members at a young age by their parents. When children grow into adulthood we encourage them to consider their continued membership in and commitment to our meeting and to our Religious Society as a whole. We welcome the fellowship of persons of all ages as they explore their spiritual identity and membership status.

A real strength is how we come together in Meeting for Worship; this is our basis and what “unites and sustains us.”

All have come with hearts and minds prepared, and Meeting is rejoicing in the fresh flow of Spirit that settles upon us in that readiness of heart.

We are reminded that our connection to the Spirit and to each other will allow us to face the troubled days ahead with love in our hearts and dedication to continue the work of the Spirit.

The Divine Spirit that guides us is unchangeable and we trust to that Presence among us and within each of us to lead us through the years to come with the certainty that our faith provides.

We conscientiously increased vocal ministry during worship.

Some wish for more vocal ministry, but we all realize that it is not quantity we need, but more ministry of a certain quality. As a Meeting, we intend to educate and encourage each other in this direction.

We are a relatively quiet meeting, but our messages are from the

heart and people speak when they are led.

Using a form taught by a Seneca clan mother in her teaching circle, at rise of Meeting for Worship on March 17, 2019, each person present was asked to give one word that conveyed their experience of worship together. These were recorded in sequence, and immediately arranged in lines, giving us a picture of where our Meeting was, in that moment:

Surprise:

Centering, healing silence.

Unity

Warmth

gratitude.

Pruning compassion with truth.

Hope, willow;

caring thought.

The Meeting's meditation garden continues to invite members and attenders to sit or walk quietly in visible connection with the natural world.

Meeting provides space for "things to come up"—the room is like a big hand that can hold all types of thoughts, reflections, and issues, and that there is more space than we might initially imagine.

[Ours] is a small meeting. We don't take on huge projects. We hope that simply by keeping the doors open we stand as a resource for spiritual light and solace to the community of Friends and to the broader public. We endeavor to carry a spirit of loving concern with us as we face the reality of everyday life.

Life of the Meeting – Inreach and Outreach

"Inreach"—how to support and enhance life of the Meeting

Beginning in July, we welcomed New York Quarterly Meeting's proposal to observe a year of Jubilee as a time of intentional repose. With discussions and time, we came to embrace and give shape to our range of perspectives—whether and what to set aside, and what new opportunities to create.

It is important to remember that the Spirit is not absent from our Meeting. Could it be that we have been blocking ourselves

from the light of the Spirit in our struggle to communicate and work through difficult matters together?

Our social room and its table have come to have a sacred feeling this year because of our growing sense of community.

Our membership and attendance have stayed steady. We have recognized, more than ever, the importance of the meeting community.

Having each other in our lives is deeply meaningful. It feels good to have an intact community.

An effort has been made to develop smaller jobs that an attender can do and ways to contribute to the life of the meeting.

While our size remains tiny, participants speak of expanded opportunities.

Spirit has been most visible in our meeting this year as we have comforted and supported each other in a year of considerable loss.

[Creating]....deep opportunities for people to share their insights, fears and questions about race, white privilege and how Friends might respond.

The Manasquan member who maintains the meeting Facebook page created an Instagram page this past year. Both pages have elicited interest and response. Also, first-time attenders have remarked that they were drawn to the meeting by our well-managed website.

There is a need for history and an awareness of our history within our meetings.

In many ways, Meeting feels alive, partly because we remember those who have passed, whose lives gave testimony to their beliefs, and who trusted Meeting to be with them in their final and most intimate moments.

Each of us, along with our words, is but one precious thread speaking its truth, while seeking to be woven into and serving to strengthen the fabric of our community.

New, younger attenders have given us the opportunity to practice and to demonstrate that it is safe to talk, even if you don't agree;

that questions are more valuable than answers; that it is OK to acknowledge the things we just don't know or have a response to; and that community is based on relationships of equals.

Responding to a need to nurture new adult attenders, we are presented with the opportunity for all to discover more about Quakerism and to explore and deepen our spirituality.

Our Adult Education and Spiritual Nurture Committee alternates between Quakerism 101 one month and worship sharing about our experiences of that morning's meeting for worship the next. We continue (not without some struggle) to provide a vibrant Social Hour after meeting for worship that is a portal for new and old Friends to transit from worship to Fellowship.

How do our various and individual approaches to membership affect our integrity as a meeting?

We wish for greater diversity.

We are attempting to deal with disagreements on a profound level, and to learn how to remain a community even when individuals find themselves in discord. Our listening circles have provided us with an opportunity to work through these disagreements by speaking honestly and listening sincerely to one another.

As we attempt to meet the various needs within our own faith community, we have become aware that this requires openness, persistence, patience and letting go of the fear that each attempt may not unfold as hoped for.

As a meeting we were able to move beyond a seeming impasse and start working towards long needed conflict transformation.

In our monthly gathering of "Moving with Spirit," we dance together, soaring beyond our words. We also support each other in our artistic endeavors.

Business and Care of Space and Place

The special care of our grounds is part of our meeting's ministry.

The cost and strain of maintaining our large property is a continuing concern as we labor to seek unity on what may be right stewardship of those abundant assets.

Importantly we have only three members who make significant, continued contributions to running the Meeting. We have managed to keep the nursery school running and maintain the building but it is difficult, when problems arise, to deal with them in a timely, professional, economical way.

Friends found Spirit at work in our discernment around replacing carpeting, repainting, and refreshing rooms in the meeting-house, as we were encouraged to consider the environmental impact of replacing and ecologically disposing of old carpet, and replacing furniture with gently used rather than new pieces.

One of our goals in building our Meeting House was to provide a space for the community to participate in a variety of activities as well as to issue an invitation to join our community.

We have put in place a plan of how to respond to an emergency should it occur during our worship time.

[We as a meeting] recognize our challenge to know and act recognizing “that there is that of God in everyone,” and George Fox’s teaching of consensus and that nobody’s will should be imposed on others.

As a small meeting, we function well as a “committee of the whole.” Members and attenders are generous in the ways they contribute to and participate in the life of the meeting, and it is believed that this comes from a spiritual force felt in worship that binds us.

The Life of the Spirit is visible in the increased desire for, and reinstatement of, a nominating committee and separate committees to help channel the latent energy and capabilities of our members and attenders.

Too often a meeting focuses on preservation of the institution instead of serving the community.

First Day School and Intergenerational Activities

First Day School has been a welcoming space for the children to be heard, to hear from each other and from adults that are not their parents, and to play and connect with each other.

We welcome our kids and respect them.

We remain committed to encouraging intergenerational activities

The small moment when children come down to worship feels big, as there is something wondrous in their intermingling with adults, as they increasingly become an important part of the community.

Witness and Service

Where is the spark that Quakers used to have?

Our experience more than ever in 2019 was that our witness work attracted new attenders to our worship and our community.

Young Peacemakers Week (YPW), held this past summer of 2019, our urban day camp, hosted 36 young people between grades 2 and 8, plus 4 delightful teenagers, for a week of bearing witness to our Quaker Peace Testimony.

We continue our monthly Meeting Peace Vigil in front of the State Capitol.

Our concerns have centered on Gun Violence in our society and culture.

We feel a sense of balance which comes from grounding our actions in “old” values, priorities, and ideas but updating how we address issues based on the “new” of what is going on in the world now.

One Friend noted that she tries to support organizations that do good work, but it’s essential that there be a call behind such activism. Though we recognize that many Friends are active in their professional lives and look forward to the Meeting for peace, if everyone comes as an escape and is not open to hearing a call, that presents a problem.

Our regular participation in a variety of local advocacy and justice groups shows an ongoing commitment to making the world a better place.

Several people from other faiths who attended our gun-control vigil stated that ours is the only house of worship in the community willing to confront controversial issues. These remarks were both a confirmation of our calling and a sobering challenge. If

Quakers are not willing to step forward to offer space and opportunity for like-minded people to gather, then who will? Whether we seek to end violence against the earth or earth's inhabitants, we must be prepared to do what God requires of us.

Lofty thoughts on theory and policy manifest themselves on the ground with lobbying, letter writing, making phone calls, visiting representatives in Albany, and maintaining a relationship with the men in the worship group at the Woodbourne Correctional Facility. When we live the lives that we preach, we become both a mystical and practical religion.

Though our meeting occasionally experiences doubts about our long-term future, we are joyful that the continued existence of our witness demonstrates that the Spirit is present among us and works through us to help others in our world.

Meeting offers a place to worship together, as well as offers a way to communally make a positive impact on our world and the lives of others.

Ministry Coordinating Committee

Ministry Coordinating Committee coordinates and supports work done by New York Yearly Meeting that connects in some way to ministry. As of May 2020, this includes committees, working groups, and task groups that fall into a number of categories: anti-racism, chaplaincy, conflict, epistles, Faith and Practice, membership, ministry, outreach, pastoral care, Powell House, recording ministers, spiritual nurture, testimonies, worship, young adults, and youth.

MCC has met nine times per year (including four videoconferences) for the last two years. We now have regional representatives in place for eight of NYYM's nine regions, and some of those regional reps have been very active in trying to support the local meetings in their regions. We also have active representatives to MCC from the majority of our task groups, working groups, and committees. All of this is good in terms of increasing communication within MCC, so that we have a better understanding of the needs of local meetings and more cooperation between our various groups.

However, many things aren't working very well.

Some of us feel that we don't have enough people to do the work that needs to be done. On average, a little more than half of us attend each MCC meeting, and fewer than half of us respond to emails from our clerk—though those who do attend and/or respond are not consistently the same people. A few members of our committee say that they aren't completely clear what their responsibilities are, and a few members of our committee say that they don't fully understand what MCC is supposed to be doing.

We recognize a need to diversify our committee membership, especially in terms of race and age, but when asked, many of us (though not all of us) say that we don't know how to do that.

We know that some of our groups and committees have underspent our budgets or not spent them at all in the last few years, and we know that there is a budget shortfall in the yearly meeting as a whole, but we have not found a way to change how we handle our budget requests.

We think it's possible that the work of Ministry Coordinating Committee has some impact on the lives of Friends in local meetings, and that is certainly our intent, but beyond occasional anecdotes, we have no real way of knowing this. (Although, happily, we do know that some of our constituent groups have a real impact on Friends in some local meetings.)

Several committees and groups within MCC are mostly not functioning, in that they are not meeting regularly, not fulfilling their charge, and not communicating well with other groups in the yearly meeting, but we have not laid down or successfully reorganized any of these committees or groups.

When we are together, we often feel the life of the Spirit very deeply. Some of us feel that that Life has extended beyond our group to nourish the yearly meeting as a whole.

Emily Provance, Clerk

Committee on Conflict Transformation

The Committee on Conflict Transformation offers training to Quaker groups on tools and approaches to respond creatively to conflict and is available to assist with responses to specific

conflicts. In 2019 the Committee on Conflict Transformation (CCT) was invited to be of service to monthly meetings and organizations of the Yearly Meeting.

The Committee has an active core of five members from Farmington-Scipio, New York, and Northeastern regional and quarterly meetings, as well as two co-opted members actively involved in specific pieces of work. Two other members requested release because of time commitment required by the Committee. Two additional members have been unable to actively engage but have not requested release from service.

The Committee or subgroups met by phone conference at least 25 times. We also met at Spring Sessions 2019 and offered consultation to several individuals and meetings. Our customary retreat has not occurred, and that has affected our ability to plan and reflect together to discern way forward.

This has been a year of great activity.

- The committee was active at Summer Sessions 2019, offering a worship sharing group and an interest group on circles, participating in the Circle of Care and Concern and the Community Agreements Response Team, as well as responding to requests for assistance with several specific conflicts.
- The committee has consulted with two monthly meetings, and has been approached by 3 more.
- The committee continues to provide funding for a consultant to assist a meeting with whom we have had an ongoing relationship.
- The committee has been asked for guidance by 2 meetings outside of NYYM and 3 individuals within NYYM.
- The committee wrote many of the articles in the March 2019 *Spark* issue on conflict transformation. A letter to meetings was sent out by NYYM staff alerting meeting clerks to that issue of *Spark*. Currently, no copies remain in the office but NYYM Communications Director has set up our pages as a booklet that can be accessed online.
- Members of the committee offered a 5-day workshop at the July 2019 FGC Gathering held in Grinnell, Iowa. We offered

one-on-one opportunities in the afternoons, something that has been well received at previous Gatherings. A team from the committee was invited to offer a 5-day workshop at the 2020 FGC Gathering; unfortunately the pandemic caused the cancellation of the Gathering, but we have been invited to submit a proposal for the 2021 Gathering.

- Heather Cook and Pierre Douyon presented at the Rochester Sisters of St. Joseph, Growing Partnerships convocation, May 11, 2019; and Willie Bontrager and Karen Reixach offered a 90-minute workshop on conflict in religious communities at the Partners in Restorative Initiative, Restorative Justice Conference, October 26, Rochester NY.
- The Committee has also provided minutes of support for listening circles for other organizations:
 - Heather Cook and Wilma Campbell (Rochester) Roc-ACTS, Rochester NY, Feb 9
 - Heather Cook, Ernie Buscemi (Morningside) New Sanctuary Coalition, New York City

We hope in 2020 to update the website, update our brochure, and plan for additional circle training.

Karen Reixach, Clerk

Ministry & Pastoral Care

No report submitted

Task Group on Racism in NYYM

No report submitted

Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice*

In the time since Summer Sessions 2019, the Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice* accomplished one important addition to the Practice part of the discipline, and a great deal of thinking.

The addition was to the structure and process of membership. In collaboration with the Working Committee on Alternate

Pathways to Membership, the membership section was rewritten to include a new option for applying for membership. The yearly meeting united in approval at Fall Sessions 2019. Previously, the only path to membership was via the monthly meeting, leading to automatic membership in New York Yearly Meeting. Now prospective Friends have the option of applying directly to the yearly meeting, specifically to the clerk of Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee. It is hoped the new path will better accommodate those who change location frequently, who cannot connect with a monthly meeting, or who are incarcerated.

We also presented and received approval for a rewritten definition of Clearness Committees. The new version adds useful details for the whole process of requesting, creating, and managing a clearness committee.

The thinking we've been doing concerns the best process of revising *Faith & Practice*. What is the most spirit-led source of the desire to revise? Should it begin primarily with discernment within the committee, or in consideration of needs expressed from outside the committee? How does the committee decide that a change is sufficiently seasoned to be committed to print? In addition to major changes to Practice, how should we handle the myriad phrases and names that are outdated, out of existence, or awkwardly worded? Even small issues—the word “overseer” is now rarely used—lead to large ones: “overseer” is related to “elder,” which still holds many different formal and informal meanings in monthly meeting practice. And every change made—such as the laying down of the Nurture Coordinating Committee or a new path to membership—ripples through other parts of Practice.

The work of the Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice* is engaging and important. The committee seems to draw members who are dedicated and even enthusiastic about discernment and writing. It has been a pleasure to work with them.

Karen Way, Clerk

Powell House Co-Executive Directors

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 B. Haag and Dennis Haag
Co-Executive Directors, Elsie K. Powell House, Inc.*

Elsie K. Powell House, Inc.

It has been a miraculous year. It has been a tough one, too. The miraculous part is that we continue to move ahead, working on program development, property projects, financial security, and warm, close contacts with everyone we work with. All this has happened during an epic pandemic forcing us to change totally how we deliver programs and also with a major change in core staff.

Our virtual programming has been so successful that we will continue using that format even after we resume on-site programs. It has broadened our reach, with 40% of attendees coming from outside the yearly meeting, some internationally. The imagination and hard work of the staff has enriched our offerings rather than diminished our contributions to the life and work of all in the yearly meeting and beyond.

The Powell House commitment to its Youth Program made both the loss to retirement of the Youth Directors and the work of finding a replacement for those very big shoes the priority task of the year. We are delighted with the results. God will provide.

We have demonstrated the ability to continue to fulfill our mission statement even in this strange and difficult time: ***To foster spiritual growth after the manner of Friends and to strengthen the application of Friends' testimonies in the world.***

Mary A. Brown, Clerk

Task Group on Racism in NYYM

No report submitted.

Spiritual Nurture Working Group

Since Summer Sessions 2019, Spiritual Nurture Working Group (SNWG) has continued to support the initiative to reach out to Young Adult Friends (YAF) begun in 2018-2019. At Summer Sessions the yearly meeting heard Young Adult Friends' call for a mentorship program. Along with Mahayana Landowne of ARCH, SNWG co-clerks Anne Pomeroy & Lu Harper worked with Interim Young Adult Field Secretary Marissa Badgley to plan and implement the Young Adult Mentorship Program which began in January 2020. Since then, we have participated in the mentorship program as mentors, as members of the program's advisory committee, and have helped facilitate retreats. We have also served as elders, holding the space for regular YAF events.

At present we are participating in the work of the Reimagining Summer Sessions task group, considering ways in which SNWG might offer Coffee, Communion & Conversation or other events in support of yearly meeting's virtual sessions.

Lu Harper and Anne Pomeroy, Co-clerks

Committee on Sufferings

A Task Group for the Committee on Sufferings was named to work together to determine the purpose and functions of the Committee on Sufferings. They met once on Zoom and have communicated frequently via email about revisions to the Handbook page.

Because of the murder of George Floyd, there have been numerous demonstrations, so the Task Group felt it was important to share with Friends the steps to request Sufferings funds. The information appeared in the NYYM Weekly Update.

Carolyn Emerson

Committee on Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions

No report submitted.

Youth Committee

No report submitted.

GENERAL SERVICES SECTION

General Services Coordinating Committee

No report submitted.

Committee on Aging Concerns

This year has been unlike any other year since the inception of the ARCH (Aging, Resources, Consultation and Help) Program in 2007. In early March we found ourselves in full awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic that had come upon us and began to cancel and alter scheduled plans, shifting our focus to providing information, support and guidance for New York Yearly Meeting Friends within the context of our stated Vision, Mission and Values.

Prior to reporting what that shift has entailed, below are items traditionally included in our Annual Report.

The Committee on Aging Concerns currently comprises nine members, including co-clerks, a recording clerk, a prison correspondent, and representatives to the Yearly Meeting Personnel Committee and Financial Services Committee. Members are actively engaged and additional members are being sought in order to expand the work of the Committee in these challenging times.

The Committee meets monthly via Zoom. In addition, Committee members met during Summer and Fall Representative, at YM Coordinating Committee weekend, and at select Regional or Quarterly Meetings.

A Committee of three serves as support for Director Callie Janoff. This group has been meeting weekly since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. Previously, meetings of the support committee were held monthly, with one-on-one meetings taking place the other three weeks in the month.

ARCH's annual request for funding from Friends Foundation on Aging (FFA) was approved in the amount of \$64,000.

FFA requested an evaluation of the ARCH program by an independent evaluator. The search is in its initial phase with potential evaluators being contacted and Requests for Proposals being solicited. An additional grant from FFA will fund the evaluator's fee.

The ARCH program now employs seven Local Coordinators who are supervised by the Director. They serve New Jersey, Purchase Quarter, New York City, Farmington-Scipio Region, Northeastern Regional Meeting, Long Island and Prisons. Three of the seven Coordinators were hired this year.

This year two ARCH Visitor Trainings were offered remotely, bringing the number of Friends to participate in the training to 172.

Seven workshops were presented within the NYYM. Most of these were offered online via video conference during the COVID-19 pandemic and were responsive to developing needs and concerns such as pastoral care, care teams, advance directives, and grief and loss.

The following partnering and collaborative efforts have been happening:

A \$5,000 grant was received from the H.H. Mosher Fund to revise the ARCH pamphlet on End-of-Life Decision Making and Quaker Values and to develop a NYC Housing Guide. This work is underway.

ARCH has reached out to those who attend Prison Worship Groups and isolated Friends who are incarcerated. This activity has been enhanced with the addition of a Local Coordinator whose focus is on prisons. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 physical access to prisons has been suspended so correspondence between those in prison and Friends on the outside is extremely important.

Integration into NYYM's programming and budget is

now complete with clearly defined guidelines for ARCH fundraising. ARCH received a total of \$21,900 in designated contributions this year.

Quarterly ARCH Newsletters, which include news, resources, opportunities and inspiration were distributed within NYYM and their frequency has increased since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. Five email newsletters were distributed since summer sessions 2019 as of this writing and will likely continue approximately monthly for the duration of the pandemic.

The Committee's annual retreat was held the weekend of September 13 and 14 and included Local Coordinators. A portion of the weekend was devoted to storytelling so that Friends currently serving could learn of initial call and subsequent development of the Ministry. Anita Paul, a co-founder with Barbara Spring, was present to share this story. Individual Friends were invited to speak their own sense of call to involvement. The weekend included items of business and concluded with attendance at Barbara Spring's memorial meeting in Albany. A memorial meeting for Barbara was also held at Silver Bay during Summer Sessions.

ARCH has played an integral role in formation and participation in the NYYM's Mentorship Program in collaboration with the NYYM's Spiritual Nurture Working Group and the Interim Young Adult Field Secretary. Mahayana Landowne, the Local Coordinator for New York City has been the primary point of contact for organizing the initiative with Local Coordinator for Farmington-Scipio, Kathy Slattery serving on the advisory group.

In March when the severity of the pandemic became apparent and the country went on lockdown, the Committee met to discern our role in these uncertain and changing times:

- To encourage the development and upholding of community
- To assist Friends connect electronically in a time of social

distancing

- To empower meetings in the formation of support groups and Care Committees
- To reference and distribute reliable information regarding the virus, keeping information current. Support Callie as she participates in the development of a yearly meeting COVID-19 website
- To work closely with the Local Coordinator on Prisons, keeping the Ministry alive behind the walls when visitors and volunteers are being denied access

In-person workshops and meetings were cancelled or postponed and rescheduled in an electronic format in order that the Ministry of ARCH would continue in a seamless manner.

In the midst of discerning and planning for ARCH's role in response to the changing needs of YM Friends, Callie developed the virus and was required to take time apart in order to care for herself, to receive the loving care of others, and to recover. She describes her journey of recovery in the most recent ARCH Newsletter.

Since recovery, Callie has worked with yearly meeting staff to develop the yearly meeting COVID-19 website; has facilitated YM and Powell House information sessions on the virus; and has provided a two-part remote workshop on Advance Directives. The latter workshops will be posted on the NYYM COVID-19 website.

Plans are currently underway to form a task group under General Services to design a survey which will help gather Friends' concerns, needs and capacities in this time of COVID-19. Results will be forwarded to Financial Services, the Spiritual Working Group, and other relevant committees and individuals.

In the midst of uncertainty and the attendant questions, fears and concerns that arise, we seek ways to support and companion Friends navigate the waters of these times. And we invite all of us, as Friends, to ask, "Where are the blessings and the opportunities in these times? Are there lessons we are to learn? Where do we find hope and meaning?"

Audit Committee

No report submitted

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is charged with ensuring NYYM communication moves forward throughout the year. Steve Fortuna began co-clerking with Jennifer Swann in August 2019, enabling the committee to more fully engage across the yearly meeting. The committee met at Fall Sessions in November 2019 and again via Zoom in May 2020. We welcomed non-committee members once again to join us in these meetings to provide additional insights that might inform our committee work.

At the Fall Sessions meeting, a discussion was held concerning the purpose and goals of *Spark* as described in the first edition of the publication. It was agreed that some of the concerns that yearly meeting was looking to address at that time by publishing *Spark* (such as “a cohesive picture of the local meetings activities” and “dissemination of information to eliminate mimeographed letters”) no longer exist. This led to a discussion of what the format of *Spark* should be and what purpose it should serve. Is it an important and necessary vehicle for dissemination of information and promotion of Fall, Summer and Spring Sessions?

A decision was made to form two subcommittees to address these questions:

- To review and rewrite the description of *Spark* to meet the current needs of NYYM Friends and staff.
- To look at alternate ways to support and promote sessions.

The May meeting focused on the website and a review of the standard operating procedures related to NYYM communications. Sarah Way gave a report on the weekly eNewsletter she has been sending out instead of the monthly InfoShare. The group was in favor of making this change permanent. Chad Gilmartin gave a report on the work he is doing to incorporate best practices into the design and management of the website. There was a discussion of the need for a clearer understanding of what is policy as opposed to procedure. We were left with the

question of “how do we define policy in communications when there is such rapid change in how information is collected and disseminated?”

Jennifer Swann, Clerk

Development Committee

In many ways our committee is just getting started (maybe we’re at “the end of the beginning”). The committee was enlarged considerably through work done at Summer Sessions, helped in part by a visit from Quaker consultant Michael Wajda. It now consists of seven active members and represents fairly well the NYYM as a whole. An exception to that is geography, since we are centered in the Hudson Valley with half of us in the Nine Partners quarter (Lily Bergstein, Fred Doneit, Dare Thompson, and Mary Williams). Isabella Aguirre is not far away (Purchase MM) and Bryan Wigfall (Morningside MM) is only a Metro-North train ride away. Even James Malchow (Rahway & Plainfield) visits the Beacon Sloop Club regularly, so even he is often near “our base.”

This year as we are really getting to know one another this concentration has been helpful. We were able to gather for a day’s retreat at Oakwood in the fall and get our work underway. We were then able to gather after a Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting and add notes and signatures to many annual appeal letters and help get them out—on time!

We started 2020 bolstered by the fact that for all our worries about the great Summer Sessions experiment with Pay-as-Led, generous members of the NYYM community rose to the occasion and made sure that it would work—and it did! Not only did we stay in the black, a greater range of NYYM members were able to attend, and this was a joy to us all. Furthermore, thanks to those who responded to a matching gift challenge from a very generous anonymous donor, by the end of 2019, we had also raised about \$20,000 in additional gifts. How lovely to begin the new year with successes to build on, not a hole to climb out of.

We began to make plans to meet with donors and otherwise seek new gifts and realized that first we needed to clarify our

“story”—why we care so much about the NYYM, what its future requires from us, and how additional support will really make a difference. Peter Laughter (Brooklyn MM), a storyteller, joined us occasionally to help. And as we were starting to feel we were getting somewhere, along came the pandemic.

Now instead of a lot of happy interactions on the shores of Lake George, we will be experiencing a virtual Summer Sessions, and how will that work? We are making new plans, and we shall see. Watch for us and jump aboard as we help navigate these COVID-infected seas and work to keep the NYYM safe and strong. See you on the Zoom!

Dare Thompson, for the committee

Committee on Expenditure of the H. H. Mosher Fund

No report submitted.

Nominating Committee

No report submitted.

Personnel Committee

No report submitted.

YEARLY MEETING STAFF

Administrative Associate: Walter Naegle

The last year has been productive and challenging, particularly during the second quarter of 2020. With New York City being the epicenter of the COVID-19 crisis in the U.S. the NYYM staff has had to adjust to working from home, holding meetings via Zoom, and rethinking group meetings, both worship and sessions.

My work continues to be mostly in records maintenance and assistance with finance related tasks. We are gradually transitioning into using Salesforce, and this will help us streamline

tasks in both the database and finance areas. Being a cloud-based program, it can be accessed and used by all NYYM staff, even when we are working from home.

Specific tasks I perform routinely are:

- Opening/distributing mail/answering the telephone
- Depositing checks.
- Reviewing contributions via ACCEPTIVA and forwarding them to the accountants.
- Updating the database in Salesforce, ACCESS, and the office card file.
- Working with Monthly Meeting Recorders on membership statistics
- Mailing out Yearbooks/*Faith & Practice/Spark*
- Working with the Treasurer to submit vouchers to our bookkeeper
- E-mailing Treasurer's Reports to Monthly Meeting Clerks & Treasurers
- Helping to process registrations for Spring/Summer/Fall Sessions
- Compiling the alphabetical and Statistical Report sections of the Yearbook

I enjoy working with all of the NYYM staff and our volunteers as well as with members of our local meetings.

Callie Janoff and Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help (ARCH) Staff Report

This report is being written during the first week of June 2020. Just a week ago the COVID-19 pandemic felt like an eclipse of every other thing I could report to you about last year. A week later the national uprising following the murder of unarmed black man, George Floyd, by a white Minneapolis police officer, feels like an eclipse even of the COVID-19 eclipse.

As your staff person, I am called to a ministry of care with older Friends. Before the pandemic (a time that barely feels

real) we lovingly continued to build and support a network of ARCH Visitors, offering trainings, workshops, resources, and individual support on issues related to growing older. I supervise the now seven ARCH Local Coordinators (we hired three more!) who serve you in your geographic regions and in prisons in New York State. Kevin Lovelady (Northeastern), Judy Meikle (prisons), and Helen B. Mullen (Long Island) were hired on January 1, 2020 to join Gabi Savory Bailey (New Jersey), Martha Gurvich (Purchase), Mahayana (Yana) Landowne (New York City), and Kathy Slattery (Farmington Scipio).

The Committee on Aging Concerns has continued to serve as an invaluable support in their work to oversee the ARCH program, and to season and discern our vision and direction. Much of the good work accomplished by the ARCH program before the pandemic is detailed in their advance report on page 182, and you can read more about our work with a collaborative intergenerational pilot mentorship program in the Interim Young Adult Field Secretary's advance report on page 198.

That world we occupied before March 2020 feels to me to be smashed to bits. I know that broken-ness, though rarely chosen, is always transformational. I know this experientially, but I have also learned this at the knee of those of you I work with. When you lose someone you love, and your life is smashed to bits, I have seen you build back your life with ingenuity, flexibility, and humility. When you lose the capacity to do what felt like “normal” things your whole life—things like hearing well, or remembering things, or walking for miles—I have been with you as you grieved those losses, picked yourself up, and figured out a new way to do what you are called to do. When you have lost yourself in your caring relationship with someone you love, I have witnessed your resilience, your reaching out for help, and the grace you have encountered there.

This capacity for transformation has not been diminished by the last months of pandemic. On the contrary, I have seen Friends do things I never imagined they would. Friends have organized to call (sometimes regularly) everyone over 60 in their meeting, and then everyone regardless of age. Friends have not only transitioned to worshipping remotely via video conference, but reached out to those less confident in or with limited access

to the technology to make sure that they can participate in ways that have been life saving for some. Relief funds, food distribution, supporting sick Friends, writing letters to incarcerated Friends are all familiar Friends activities reimagined and amplified for this time.

ARCH Local Coordinators have also risen to the challenges presented by the pandemic. They have supported meetings for grieving; connected remotely and individually with ARCH Visitors, older Friends, and meeting leadership in their communities; organized behind the scenes to connect older Friends with their meetings while we have needed to isolate from one another; created new written resources to more easily distribute messages about coping with trauma, grief, and loss as well as transitioning from a prison worship group to an outside meeting once released. They have done these things as they continue to support ARCH Visitors and attend to the needs and concerns of older Friends in their communities.

This is a reflective report, one that reviews the past year rather than imagines the ones to come. But imagining a future of racial healing and equity in our ARCH program is what I am doing and must do now. We had already made plans to revise our current Quaker Values and End of Life Decision Making Workbook to include more opportunities for cultural sensitivity, and to invite examination of implicit racial bias when dealing with matters of medical care at the end of our lives. It is now clear to me that all of our training materials, written materials, workshop outlines, and digital communications require similar examination for cultural and racial bias and revision. In the last years we have worked to transition our weekend in-person training retreats to an online seven week format. While I'm grateful for the experience that has given us in this time of physical separation and reliance on digital communication, it is more clear to me than ever that access to and ease with this digital format is not the same for everyone. This needs to be considered as we envision what equal access to the ARCH program really means and how to achieve that. In the last few years we have begun to focus on ageism as an intersectional concern, but I see now that focusing is not enough, and that we are called to dismantle structural ageism and racism in our program now. It has taken me too

long to take responsibility to address these problems with our program, and I know that there are more than I name here. For that I am sorry.

Friends, I feel you understand broken-ness. And so my call with you is to listen and to learn. I remain your student. You are experienced agents of change. Your faith and your practice have prepared you for this watershed opportunity that the current global disaster of pandemic and the swell of hope for racial justice present: to transform ourselves, our communities, and our world. This has always been my work with you, but I feel it now more than ever. I have no smart strategies, I have no playbook, no neat methods. All I have is my capacity to listen, to integrate what I receive, to discern the message, and to respond with what I have. When I lose hope, or faith, or focus I return to listening.

I hope that this listening continues to be of use to you in service to our meetings. I have no idea what will happen next. But this much I can continue to do: to listen, to be open to and working for transformation.

Callie Janoff, ARCH Director

Associate Secretary: Helen Garay Toppins

Stepping into Semi-retirement

Retirement is not the end of the road. It's the beginning of an open highway.

—Author Unknown

As I approach my semi-retirement this September, I find myself looking back with nostalgia. I remember with pride my first job six decades ago. I was the “clean up girl” at the neighborhood beauty parlor. After school I swept the floors and emptied the trash baskets. When I was “promoted” to shampoo girl I got the “heads” ready for the beauticians. I loved listening to the conversations in that beauty parlor! When I received my first pay envelope, it only a few dollars but it meant the world to me. On the way home I brought milk for the family. Every time I opened the refrigerator door and saw that container of milk my heart swelled with pride.

I also find myself looking forward with anticipation, even though there are more questions than answers. COVID has thrown a wrench into my social work field placement. However, the Johns Hopkins, School of Public Health COVID training for contact tracing offers new opportunities. Way will open.

Way will also open for the New York Yearly Meeting Associate Secretary position. Here again, there are more questions than answers. Who will execute the assignments that I will no longer perform? I am not worried. The yearly meeting staff is so competent, dedicated, and committed I believe that the future will be a better version than the past. Discernment for all lies ahead. Stay tuned.

Communications Director: Sarah Way

The pandemic response started in early March 2020 and has affected every aspect of my job.

Before the pandemic, I continued to create and send out the email newsletter, InfoShare, containing news, events, and opportunities for Friends, once a month. *Spark*, the printed newsletter, continued on its usual 5 times a year schedule. The themes during the past 12 months:

- **September 2019: The Spirit is Moving.** Friends wrote reports from Summer Sessions (the first one using Pay as Led, which was successful)
- **November 2019: Light Behind the Walls: Quaker Worship in Prison.** *Guest edited by Jill McLellan and the Prisons Committee.* Articles were written by Friends who were living both inside and outside of prison. Copies of this issue were sent to prison worship groups in our yearly meeting. Thanks to Jill McLellan for making this issue possible.
- **January 2020: What's Happening Now.** This was an open issue. Friends wrote about whatever they were led to share. The issue included a 3-page section on Summer Sessions, the registration for which was to open soon, following the earlier schedule we developed last year.
- **March 2020: Friends Meet on Indigenous Lands.**

Guest edited by Buffy Curtis and Liseli Haines and the Indian Affairs Committee. This extended issue is full of articles and artwork collected by Buffy and Liseli and I am grateful to them for their work. The issue also included information on Spring and Summer Sessions. The pandemic, which caused Spring Sessions to be cancelled and Summer Sessions to be re-imagined as an online event, struck in early March, right after this issue was printed.

- **May/June 2020: Quakers Together While Apart.** Articles cover how Quakers are coping with the social distancing involved in the time of COVID-19. There's also a few articles NOT about the pandemic, and an introduction to the virtual Summer Sessions that will be held online July 19-July 31.

When the pandemic started and in-person gatherings were banned I began to send out more frequent emails to the NYYM list. These emails informed people what was happening with the yearly meeting and the NYYM staff, provided updates on Summer Sessions, links to COVID-19 resources on the nyym.org page, and information on the many emerging online workshops and worship opportunities, including the new weekly "Local Meetings Respond" Zoom calls. The Local Meetings Respond calls started as a series designed for Friends who are in a position to make decisions about their local meeting, but it has expanded to topics that serve a wider audience, like stress management and end-of-life directives. I promote these calls, take notes at them (unless they're in worship sharing format, which is confidential), and publish a summary of the meetings on NYYM's COVID-19 resource webpage.

The last issue of InfoShare, the email newsletter, was in March 2020. Since then I've been emailing a NYYM update every Friday. Friends are encouraged to send items for this weekly email to communications@nyym.org. Right now the update is comprised of online events and resources. I intend to continue the weekly email schedule even after we return to holding in-person events.

After learning a bit about Salesforce I was able to integrate MailChimp with our NYYM Salesforce database. This means

updates and additions that are made to the main NYYM database are automatically transferred to the list of recipients of NYYM emails. I used to have to enter these new names manually into MailChimp, or import them by hand from an Excel spreadsheet. The new system saves time and is more accurate.

At Summer Sessions (2019), I again published a daily “Quaker Update” newsletter. I also took photos to post on social media and for use in future Sessions promotions. Chad Gilmartin, Digital Communications Director, and I ran a Communications Q & A session as an interest group, offering advice on all aspects of meeting communications.

NYYM Summer Sessions had many new attenders in 2019, due in part to the new “Pay as Led” pricing structure. I created a flyer titled “What’s New York Yearly Meeting Doing This Week?” to promote committee and business meeting participation to new and inquiring Friends. The handout included blurbs from committees who were meeting during the week, when they’d be meeting, and what they’d be discussing. It also included the times NYYM was meeting for business and discernment. Many Friends found the flyer helpful. I intend to continue producing this flyer for future Sessions, emailing it to participants in advance and publicizing it more widely.

The annual reports from NYYM committees, staff, and representatives, were made available online in advance of Summer Sessions, and printed copies were available at Sessions itself. I experimented with abridging the printed Yearbook by removing the annual reports from the Yearbook that’s printed in the fall. At Summer Sessions I provided printed copies of the reports to every monthly meeting. I’m not sure if the Yearbook will be “reduced” this year, again, or not. The goal was to save money, paper, and time, and it’s not clear if it did enough of that to be worth the extra coordination required. We didn’t hold Spring Sessions in 2020, so there are no minutes to publish, except for a few “seasoned business items” that were posted for approval on nyym.org.

I have continued NYYM’s social media presence with frequent posts on Facebook and Instagram, where Jillian Smith continues to post most prolifically. Thank you, Jillian. I also post semi-regularly on Twitter. The most popular posts on all outlets

are about social and Witness issues, or are reposts of news articles about Quakers or Quakerism. I set up a new YouTube channel for NYYM—NYYM Videos—on which I’ve been posting the “Witness in the World” series of videos produced by Cai Quirk, co-clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee. I continue to be open to and listening for new ways of communicating with younger and more online-oriented Friends.

In conjunction with the NYYM Trustees I’ve been working on creating “Standard Operating Procedures” (SOPs) for NYYM’s communications. I’ve been putting into words a lot of previously unspoken guidelines under which I’ve been operating. Most of these are descriptive (describing how we already do things) but some are prescriptive (describing how we should start to do things). Those prescriptive procedures may need approval from Communications Committee or General Services CC. I’ve been researching other yearly meeting’s SOPs and seeing what makes sense to include or adapt from them for NYYM. This is an ongoing project.

Another ongoing project is updating the Handbook. Changes to the committee pages in the Handbook are usually approved and minuted at a YM business meeting. Those changes haven’t been integrated into the main Handbook document or website for a few years. The YM also changed its structure a few years ago, dropping from four coordinating committees to three. The Handbook needs to be edited throughout to reflect the organizational changes that caused.

The NYYM staff has been meeting weekly over Zoom since the pandemic began. Staff members have been supporting each other while we—like everyone else in the world—deal with fundamental changes to our plans and our responsibilities.

I have been handling the majority of requests to use the NYYM’s Zoom accounts for online meetings. We now have three accounts to use for NYYM committees, working groups, and monthly or quarterly meetings.

I’ve been a part of the Storytelling Network Advisory Circle, which is one aspect of the wider outreach plan for NYYM. Once our new normal becomes apparent, I expect the Circle will start meeting more frequently, and I can continue to help roll out the outreach plan.

The recent police killing of George Floyd, combined with the disruption caused by the pandemic, has sparked an unprecedented opportunity to take apart some of the structural racism in this country. I will continue to share news about anti-racism Quaker actions and statements, promote opportunities to talk about and learn about systemic and structural racism, and share resources on how to recognize and dismantle White supremacy. Thank you in advance, Friends, for your help, guidance, and support in these efforts.

Digital Communications Director: Chad Gilmartin

New York Yearly Meeting is continuing to embrace and explore digital tools that help Friends collaborate across distance and scheduling barriers. Committees, clerks, and volunteers alike are better able to communicate, create and share documents, and meet together in virtual spaces to do great work. Even before COVID-19 imposed a global transition to virtual platforms, NYYM was using Google Suite and Zoom to work together at a distance. At Fall Sessions 2019, committees were able to include Friends via Zoom who were not able to be physically present. Our adoption of Google Drive has helped us better organize and update our ever-evolving documents such as the NYYM Handbook and our *Faith and Practice*, as well as create a space for our ongoing effort to codify and publish our Standard Operating Procedures. While nobody was prepared for the huge impact of a global pandemic, New York Yearly Meeting was well poised to adapt and thrive thanks to our use of digital communication technology.

My role in the last year as Digital Communications Director has been to steward the yearly meeting through technological administration and support in order to help facilitate the work of this vibrant community. I help introduce Friends to Google Suite and its wide variety of tools; I create and share forms and spreadsheets to collect and sort information and data; I collect and curate reports and updates for publishing on our website; I support committees and clerks on Zoom. Much of my work is creating the virtual spaces and offering the tools to foster the

movement of The Spirit throughout our yearly meeting, and I am pleased to say that Friends are embracing the Digital Age with enthusiasm and skill.

Our website, nyym.org, is seeing steady traffic throughout the year, with some particularly high-traffic times around Yearly Meeting Sessions. We average over 100 users per day visiting our website, with a large interest in our *Faith and Practice*. Our peak this year saw 681 users visiting our website on December 10, 2019, most of whom visited our “Find a Meeting” page and then navigated to a particular monthly meeting page. Friends have observed a trend in the past that new Seekers, visitors, and returning Friends seek out a monthly meeting during the December holiday period, but until the use of our website analytics tools we have not been able to see that trend in hard data, so I am excited to see that our primary interface with the digital world is serving well as an outreach tool!

With the global pandemic forcing people inside and online more than ever before, Friends have also had to adapt to our new digital worship practices. New York Yearly Meeting had been using the Zoom platform for almost a year before COVID-19 disrupted our in-person practices, so we were fortunate to have our digital worship ready to go right away. After some early stumbling blocks with Zoom security, and a quick response from Zoom’s developers, Friends found grounding and deep worship in online spaces. We are able to gather in worship over vast distances, overcoming geographical barriers and physical limitations by opening our digital doors. Our committee work is buoyed by lowered travel costs and time commitments for participants. Although these technological solutions have provided many wonderful opportunities, we have also discovered new barriers to participation around access to technology, connection stability, and ease of use. I am very optimistic that we are growing in wonderful ways, and that we will continue our work to adapt and improve our digital practices.

Steve Mohlke, General Secretary

Well into my third year as General Secretary, I started to feel like I knew what I was doing. And then, with COVID-19, every-

thing changed.

Pre-COVID I travelled a great deal. I developed a rhythm of twice a month catching a bus from Ithaca on a Tuesday morning, spending the afternoon in the NYYM office, staying overnight in New York City, spending Wednesday in the office and then taking a bus back home. This seemed to be just about the right amount of in-person time with staff and others in NYC. There are numerous Quaker events I have been attending annually: Coordinating Weekend, Meeting for Discernment, Spring Sessions, the FGC Gathering, Summer Sessions, Quaker Superintendents and Secretaries, Budget Saturday, NYYM-NEYM Pastors' Retreat, and Fall Sessions. I visited seven monthly meetings between last Fall and the COVID shutdown. I also travelled for Sessions and Development Committee meetings. I co-facilitated weekend workshops on clerking for a weekend at Powell House and a weekend at Pendle Hill.

With the COVID lockdown, my travel stopped but my opportunities to engage multiplied. Staff started meeting weekly instead of just when I was in the office. We adjusted to all being on Zoom. As a team, staff became much more adept at using a communications tool called Slack to keep each other up to date and ask questions. Staff started hosting Monday night video calls with the general theme Local Meetings Respond. Staff collaborated to set up a COVID-19 page on our yearly meeting website loaded with resources. I helped several meetings make the transition to online worship. I offered a couple of short workshops on Clerking By Zoom. I helped form the Reimagining Summer Sessions Task Group to see what we could make of this opportunity. My favorite part of all of this was collaborating with others to figure out how we could take our Quaker business process, developed over hundreds of years, and transition it to an online format in a manner that keeps the technology in the background and Spirit in the foreground. In that respect, COVID has given us an opportunity to try something that would likely have taken years for us to try without this push.

Pre-COVID I started working on assembling a group of people to write a statement for consideration by NYYM about declaring our intention to be an anti-racist faith community. That effort got lost in the transition but Spirit has a way of bringing back

missed opportunities. The murder of George Floyd while in police custody caused a lot more people to start talking about racism and systemic violence and oppression. I hope we can find ways to convert this moment into a movement.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve New York Yearly Meeting as General Secretary.

Interim Young Adult Field Secretary: Marissa Badgley

Since officially joining the NYYM staff team in fall 2019, my work and Ministry of serving young adult Friends (YAFs) has been challenging, uplifting, energizing, frustrating, and ever-changing. It has been a year of transformation and adaptation, beginning in relative stability and ending in the middle of a global pandemic that has significantly impacted all of us, but especially young adults physically, financially, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Looking back, it is humbling to see what we have accomplished in the last eleven months, even amidst uncertainty, fear, and circumstances that have largely inhibited us from meeting in person. In what follows, I will provide details about YAF activities and events between September 2019 and June 2020, Young Adult Participation and Outreach, and the impact of COVID-19 on YAFs. I will also provide some preliminary thoughts regarding where we go from here.

YAF ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

It has been a busy year full of old traditions and new experiments! Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I had already felt like it was important to balance in-person activities with virtual engagements, and it was a blessing to have experience leading virtual workshops and worship opportunities before the pandemic required us to adapt to these forms exclusively. Here are some of the programming highlights:

- Six Virtual Semi-Programmed Worship, engaging ~75 people
- In-Person Workshops engaging ~27 YAFs
 - Advocacy & Lobbying with FCNL @ 15th Street

- Eldering & Healing @ Powell House
- Virtual workshops engaging 43 YAFs
 - Q&A with Quaker Organizations & Groups (8)
 - Q&A with Traveling Ministers (22)
 - Finding My Quaker Voice & Vocal Ministry (13)
- Virtual fun engagements (e.g., game nights, karaoke, poetry slam, film festival, etc.) for fifteen straight Thursdays, engaging ~50 YAFs

In addition to these engagements, we were also able to respond to the Statement of Needs offered by Young Adults at NYYM's 2019 Summer Sessions and emerging needs because of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am excited to see how these new programs and initiatives grow and deepen in the next year, and know that these structures can be adapted to support the growth not only of NYYM but also the Religious Society of Friends and other Quaker bodies.

Pilot Mentoring Program

At Summer Sessions 2019, Young Adults made a clear ask of the yearly meeting to establish formal mentoring structures through which YAFs could deepen their awareness, knowledge, and experience of Quaker faith and practice. Between August and October, the Spiritual Nurture Working Group, ARCH, and the Young Adult Field Secretary worked together to craft a pilot mentoring program. We sent out calls for mentors and seekers and expected to *maybe* make ten matches. We were surprised and delighted to receive 24 requests for mentorship, over 40 applications from Friends looking to serve as mentors, and 10 volunteers to serve as members of an advisory committee. This response was unprecedented and truly remarkable, and I have shared with many that I have never experienced such profound energy coming from all needed directions. Friends stepped up to ask for mentorship. Friends stepped up to offer mentorship. AND Friends stepped up to hold the space and continuously improve the program. Thank you to everyone who participated and who offered their love and support!

Ultimately, we made 24 matches between mentors and seekers, and 20 of these matches successfully completed the

six-month program. Importantly, 4 of our 24 seekers were brand new to Quakerism and all completed their mentoring experience. During the program, we provided regular touch-points for both mentors and seekers for support, new learning, community worship, and fun.

We believe we have a strong foundation on which to build a sustainable program that becomes an integrated part of New York Yearly Meeting's work with young adults and newcomers, and we look forward to continuing to apply what we learned about spiritual mentorship in the months and years to come.

Peer Support Groups

Out of the COVID-19 Impact Survey completed by over 80 YAFs in April 2020, I heard a deep need for spiritual community beyond Sunday morning meeting for worship and YAF events. Thus, in early May, we launched Peer Support Groups. 29 YAFs signed up, 11 of whom were new to NYYM and at least two of whom were new to Quakerism. These Friends were split into seven weekly worship groups that meet at mutually agreed upon times and are facilitated by a YAF volunteer. Some groups use this time for open worship, others for reading a passage or book together, and others for worship sharing. They are entirely organic and self-facilitated.

After six weeks, I reached out to the participants to see how things were going and if they wanted to continue with their groups. Even as the world began re-opening and Friends began returning to work, 25/29 participants decided to remain in their groups for the near future. This suggests that this format is useful for YAFs who are more likely than older Friends to not find home in a monthly meeting. I look forward to iterating and exploring how to use what we have learned to support more Friends in the future.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YAFS

In April 2020, NYYM put out a survey to Young Adult Friends to assess the impact of COVID-19 on this vulnerable demographic. We collected a ton of useful data, and I want to elevate a few key points to help guide interactions, actions, and mindsets towards YAFs in the wake of the pandemic.

- 64% reported decreased psychological wellbeing
- 26% lost their jobs (20% have had a primary financial contributor lose their job); 28% were worried that this would happen in next six weeks
- 42% had their salary or income reduced (but did not lose their jobs); 37% worried that this will happen in next six weeks
- 31% were unable to cover basic household expenses (rent, utilities, food, etc.)
- 25% were living outside of their permanent residence due to COVID-19
- 11% had COVID-19; 10% had a family member or friend die from COVID-19
- 76% postponed big life plans (weddings, babies, graduations, moves, new jobs, etc.)
- 15% had their education interrupted
- 12% were unable to access normal mental health support

While these statistics are old and can no longer accurately tell the story of where YAFs are today, the impacts that were recorded in April 2020 were likely exacerbated in the weeks that followed, and also likely had long-term effects that we are only just beginning to understand. I invite you to consider how these data might reflect realities for YAFs in your meeting or even your family members. I also invite you to reach out to discuss ways that you or your meeting might respond to the ever-changing needs of YAFs in the face of continued uncertainty and instability.

YOUNG ADULT PARTICIPATION

We started 2020 with 142 Young Adults on our mailing list and now have 265. New additions include people who signed up for the mentoring program, new attenders/members at Monthly Meetings, participants in peer spiritual support groups, young adults who attended Powell House who opted in, and a handful of people who reached out independently after seeing our work on social media. About 50% of this list has engaged in YAF activities in the last year, and I aspire to reach out to the other 50%

to explore engagement barriers. Of those who have engaged in YAF programming since July 2020:

- 34% are not regular attenders or involved in a monthly meeting
- 16 are brand new to Quakerism (0-8 months)
- More than 20 are new to NYYM (or are participants in other yearly meetings)

These numbers and results are promising and point to what can be accomplished when there is a staff person dedicated to stewarding the concerns and needs of young adult Friends. I am grateful for the opportunity to do this work and to walk with so many YAFs on their spiritual journeys. Thank you to all the individuals and meetings who have supported us this year. We could not have done it without you!

Records Committee

None submitted.

Sessions Committee

None submitted.

Junior Yearly Meeting Subcommittee

None submitted.

Supervisory and Support Committee for the General Secretary

None submitted.

Trustees, Lindley Murray Fund

No report submitted.

Trustees, New York Yearly Meeting

During the year 2019, Trustees met regularly in person and by conference call.

Considerable progress was made in resolving outstanding property issues. The sale of the Yorktown Heights, NY, property to Calvary Bible Church was closed, and the transfer of title to the Friends Methodist Church and burial ground in Monkton, VT, has been completed with the Monkton Association's approval of its 501 (c)(3) application.

With respect to the Meeting Houses and Properties Fund, grants for repairs continued to be made. We are looking forward to being able to assist even more as the body of the yearly meeting approved the trustees' recommendation to add \$100,000.00 from the sale of the Yorktown Heights Meeting House to that fund.

With regard to the yearly meeting's invested trust funds, total assets as of December 31, 2019 were \$6,668,968.79.

Our yearly meeting's investable financial assets continue to be held and managed by Friends Fiduciary Corp. in Philadelphia. Performance measured against published benchmarks has been satisfactory and investment policies are clearly aligned with Quaker values. A trustees' investment committee was formed to review our yearly meeting's investments and bring recommendations back for trustees to review.

Trustees began the process of divesting our yearly meeting's investments from fossil fuels. Based on our review as well as sentiment expressed within the yearly meeting body, one-sixth of our funds at Friends Fiduciary were transferred to the Friends Fiduciary Green Fund with the intent of completely divesting our investments from fossil fuels within a six-year period.

In connection with this transfer and subsequent transfers, trustees will continue to discern the proper balance between our fiduciary responsibility to provide maximum financial support for yearly meeting programs and initiatives while addressing broader concerns such as divestment as they arise in our yearly meeting.

Three members of trustees agreed to serve on the Yearly Meeting Climate Justice Working Group which is searching for a way forward for the yearly meeting in response to the danger

presented by accelerating climate change.

By-Laws revisions were presented and approved by the body of the yearly meeting. In 2019, our yearly meeting was registered as an exempt organization with the New York State Charities Bureau.

Trustees serve the yearly meeting with humility and value the trust placed in them to steward our yearly meeting assets. Our minutes are posted on the yearly meeting website.

Peter Close, Trustee

Witness Section

Witness Coordinating Committee

in 2019 the coordinating committee continued its experiment with distributed clerking. Several reviews indicated that it worked fairly well. There were some difficulties due to the large number of tasks which had to be distributed, and with communication among the people who had agreed to do them.

The coordinating committee worked on several issues over the year, and brought some relevant minutes forward to the body. Some issues brought forward by committees and working groups were treatment of immigrants; prison wages; gun control; sustainable living (see eco-eating) and institutional racism (including within NYYM). The coordinating committee approved a minute calling for divestment of invested NYYM funds from fossil fuel companies, and a letter to be sent to Friends Fiduciary asking them to divest all their funds from fossil fuels. Friends from several committees joined to make possible Eco-Eating at Fall Sessions. The coordinating committee was also kept abreast of the lawsuit brought by the Green Haven Preparatory Meeting against the Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS), which was also reported to the body.

The work of the Witness committees is supported by two sources of money. One, the Sharing Fund, asks for contributions from individuals and monthly meetings each year. The other is income from funds which have been left to the yearly meeting by deceased Friends as endowments. These specified uses for

the funds which the yearly meeting trustees deemed to fit within the charges of several Witness committees, and the income from the endowments has been used by those committees in carrying out their charges. Recently, the trustees have decided that once the total amount specified by the donor has been spent in accordance with the donor's will, (unless the will stipulated that the principal be invested and only the income used as directed) these funds are now unrestricted. Friends on Witness Coordinating Committee pointed out to the body that taking the funds from the committees serving people of color, and using them for the operating budget, would be a clear example of institutional racism. The body seems to have accepted this point of view.

The Sharing Fund sends one or two appeal letters each year, and a financial subcommittee allocates each committee a percentage of the contributions based on its budget request for that year. The result is that, if the Sharing Fund is not fully funded from contributions, the committees do not have enough money to do the work they wish to do in the name of the yearly meeting. In the past dozen years, maybe more, the Sharing Fund has not received its goal, even though the amount of the goal has gradually declined over these years.

To encourage monthly meetings in their witness work, the coordinating committee has set up a budget line called "Witness Activities Fund." Grants in 2019 included:

Albany Monthly Meeting for their Young Peacemakers Week	\$1,500
Farmington Monthly Meeting's P&SC Committee for their "winter series" of invited speakers	\$500
Hamilton Monthly Meeting, for their support of the Hamilton Interfaith Service Committee	\$200
Hamilton Monthly Meeting, for their anti-racism training	\$200
Old Chatham Monthly Meeting, for their movie series	\$100
Powell House Youth to attend FCNL Lobby weekend	\$1,000
Scarsdale Monthly Meeting, for their (homeless) Shelter project	\$550
TOTAL	\$4,050

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)

AVP New York's work in 2019

In 2019, AVP New York held 168 full (16 -22 hour) two or three-day workshops, up from 154 in 2018. The number of active incarcerated facilitators also increased from 212 in 2018 to 258 in 2019, while we our active outside (civilian) adult facilitators dropped from 108 in 2018 to 101 in 2019 and nine youth (under 18) served on facilitation teams for two full workshops and seven youth facilitated mini (three-six hour) workshops.

The number of hours our volunteers put in is consistently impressive. Inside (incarcerated) facilitators volunteered more than 16,000 hours and outside facilitators nearly 9,090 hours to hold more than 3,600 in-session workshop hours with 1,988 participants in full (16 hour minimum) workshops and 275 participants in shorter and mini (half-day) workshops. These hours do not include the weekly, bi-monthly or monthly maintenance sessions that many prison programs hold.

The Rochester Landing Strip continues to meet twice monthly at the Gandhi Institute and at a café. Landing Strips provide a support community for people returning from prison and meeting with community people interested in AVP. The schedule and location of the Rochester Landing Strip is on the website: www.avpny.org People returning to any community in New York State are invited to call the AVP office and they will be connected with facilitators in their communities.

Our Work in Prisons

We are super-excited to announce that we began new AVP programs in four prisons and one county jail in 2019! Steve Bradley responded to Clinton Main's and Clinton Annex's calls for AVP (in addition to continuing to anchor the program at FCI Ray Brook). Clinton Main is the largest maximum security men's prison in the state. At Clinton Annex, we work with incarcerated veterans. We were briefly back at Eastern in 2019 but when that didn't work, our volunteers, Patty Tyrol and Ingrid Blaufarb Hughes moved to Fishkill, a medium security men's prison, for our first workshop there since 2003. Margaret Lechner shepherded our return to Taconic (a medium security women's prison) following a twelve-year hiatus. And a few of our prison

volunteers who DOCCS decided to terminate as volunteers have initiated a program at the Westchester County Jail.

With programs in eighteen prisons and one jail, our outside volunteers are feeling stretched. We would like to broaden our pool of volunteers so that we might sustain the programs we have.

We held 150 full workshops, two short workshops and four mini workshops inside nineteen prisons (including one federal prison) and one county jail with 1,871 participants completing. Four of those workshops were in Spanish and two were bi-lingual at Sing Sing and Green Haven prisons. One all-facilitator workshop and a facilitator day focused on strengthening our facilitation skills. We trained 193 new apprentice facilitators inside the walls.

In 2019, our annual Forum Day was held at Bedford Hills, a maximum security women's prison. Ten inside facilitators joined with fourteen outside facilitators from across the state. Yolanda Lewi and the inside team created a memorable day for all.

Special topic advanced workshops in prison focused on understanding manhood, trauma awareness and resilience, domestic violence, manly awareness, anger, youth poetic expression, forgiveness, women of courage, and relationships.

Our Work in Communities

We held 19 full workshops with 127 adult, 64 young adult or teen and 11 youth participants. We trained 32 adult and 15 teen and young adult apprentice facilitators. 76 youth and nine adults completed short workshops (6-12 hours). Five mini workshops saw 18 adults and 56 youth. Two facilitator days provided opportunity for 31 facilitators to hone skills and share new exercises.

T. Haywood and his team at the Osborne Association continued their work with teens and young adults in the Bronx, holding five workshops with 43 participants and training fifteen new apprentice facilitators.

AVP Syracuse continued to grow, holding one multigenerational Basic, one Special Topic Advanced on Trauma Awareness and Resilience, one Training for Facilitator Workshop (adding ten new facilitators to the pool) and one multigenera-

tional short workshop.

Elmira Area Council held one Basic Workshop in Ithaca and one Mini Workshop with veterans in Binghamton.

Mid-Hudson Area Council held a two-hour Mini Workshop at the Trans Health Forum in White Plains.

Niagara Frontier Area Council held a Basic Workshop at a residential treatment center with eight 16 -21 year old women.

Mary Eagleson, Fred Feucht and Margaret Lechner of Westchester Area Council coordinated two Basics, two Advanceds and two Training for Facilitators Workshops, adding twenty-two new apprentice facilitators to the pool. Two Facilitators Days brought together twenty-one and ten facilitators—some attended both.

Our Work with Youth and Teens

Noelle Granger continues to anchor our only on-going work in schools at Walton and Franklin Schools. She, together with three other teachers and nine students were on-team for one Basic and one Advanced Workshop with twenty and twenty-four high school students respectively. They held a full-day short workshop with twenty-three 8th graders and three simultaneous half-day workshops with fifty-six 7th graders.

With Central New York Area Council, Stuart Bartram coordinated two workshops—one Basic with thirteen 13-21 year olds and one Mini Workshop with six 8-12 year olds.

Genesee Valley Area Council held a multigenerational Basic Workshop at the Gandhi Institute with eight adults and four youth completing.

With Westchester Area Council, Coralie Joseph led a Basic Workshop with five 4th – 7th graders at the Mamaroneck United Methodist Church.

Our Work Outside of NYS

Several AVP New York facilitators attended the AVP USA National Gathering in Oakland, CA. AVP New York sponsored T Haywood, El-Sun White, Tyree Hicks and Kiki (Kyhani) Freeman (all from the Osborne Association) making it possible for them to attend.

Shirley Way returned to Central America—this time to Honduras—with Allie Prescott (AVP facilitator from Los

Angeles). They participated in a gathering of facilitators from across Central and South America and then served on-team for two Trauma Awareness and Resilience workshops—one inside El Porvenir prison and the other in La Ceiba, Honduras.

Nadine Hoover continued her work as a Working Group member of Friends Peace Teams' Asia West Pacific Initiative. In 2019 AWP held their sixth annual AVP Cultures of Peace Training in Indonesia with 45 participants, many of whom are facilitators, from eleven countries: Indonesia, including Sumatra, Java and West Papua, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Nepal, Korea, Chechnya, U.S., England, Aotearoa/NZ and Australia. Workshop themes were empowerment, resiliency, liberation, discernment and permaculture. Nadine and others followed with a facilitator training workshop. In the Republic of Georgia, 25 facilitators from Georgia, Ukraine, Ingushetia, Dogestan and Chechnya were participants in the AVP Cultures of Peace Training with workshop themes on empowerment, resilience, liberation and discernment. Nadine and others followed with a facilitator training workshop. Back in the U.S., Nadine was on-team for a Basic Workshop in Philadelphia. Again in Indonesia, Nadine with AWP offered an Interfaith Youth AVP Cultures of Peace Training on empowerment and resilience, followed by a facilitator training workshop.

Our Gratitude.

Many thanks to all who do this work and who make this work possible.

Thanks to our donors, we exceeded our expectations in income from direct public support. We budgeted \$25,450 and we received \$26,671. Thank you!!! And with our investments seeing sizeable gains, we ended the year with a net income of more than \$7,000.

Your support means we can:

- provide manuals to area councils that are unable to purchase them
- cover travel expenses for facilitators to attend the AVP/USA annual gathering
- hold our annual Forum Day and Annual Gathering
- support Landing Strip meetings in Rochester

- staff an office that:
 - promotes AVP and advertises community workshops
 - fields inquiries from potential participants
 - stays connected with facilitators coming home from prison
 - maintains our website and presence on social media
 - tracks and publishes workshop statistics
 - works to foster a positive relationship with NYS Dept. of Corrections and Community Supervision
 - publishes two newsletters annually, giving voice to inside facilitators

An update.

With COVID-19, we have not been allowed inside prisons since early March and we haven't been holding community workshops. Some in Australia have tried holding a workshop on Zoom with some success. We held the AVP-USA Annual Gathering on two days of Zoom.

We have been maintaining contact with inside (incarcerated) facilitators through Jo Clayson, our Volunteer Correspondent.

Kha Gould, KHArismatic Kha, writes: "It pains me to imagine a world more separated than it already is."

American Friends Service Committee Corporation

AFSC Northeast Region's Report to NYYM for Oct. 2019 through Sept. 2020

The AFSC Northeast Region has programs from Maine to Pennsylvania that focus on Immigrant Rights, Healing Justice, Youth Organizing, Economic Justice and Peace. All of the regional programs are directly connected to AFSC's national efforts in support of these issues.

Starting in March 2020, our program work shifted to respond to the tragic consequences of the spread of COVID 19, particularly for people in prison and immigration detention and their families, and to ensure that immigrants are able to access important safety net resources.

Healing Justice

In New York and New Jersey, the Healing Justice and Prison Watch programs empower individuals harmed by criminal justice policies and violence to heal and transform the conditions under which they live. The programs recognize and advance the worth and dignity of all people in and around the criminal legal system. Program staff disseminate information on human rights abuses and healing opportunities; monitor and advocate on behalf of imprisoned individuals and respond to needs of incarcerated people and their families and those harmed by criminal acts; influence individual administrators and policy makers; and provide expertise and support to coalitions, advocacy groups, community organizations, students, writers, and the media.

AFSC's Prison Watch Program, based in Newark, monitors human rights abuses in U.S. federal and state prisons. In particular, the program promotes national and international attention to the harmful practices of isolation and torture. Staff testify before the New Jersey legislature, participate in and lead coalition work, and publish op-eds in local papers.

This year, Prison Watch offered its expertise on issues related to the criminal system to media and to policymakers, while also sharing its many publications with hundreds of people in prison throughout the US. These publications include the Survivors' Manual, a resource guide for LGBTQ individuals in prison; a report on Aging in Prison; and a regular publication called From the Inside Out, which includes testimonies on prison conditions from people in prison in New Jersey. This year Prison Watch published From Her Mouth to Your Ears, A Survivors Manual By and For Women, along with a Spanish Language translation. These documents are available at www.afsc.org/content/prison-watch-resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created tragic circumstances in prisons throughout the country as the virus spreads and staff and incarcerated people at the jails become infected. The number of deaths is growing, yet relatively few people have been released. AFSC programs locally and nationally are participating in various campaigns to request release of people in prison and to highlight the devastating conditions under which people

are confined. Our staff are fielding phone calls from families of people in prison, providing support and avenues for advocacy, while maintaining a strong media presence to ensure that the issues remain in the public eye.

AFSC's Hope Lives for Lifers Project, based in New York, works with men who are serving long sentences, including those sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. AFSC helps them in their quest for freedom and in their efforts to transition from prison, stronger and ready to reintegrate into their communities. In 2015, AFSC received funding from Trinity Church Wall Street to develop materials and begin implementation of the project. To date AFSC has completed three full courses at Eastern Correctional Facility, although the last course was interrupted at the very end due to restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. AFSC is currently working with the Department of Corrections to create an electronic version of the Hope Lives for Lifers Manual. We plan to expand the program to additional prisons once restrictions are lifted.

During this program year AFSC's Healing Justice programs have provided education and outreach to thousands of individuals on the issues raised by mass incarceration and conditions of confinement and have provided support and organizing tools to people in prison to help them advocate for themselves. The programs also implement Liberation Summer: Young People's Advocacy Training Camp, with support from New York Yearly Meeting and in partnership with Echoes of Incarceration, that builds leadership skills and offers social justice advocacy training to young people in the New York Metropolitan area who have had some experience with the criminal or immigration legal systems, or who are concerned about those systems and would like to become Agents of Change. In 2019, 24 campers and counselors participated in and completed the summer camp. Due to COVID-19 restrictions AFSC plans to implement the 2020 summer camp virtually and has received funding to support the costs involved.

AFSC is grateful for the support of many volunteers and interns who significantly increase our capacity to do this work. We especially appreciate those members of the Quaker community who have supported us in responding to letters from people

in prison. Volunteers are in turn educated and trained by AFSC and help us expand our reach by bringing what they learn back into their communities.

Immigrant Rights

The overarching goal of the Immigrant Rights Program (IRP) in New Jersey is to achieve policies that respect the rights and dignity of all immigrants, including a fair and humane national immigration policy. The Immigrant Rights Program's successful integration of legal services, advocacy and organizing has made a dramatic difference in the lives of immigrants in New Jersey and beyond by ensuring that immigrant voices are heard in policy debates, by assisting immigrants with challenging immigration cases, and by changing the narrative about immigration issues to influence policy. AFSC offers legal services to immigrants who are in detention, facing deportation, seeking to reunite with families, or in need of protection. AFSC also organizes in immigrant communities, training emerging leaders and ensuring that those people most affected by immigration policy are advocates for change.

Since 2015, AFSC has increased its capacity to provide legal representation to immigrants in detention by using a public defender model, with hundreds of additional clients receiving quality information and representation by AFSC attorneys. The legal services team continues its longstanding work with minors, survivors of domestic violence and other crimes, and with the Central American community and people from other parts of the world, providing legal representation in complex immigration cases that lead to family reunification.

At the same time, AFSC works in opposition to immigration detention, organizing campaigns and providing support to individuals whose lives have been impacted by the detention and deportation system. Recent years have seen increased arrests, detention and deportation, and AFSC staff are working to provide necessary information to immigrant communities, ensure accurate media coverage, and to share information with the public through presentations, articles, and online presence.

In 2018, AFSC opened an office in Red Bank, New Jersey, where we have expanded our legal services and organizing work.

In 2019 AFSC opened a second office in Newark to accommodate our growing detention project staff after receiving funding from the state of New Jersey to provide legal representation to people in detention.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led many of our staff to pivot much of their work to advocate for release of people in immigration detention. We have turned our legal resources to filing petitions for release in federal court, including participating in a class action lawsuit with partner organizations that demands release of all immigrants who are detained at the Elizabeth Detention Center, a private facility run by CoreCivic that is notorious for its conditions and lack of transparency. Our organizing staff have also pivoted to support release campaigns, as well as efforts to ensure that immigrants have access to much needed safety net resources including advocating for expanded benefits and assisting members to use existing services. The remaining members of the team continue to assist immigrants in their applications for status in the US, which has become more and more tenuous as the federal government creates more restrictive immigration policies.

Intern Program

The New York and Newark offices host an internship program each summer. Through the support of a generous donor we are able to offer stipends to these interns. In 2020 this support was increased, and AFSC was able to hire student interns for both spring and summer terms. This year, interns have been working to support social media/communications, legal research, community outreach, policy investigation, and other projects to support Healing Justice and Immigrant Rights staff. Interns will also participate in online orientation, social networking and brown bag events in the summer.

Other Regional Work

AFSC's work outside New York and New Jersey includes longstanding work on economic justice, peace, and healing justice. Staff work on trauma healing and reconciliation with Native Americans in Maine, and on peace and justice issues in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. This last year led to the

closure of two youth organizing programs in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia due to budget cuts, though we retained a Fellow in Philadelphia who is supporting AFSC's participation in the Poor People's Campaign.

Engagement

AFSC staff members are always open to engage with Monthly Meetings around the many issues we work on. Please feel free to be in touch with the New York office at 212-598-0950 for information and requests. To be added to our email list, please contact Janice Buzby at jbuzby@afsc.org.

Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development

The Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development was established in 1969 as New York Yearly Meeting's response to the needs of Black and Latino communities. **Barrington Dunbar grants in the time of COVID were front and center** in addressing the onslaught of the pandemic. The committee offered special assistance to monthly meetings addressing food insecurity in their communities via food banks, shelters, and/or other assistance to food insecure individuals. Below is a sample of grant recipients. We are putting our Sharing Fund dollars to work. Please give generously to the Sharing Fund.

- **Casa Freehold** (Freehold NJ)—Serves undocumented immigrants. Due to the COVID pandemic Casa Freehold has added food support to its mission. (Requested by Manasquan Meeting)
- **Christ is the Answer International Fellowship** (Buffalo NY)—Many of the members of this Preparative Quaker Meeting are experiencing food insecurity due to the COVID crisis. More than 7000 people in Erie County have tested positive for COVID-19. (Requested by Buffalo Meeting)
- **Hope House** (Bronx NY)—an initiative of The Ladies of

Hope Ministries. They help empower formerly incarcerated women by providing a safe housing space, a supportive community of women, mentorship and guidance to successfully re-enter life after prison.

- **La Jornada Food Pantry** (Queens, NY)—During the COVID-19 pandemic more than 66,000 people have tested positive in Queens County. La Jornada provides approximately 5000 grab-and-go food bags per week and emergency food assistance to homebound seniors. (Requested by Flushing Meeting)
- **Lifting up Westchester** (White Plains NY)—Their soup kitchen has been converted from sit-down meals to Grab and Go healthy brown bag lunches. More than 35,000 people have tested positive for COVID in Westchester. (Requested by Scarsdale Meeting)
- **Mano A Mano Mutual Aid Fund** (Columbia County NY)—Provides financial support, resources, and services to address economic, food insecurity, and survival needs of immigrants in Columbia & Greene counties during these challenging times. (Requested by Old Chatham Meeting)
- **Operation Unite** (Hudson NY)—Cultivates well-rounded, progressive youth by providing programs that foster a sense of direction, self-esteem and social consciousness. (Requested by Old Chatham Meeting)
- **Passage of Hope for Children** (Yonkers, NY)—Giving Hope to Migrant Children on their Journey to Hope and Opportunity. Provides shelter, food, clothing, emotional support, medical support and opportunities to play and to learn for unaccompanied migrant children.
- **Powell House Youth Program**—Scholarships for economically disadvantaged Black & Latino youth. (Requested by Powell House Youth Directors)
- **Providence House Garden of Hope Shelter** (Brooklyn NY)—Serves women and families at risk of harm who have histories of homelessness or justice-involvement and provides a safe community where their dignity is recognized, strengths are enhanced, and a transition to stability

is achieved. More than 60,000 people have tested positive for COVID in Brooklyn.

- **Redemption Center** (Queens NY)—Provides transitional housing for men recently released from prison.
- **Soup Angels** (Nyack NY)—Offers healthy food to families, the elderly, veterans, and recent immigrants. More than 13,000 people have tested positive for COVID in Rockland County. (Requested by Rockland Meeting)
- **Westbury Friends School**—Scholarships for Black & Latino students. (Requested by Westbury Meeting)
- **The Youth Services Opportunities Project**—Conducted overnight work camps that engage youth and college students in meaningful service experiences.

Black Concerns Committee

Our Hearts are Heavy but Our Spirit is Strong

As racial violence hurled around us Black Concerns Committee (BCC) members mourned the lost lives of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many others. We searched our hearts and minds for way forward. We decided to consult others in our yearly meeting—Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development, European American Quakers Working to End Racism, the Friends Center for Racial Justice, and Friends of Color. We asked all for help in discerning way forward.

The responses were numerous, inspiring, and focused on addressing structural racism. Many Friends advocated that we address mass incarceration (often described as the New Slavery). That is understandable. New York State incarcerates more than 70,000 people and has the 3rd largest incarceration system in the country.

Based on the feedback we formed the following Action Study Groups:

- **Advocating for College behind Bars** (Coordinator: Emmy Gay) Research shows that incarcerated people who participate in prison education are far more likely to stay out of prison once they are freed; and that prison educa-

tion programs are highly cost effective. The BCC has been advocating for college behind bars for quite some time. We supported the Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison and the Bard College Prison Initiative and are seeking to expand our efforts. Our long-term goal is the reinstatement of prison TAP and Pell grants. However, our immediate goal is to nurture and support existing private college prison programs.

- **Disrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline** (Coordinator: Helen Garay Toppins)—Background reading—Mapping disadvantage: The geography of Incarceration in NYS, www.prisonpolicy.org/origin/ny/report.html. The neighborhoods with the highest number of incarcerated Black and Brown people are the economically poorest neighborhoods with the worst performing schools. How can we assist these schools? How can we assist at-risk youth from these neighborhoods?
- **Racial Justice and Anti-Racism Resources** (Coordinator: David Fletcher) We are asking Friends to submit resources addressing all aspects of racial justice. YouTube, print media, film suggestions, Internet links, etc. Here are a few samples:
 - a. [Scaffolded Anti-Racist Resources](#), an evolving Google doc, findable via Google search;
 - b. [Books on racism](#), a list from Rutgers University; sas.n.rutgers.edu/news-events/news/summer-reading-40-books-race-racism-and-black-american-experience-read-now-recommended-rutgers-newark-faculty;
 - c. [A guide to becoming an anti-racist](#): www.socialwork.career/2020/06/anti-racism-resources-for-social-workers-and-therapists.html

We invited Friends to participate in our Action Study Groups and many Friends have volunteered. If you are interested in joining a group please contact a member of the BCC.

Throughout the year BCC put Sharing Fund dollars to work by:

- Sponsoring Friends' participation in anti-racism workshops

and conferences.

- Providing Powell House youth scholarships for Black and Brown participants.
- Contributing to: the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent, Friends Center for Racial Justice, NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, NAACP New Brunswick Branch, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the United Negro College Fund.

Through the generosity of an anonymous donor the BCC was able to finance Summer Sessions' attendance for a number of Young Adult Black Friends. Thank you.

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund

It has been a tough year in Bolivia and for the scholarship students of the BQEF program. In November of 2019 after disputed elections, Evo Morales was ousted. He had been president for thirteen years, and was replaced by a government of the opposition. The political turmoil was very unsettling to many of our students who lived in areas where protests and violent responses by the new government left numbers of people injured and dead. New elections were set for April, but these have not happened as COVID-19 began to take its toll in Bolivia and the interim government declared it would not be possible to hold new elections.

The universities have done their best to continue operating using distance learning techniques with cell phones. Few students have computers at home. This has worked, somewhat, for many of our scholarship students, though those who live in far rural areas have tended to not have the connectivity required. Students have not been able to engage in hands-on practical elements of their studies, except those in medical fields who have been coopted before graduation to help out in clinics and hospitals. Between the political unrest and COVID-19 the BQEF staff in Bolivia has had a difficult time getting scholarship stipends to the students, but given new government policies on transfers through cash machines, this has become less of a problem. The board has felt that since studies have continued—

if much less effectively—most students are still engaged in their fields of study and at the same time they and their families have the added economic burdens of lockdown.

In the midst of all this, the US Embassy in La Paz granted Rebeca Ramos, a former scholarship student, a visa to visit the US. We have had several recent scholarship students attempt to get a visa to both work at a Friends School during the school year and visit yearly meetings and FGC during the summer to raise awareness and share about BQEF's work and programs. Rebeca arrived early in 2020 and settled into being an apprentice teacher at Oakwood School. Then COVID-19. We offered to send her home just before flights were stopped, but she opted for staying in the US. We are very grateful to Oakwood for continuing to house and feed Rebeca through the end of their school year. Rebeca has been practicing and giving reports about BQEF, her life and studies, and the situation in Bolivia via Zoom. If you are interested, contact BQEF and we can have her speak to your meeting or worship group! She is a wonderful young woman and it is well worth getting to know her.

During the second half of 2019 BQEF worked hard to organize a study tour to Bolivia, with theme of Climate Change in the Southern Hemisphere in addition to BQEF. We regret that it had to be cancelled, and hope that perhaps the groundwork that has been set can be used for such a tour in 2021. These are uncertain times and we tend to think about the uncertainties close at hand. They are just as complex, and often more so in places where many people are day laborers, with their income dependent on what they do or sell each day. We are holding our students in prayer and are grateful for the continued support of many Friends in New York Yearly Meeting.

Jens Braun

The Climate Justice Working Group

The Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG) formed as directed by the New York Yearly Meeting body (minute 2018-07-34) in response to Friends World Committee for Consultation's call for action on climate change. (Link to both NYYM and FWCC minute here: nyym.org/sites/default/files/2019-Summer)

Sessions/FWCC-Minute-Summer2018.pdf)

The Climate Justice Working group encourages and supports direct action to reduce global warming and other harmful human effects on the environment and to restore Earth's ecosystems for the good of all life. By providing resources that will be informative, interactive, action-oriented, and rooted in Quaker witness and testimonies, we hope to inspire action both within and outside the New York Yearly Meeting community. We meet regularly by phone or Zoom and welcome new members.

CJWG celebrates NYYM's decision to take up CJWG's minute and begin divesting its funds from fossil fuels as well asking Friends Fiduciary Corporation (the corporation that holds the funds) to divest all of its funds from fossil fuels and reinvest in climate solutions. CJWG encourages all Friends with employer sponsored 401(k) plans and individual investment advisors or who sit on boards of nonprofits to make similar requests of their investment advisors or initiate hiring of new investment advisors who take the climate change threat more seriously.

We also urge Friends to join NYYM and the Climate Justice Working Group in advocating for ecological and ethical investing by contacting Friends Fiduciary Corporation (FFC) and asking them to divest all funds from fossil fuels. FFC has said that they would like to hear from as many Quaker groups as possible, regardless of their assets, to be sure the environment and a strategy that protects it is really at the forefront of Quakers' priorities.

CJWG is now on the web! Check out the web page: nzym.org/committee/climate-justice-working-group for resources and please share initiatives that you or your meeting are taking to reduce carbon emissions and help the Earth.

We have formalized our affiliation with Witness Coordinating Committee and are grateful for the Coordinating Committee's support of our work.

Sylke Jackson, Clerk of the Climate Justice Working Group

Conscientious Objection to Paying for War (COPW) Working Group

There was very little action with this group other than a short

gathering during Yearly Meeting. Individual members of working group continue their respective witness with which include tax witness and counseling young people about the draft. There is among the working group a deep commitment to not supporting war and much pain in the fact that we do so through our taxes. We have not felt active support for this witness from the Yearly Meeting though many Friends with whom we speak also express sorrow that their money does go to war-making. One reflection that has emerged is that perhaps, as a body of Friends, we first need to do the work of deconstructing institutional racism, and addressing white privilege, and as then it will be possible to defund the police... and the military.

Jens Braun

Earthcare Working Group

No report submitted

European American Quakers Working to End Racism (EAQWER)

Following its mission of working in opposition to racism within NYYM, EAQWERs met formally at Silver Bay in 2019, over some conference calls in the fall of 2019, in December at Oakwood Friends School and via Zoom in February of 2020. In late spring of 2020 we met via Zoom to review our year (and report). We reviewed our educational efforts and how we see needs for structural change. We also considered how to discern our way collectively and individually during this time. How do we move from allies to accomplices in the response to health disparities disproportionately ravaging communities of color during the pandemic, police murder of another black man and brutality in response to peaceful demonstrations?

EAQWER members attended the virtual March 2020 Anti-Racism Analysis training at the Friends Center for Racial Justice, facilitated by Angela Hopkins with break-out sessions facilitated by Angela Hopkins, Jeff Hitchcock, Charley Flint, Robin Alpern and Judy Meikle. We re-examined basic principles for white allies to use in working for racial justice; explored

continuing to unpack white privilege and ways to use intersectional analysis, all essential in making institutional change.

Throughout our time together we EAQWERS strengthened our understanding of accountability and transparency and deepened our capacity for action. As a group we spent time using both the NYYM accountability queries for committees and the Friends General Conference institutional assessment queries developed for that organization's institutional accountability (which are now being recommended for use by yearly meetings). The process re-grounded us in both the history and mission of our work group and individual leadings of current members.

We are examining how we reach out to others in NYYM. We support the work of both the Task Group on Racism and the Friends Center for Racial Justice. Individually we served on other committees as representatives of EAQWER including Prisons and Indian Affairs. We recognize we have more to do regarding accountability to people of color and to each other.

Our American society is wracked by systemic racism and police brutality. The world is turning upside down due to climate change and COVID-19—disproportionately impacting people of color here in the U.S. and around the world. We end the year with a deep commitment to our work.

The treasurer's report for 2019 is as follows:

Received from the Sharing Fund: \$600

Expenditures: \$600

Program (Sharing) Funds

Travel to Rochester White Privilege Symposium	100
Donation to Friends Center for Racial Justice	500
Annual total	\$600

Friends Committee on National Legislation Representatives

No report submitted. Learn more about FCNL's work at www.fcnl.org and sign up for email action alerts at fcnl.org/action/act-online

Friends Peace Teams Representatives

Thanks for all the NYYM support for Friends Peace Teams over the last 25 years!

Friends Peace Teams is a Spirit-led organization that develops long-term relationships with communities in conflict to work for peace, healing and reconciliation and create enduring cultures of peace. Yearly meetings from the United States and Australia nominate representatives to serve on the Friends Peace Teams Council. We support Friends peace ministries and witness on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends. Our programs build on extensive Quaker experience combining practical and spiritual aspects of grassroots work for peace and justice. Your attention, participation, and support guides this work.

We work with partners around the world in the African Great Lakes, Asia West Pacific, and *en las Américas* (Central and South America), as well as support Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples in North America and Power of Goodness: Stories of Nonviolence and Reconciliation worldwide. Visit our website at friendspeaceteams.org to read the news. Sign up for email news or like us on Facebook.

We rely on the power of the Living Spirit when we bring together people who have suffered on all sides of oppression, violence or war. Together we mutually discern how to create peaceful societies, to:

- **Empower and Heal:** Dr. King described the Beloved Community as a society based on justice, equal opportunity, and love. Larry Apsey designed the **Alternatives to Violence Project** to create an opportunity to experience peace. On the AVP foundation, we draw on Re-evaluation Counseling, trauma resiliency, developmental play, liberty of conscience, liberation from oppression, and Quaker practices of discernment for **Healing and Rebuilding our Communities** (HROC) and **Creating Cultures of Peace**. (CCP)

...strive to live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars, and come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strife were.—George Fox (1651)

- **Educate and Liberate:** We believe there is that of God in all life, that all people are good and capable. Love, conscience, and capabilities don't spring forth fully formed, they grow as we pay attention through daily life, education, and training. Faith and capabilities grow through stewardship and integrity. Therefore Quakers give special attention to **peace libraries, schools, and gardens** and spread the message of peace through the **Power of Goodness** story collection.

Let us then try what Love will do: for if men did once see we love them, we should soon find they would not harm us. Force may subdue, but Love gains: and he that forgives first, wins the laurel.—William Penn, 1693

- **Act in Solidarity for Justice:** To stand up for **ecological and social justice**, Quakers look first within ourselves and our institutions and uproot the seeds of injustice we find there. We act in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and marginalized communities to challenge oppression, **Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples** based on truth with love, respect, justice, and our shared humanity.

Any great change must expect opposition because it shakes the very foundation of privilege. —Lucretia Mott, 1793-1880

We hope NYYM Nominating Committee will let Friends know of the opportunity for several Friends serve as representatives to Friends Peace Teams, hopefully from a diversity of ages and backgrounds to strengthen our Quaker peace witness in the world. Please notify council.clerk@friendspeaceteams.org when a person is approved as a representative.

Friends Peace Teams is us—Friends who volunteer to support Quaker peace work. To get involved, send a brief bio of your Quaker peace, justice, or related experience and your gifts, skills, or interests to nominations@friendspeaceteams.org. We welcome skills as recording clerk and in fundraising, personnel, communications, finance, and peace and justice ministries and witness. To learn more about Quaker work worldwide visit our website at friendspeaceteams.org.

We speak at Quaker meetings and local groups. Please ask your meeting or group if they would like to have a speaker from Friends Peace Teams via Zoom. Translation can be arranged as needed. Contact Shirley Way shirleyway61@gmail.com or Nadine Hoover nadineclare@gmail.com to schedule. Friends Peace Teams, 1001 Park Avenue, St. Louis MO 63104

Shirley Way, NYYM Representative to Friends Peace Teams

Indian Affairs Committee

“Sometimes when people learn about the broken treaties, relocation, and genocide, they feel guilty about what happened to Native Americans. You don’t need to feel guilty. No one here today made these things happen. But we are the ones who are living now, and we need to understand that we are all in this together. I think we all have an obligation to use the talents we have to make the earth a better place. I am working on my reservation to make a better future for my people and for our land. It helps me to know that you are working for this too, that my people are not alone.”—Rio Ramirez (Tohono O’odham)

The Indian Affairs Committee is full of life, people, and energy. We continue to support the organizations that we have engaged with previously and look forward to new directions and ways of being that will affect our future work.

We maintain our longstanding relationships with native-led initiatives in the NYYM area: Kanatsiohareke—the Kaneien’keha:ka (Mohawk) Community in the Mohawk Valley; The Akwesasne Freedom School—a Mohawk language immersion school; The Awkesasne Task Force on the Environment; The American Indian Community House in Manhattan; Ndakinna Education Center, which offers classes in the Abenaki language; and Ganondagan, a Seneca Arts and Cultural Center in western New York.

We also support Quaker organizations that work with Native Americans: FCNL lobbies in support of legislation for Native Americans, The Blossom Garden Friends School in the Seneca territory works with Seneca students, and we have provided honoraria for Native Speakers at events of the 1816 Meeting House in Farmington, NY.

We continue to fund the Marjorie Sexton Scholarship for a Native student at Onondaga Community College and recently discovered that one of the Native Elders who joins us at Sessions, Hazel Powless (Oneida), is a former recipient of this scholarship. We prioritize offering modest stipends to Native individuals working on furthering their education.

With our financial picture in flux due to possible reallocation of Trust Funds that have, in the past been given to IAC to distribute, we are looking for additional ways to support Native led initiatives. As we know, it is not all about money. Several members have contributed quilt squares for a quilt for the Akwesasne quilt auction—a fundraiser for the Akwesasne Freedom School, others have volunteered at Kanatsiohareke workdays and helped prepare for their annual Strawberry Festival. One member organized an all all-day Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration for Brooklyn Monthly Meeting and Brooklyn Friends School. A friend of IAC has been working with the Ramapough in support of their current court appearances for various issues concerning the Split Rock, Sweetwater Prayer Camp in what is now northern New Jersey. We are still looking for people who can build relationships with the Shinnecock on Long Island and Native peoples in Western Connecticut.

The IAC was instrumental in bringing the practice of acknowledging the original inhabitants of the land on which NYYM meets at Spring, Summer, and Fall Sessions. This practice has been spreading to monthly meetings, quarterly meetings, schools, and activist groups as well.

Slightly further afield, two members paddled for their 4th year with the Two Row on the Grand in Ontario, continuing to deepen connections with the Haudenosaunee of Six Nations in Ontario. And one member has traveled to Penobscot territory in Maine for two years to volunteer at and be part of a 21-year cycle of “Healing Turtle Island.” Two members provide experiential exercises locally and as far away as Iowa, primarily for non-indigenous people, on the history of Native/European Settler interactions. They have led a weeklong workshop at the FGC Gathering for the last 3 years.

We continue to invite a Native Elder to join us at Sessions to help us understand if we are going in the right direction. And

have been advised by our Native Elder that it is appropriate for two Natives to travel together. We understand this both in the light of importance of an oppressed group not being asked to be alone in a group and in the historical Quaker context of Traveling Ministers traveling in pairs. In the light of both of these understandings, we plan to start inviting two Native Elders to Summer Sessions.

Last year we applied for a Lindley Murray grant that was awarded to the American Indian Community House who used it for cultural events and children's workshops at their summer site on Governor's Island. This year it is being awarded to the Akwesasne Freedom School who are working on a capital campaign for a new school building as they are outgrowing their original 30-year-old building.

Not only do we look forward to increasing collaboration with Indigenous peoples, but we hope to increase our collaboration with other committees of NYYM, such as the Earthcare Working Group, as we hold many issues in common.

We move into this year with hope and enthusiasm for the possibilities that lay ahead. We hope you will join us.

Buffy Curtis and Liseli Haines, Co-Clerks

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF)

On August 6th, 2019 Representative John Lewis introduced in the House of Representatives of the 116th Congress H.R. 4169. **Friends are urged to write their congressional representatives to join John Lewis in support of this bill.** It reads as follows:

HR 4169: A Bill To affirm the religious freedom of taxpayers who are conscientiously opposed to participation in war, to provide that the income, estate, or gift tax payments of such taxpayers be used for nonmilitary purposes, to create the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund to receive such tax payments, to improve revenue collection, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. Short title.

This Act may be cited as the “Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Act”.

SEC. 2. Findings.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The free exercise of religion is an inalienable right, protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

(2) Congress reaffirmed this right in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, as amended in 2000, which prohibits the Federal Government from imposing a substantial burden on the free exercise of religion unless it demonstrates that a compelling government interest is achieved by the least restrictive means.

(3) Many people immigrated to America (including members of the Quaker, Mennonite, and Church of the Brethren faiths) to escape persecution for their refusal to participate in warfare, yet during the First World War hundreds of conscientious objectors were imprisoned in America for their beliefs. Some died while incarcerated as a result of mistreatment.

(4) During the Second World War, “alternative civilian service” was established in lieu of military service, by the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, to accommodate a wide spectrum of religious beliefs and practices. Subsequent case law also has expanded these exemptions, and has described this policy as one of “... long standing tradition in this country ...” affording “the important value of reconciling individuality of belief with practical exigencies whenever possible. It dates back to colonial times and has been perpetuated in State and Federal conscription statutes”, and “has roots deeply embedded in history” (Welsh v. United States, 1970, Justice Harlan concurring). During and since the Second World War thousands of conscientious objectors provided essential staff for mental hospitals and volunteered as human test subjects for arduous medical experiments, and provided other service for the national health, safety and interest.

(5) Conscientious objectors have sought alternative service for their tax payments since that time. They request legal relief from government seizure of their homes, livestock, automobiles, and other property; and from having bank accounts attached,

wages garnished, fines imposed, and imprisonment threatened, to compel them to violate their personal and religious convictions.

(6) Conscientious objection to participation in war in any form based upon moral, ethical, or religious beliefs is recognized in Federal law, with provision for alternative service; but no such provision exists for taxpayers who are conscientious objectors and who are compelled to participate in war through the payment of taxes to support military activities.

(7) The Joint Committee on Taxation has certified that a tax trust fund, providing for conscientious objector taxpayers to pay their full taxes for nonmilitary purposes, would increase Federal revenues.

SEC. 3. Definitions.

(a) Designated conscientious objector.—For purposes of this Act, the term “designated conscientious objector” means a taxpayer who is opposed to participation in war in any form based upon the taxpayer’s sincerely held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs or training (within the meaning of section 6 of the Military Selective Service Act (50 U.S.C. 3806(j))), and who has certified these beliefs in writing to the Secretary of the Treasury in such form and manner as the Secretary provides.

(b) Military purpose.—For purposes of this Act, the term “military purpose” means any activity or program which any agency of the Government conducts, administers, or sponsors and which effects an augmentation of military forces or of defensive and offensive intelligence activities, or enhances the capability of any person or nation to wage war, including the appropriation of funds by the United States for—

- (1) the Department of Defense;
- (2) the intelligence community (as defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)));
- (3) the Selective Service System;
- (4) activities of the Department of Energy that have a military purpose;
- (5) activities of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration that have a military purpose;
- (6) foreign military aid; and
- (7) the training, supplying, or maintaining of military

personnel, or the manufacture, construction, maintenance, or development of military weapons, installations, or strategies.

SEC. 4. Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund.

(a) Establishment.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall establish an account in the Treasury of the United States to be known as the “Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund”, for the deposit of income, gift, and estate taxes paid by or on behalf of taxpayers who are designated conscientious objectors. The method of deposit shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury in a manner that minimizes the cost to the Treasury and does not impose an undue burden on such taxpayers.

(b) Use of Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund.—Monies deposited in the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund shall be allocated annually to any appropriation not for a military purpose.

(c) Report.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate each year on the total amount transferred into the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund during the preceding fiscal year and the purposes for which such amount was allocated in such preceding fiscal year. Such report shall be printed in the Congressional Record upon receipt by the Committees. The privacy of individuals using the Fund shall be protected.

(d) Sense of Congress.—It is the sense of Congress that any increase in revenue to the Treasury resulting from the creation of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund shall be allocated in a manner consistent with the purposes of the Fund.

Jens Braun, NYYM's Representative

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) mobilizes people of faith to end torture in U.S. policy, practice and culture. NRCAT clearly frames torture as a moral issue.

Torture in U.S. Prisons:

NRCAT works to end the torture of solitary confinement promoting restorative alternatives and human rights. They support state campaigns such as:

- **NJ Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC)** successfully campaigned for the Isolated Confinement & Restriction Act that was signed into law by Governor Phil Murphy in July 2019. This legislation limits the use of solitary confinement in the state of New Jersey to 20 days and eliminates it entirely for certain vulnerable populations.
- **NY CAIC** continues to campaign for passage of the far-reaching HALT Bill (Humane Alternatives to Long Term Isolation). If called for a vote, the Bill has sufficient votes to pass in both houses.
- **Stop Solitary CT** introduced the PROTECT Act which calls for an end to extreme isolation, a limit to the use of in-cell restraints and the closing of the state's supermax facility.

Response to COVID-19 in Prisons:

Incarcerated people are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. NRCAT is calling on governors to take steps to ensure that incarcerated people and corrections staff are protected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NRCAT calls on Governors:

- To take concrete steps to release the highest number of people possible from all jails and state prisons, beginning with the most vulnerable.
- To ensure that all people who live and work in correctional facilities have access to adequate testing and personal protective equipment to help stop the spread of COVID in these spaces. This includes increased access to hygiene products.
- To ensure correctional leaders do not respond punitively, potentially discouraging the sick from reporting their symptoms. This includes ensuring correctional leaders never use solitary confinement as a containment strategy for COVID-19.

Human Rights and National Security:

The current White House administration is in power follow-

ing a pro-torture campaign by Donald Trump. NRCAT works to ensure that the American public will continue to resist and reject and future call to resume torture.

Submitted by Judy Meikle NYYM Representative to NRCAT

New Jersey Council of Churches

The New Jersey Council of Churches (NJCC) seeks to identify areas of commonality in theological traditions which might provide a foundation for shared life and witness. The specific mission of the Council is to work within this community engaging society and its culture through ministries of compassion and justice.

Marcus Burnett was installed as the president of the New Jersey Council of Churches (NJCC); he is a member of the Grant Chapel AME Church in Trenton. The Rev. Derrick Green, the spiritual advisor to the governor of New Jersey and Senior Advisor for Diversity, Faith, Urban and Regional Growth, delivered the Message during the Installation Service.

The New Jersey Council of Churches (2019-2020) pushed on. We continued to focus on the commonness to all religions: the inherent dignity of all human beings; the right of all humans to be treated with respect; the particular support for those who are most vulnerable in our society, such as the aged, the impoverished, and the infirm; and the equalization of opportunity for everyone in our respective communities.

Issues and Action for NJCC involved an exploration of the Broken Windows Theory, and we challenged ourselves to identify why “broken windows” exist within our society; we maintain that broken windows will not mean the abandonment of those most vulnerable.

Taking the line from Mister Fred Rogers, “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” we, as a Council, are processing the framework for building a *Beloved Community*. We are looking at health care discrepancy based on zip codes, what defines citizenship, criminal justice, accessibility to food, and food insecurity. We are looking at the role of Faith Healers, Public Servants, and Civic Servants to meet the challenges of the vulnerable.

The Council arranged an in-service with Eliot Daley, the

former President of the Mister Rogers Neighborhood Company. The program was designed to look at the host's iconic model of friendship, citizenship and service. COVID-19 arrived and the program was postponed; the work of the Council, however, continues.

We invited Nicoleta Acatrinei, Ph.D. (Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University) for an in-service. Dr. Acatrinei challenged us by asking, "Whose Bottom Line?" in a work-shop entitled, "Towards a Christian Charity Economy." We reviewed moral decision making, work motivation, and pro-social behavior in the delivery of public services. We learned intrinsic motivation involves doing something that is personally rewarding; extrinsic motivation involves doing something to earn a reward or avoid punishment. By combining behavioral economics with work motivation, we studied how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can coexist simultaneously and how to use both types of motivation to foster pro-social and altruistic behavior.

The work of the Council was empowered by successful joint & collaborative efforts for bail reform, restoration of voting rights for those convicted and released from custodial supervision, changes to policy governing isolation during confinement, and changes to school bullying protocol with Mallory Law.

Mallory Grossman was 12 years old when she committed suicide (2017); she was reportedly bullied by schoolmates. The new law expands the State's 2002 Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act. Mallory Law requires all reports of bullying to be forwarded to county superintendent executives and the parents or guardians of all students involved in reported bullying incidents. A third offense would require notification to law enforcement. Students along with their parents or guardians would be mandated to attend anti-bullying sessions. Parents and guardians can now face civil liability.

New legislation requires qualified healthcare personnel to conduct a personal and comprehensive medical and mental health examination before a state inmate may be placed in isolated confinement.

Inmates placed in isolated confinement are not to be held there for more than 20 consecutive days, or for more than 30 days during any 60-day period. Cells or other spaces in which

inmates are confined are to be properly ventilated, lit, temperature-monitored, clean, and equipped with functioning sanitary fixtures. Under new legislation, inmates may not be placed in isolated confinement for non-disciplinary reasons, with the exception of facility-wide lock downs, medical isolation, and protective custody. Inmates generally also are not to be placed in isolated confinement pending investigation of disciplinary offenses.

Legislation establishes an inmate as a member of a vulnerable population if he or she is 21 years of age or younger; is 65 years of age or older; has a disability based on a mental illness, a history of psychiatric hospitalization, or has recently exhibited conduct, including but not limited to serious self-mutilation, indicating the need for further observation or evaluation to determine the presence of mental illness; has a developmental disability; has a serious medical condition which cannot effectively be treated in isolated confinement; is pregnant; is in the postpartum period, or has recently suffered a miscarriage or terminated a pregnancy; has a significant auditory or visual impairment; or is perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersexual. The bill defines “postpartum period” as 45 days after childbirth.

We book-marked six anti-poverty platform bills. This legislation would:

1. Require the State to pay the difference between federal allocation and total cost of reduced priced breakfast or lunches for our public-school children
2. Examine the effect of poverty on the development of the children in the State’s most fiscally distressed urban and rural areas, and to develop recommendations about how local nonprofits, civic organizations, religious institutions, and institutions of higher education in the State can help to support and improve the lives of children living in these areas. (New Jersey Investing in You Promise Neighborhood Commission)
3. Require hospitals and homeless shelters to provide information on services and resources to homeless and/or disenfranchised Veterans

4. Establish a NJ Eviction Crisis Task Force
5. Establish a NJ Task Force on Maximizing Employment for People with Disabilities and
6. Mandate the Commissioner of Human Services to assess and report on the nature and frequency of social isolation and to assess resources that are available to combat social isolation affecting vulnerable populations in the state. Vulnerable populations are defined as:
 - a. individuals who are 65 years of age or older;
 - b. individuals with disabilities, with the definition of the term “individuals with disabilities” interpreted by the Commissioner of Human Services in an expansive fashion to include as many disabilities as is appropriate for the purposes of this act;
 - c. individuals with mental illness; and
 - d. other vulnerable populations, as deemed by the commissioner to be appropriate, including individuals who serve or have served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard of the United States, a Reserve component thereof, or the National Guard of this State.

We continue our work to fight inequality and polarization and promote civil discourse. At the time of writing this report, COVID-19 is with us, and we have forever been changed. As the way opens, we call upon all people to imagine a bold new future, and a way forward that considers the best interests of all of God’s people. The pandemic is a crisis and, we believe, an opportunity for change and renewal. As a people, we need connection with one another, and we desire to collaborate to build a new future that integrates justice and peace with health and well-being. We celebrate, that and we are committed to participating as full partners in working for the beloved community.

We acknowledge that uncertainty and fear remain. In the midst of such tribulation, this pandemic shines a light on our ability as a nation and as a people to rally together in a time of crisis. We rejoice and express thanks for all those who are providing aid and comfort to the ill and suffering. This includes first responders, medical personnel, chaplains, and others

providing humanitarian assistance. Our prayers are with the scientists and researchers and other experts who are working on improved testing, new vaccines, and guidelines that will enable a return to normal life.

We are grateful to the countless individuals who have come to the aid of their neighbors out of moral conviction, religious faith, or love. We also give thanks for educators, civic officials, and religious leaders, who are learning new, creative ways to teach, lead, and minister to their communities.

This pandemic also shines a light on the hierarchy of human life as we live it. Many workers considered essential are treated as expendable. Grocery clerks, orderlies, custodians, restaurant workers, delivery drivers, warehouse workers, and countless others—are at the bottom of the economic ladder. They are required to show up at work and maintain the comfort of others without having necessary resources to protect themselves or their families.

We support measures to safeguard their well-being and elevate their economic and social status.

We urge everyone to continue to adapt to those guidelines which will limit the spread of the virus. Now is not the time to ignore measures intended to limit illness and loss of life.

As we are mindful of all the good happening around us, we must also name the injustices and challenges that we confront. This crisis reveals dangerous biases.

In particular, we condemn the hate-speech and hate-crimes directed against the Asian-American community, as well as attacks on our siblings of other ethnic and religious backgrounds who are experiencing hatred and xenophobia during this time.

The pandemic has uncovered the systemic racism and classism that is intrinsically part of our national DNA and has shined a light on the vast disparities in our healthcare system. Large cities are reporting over 70% of reported deaths are of African Americans.

A grossly disproportionate number of persons of color are suffering and dying from COVID-19 because of the systemic poverty and racism that plagues our society. We reiterate our determination as a Council to work to end racism.

As a Council the economic collapse that is underway shines

a light on the weakness of our social safety net, including economic and healthcare inequities, and the tenuous nature of our purported prosperity now that tens of millions have quickly been thrown out of work. As some corporate interests rightly seek government funding to support their workers, others inappropriately seek vast sums from our government to enrich themselves; meanwhile, those of more humble means have received inadequate assistance. We pledge to continue to advocate for our nation's resources to be utilized to help the most vulnerable among us, including immigrants and refugees.

This is a time of grief and sadness. The loss of life and the numbers who are suffering is staggering. The anguish is compounded by our inability to be near our loved ones as they pass away and to gather in community to celebrate their lives. Although many have died alone, they are not expendable and their loss to us is irreplaceable.

Jan T. Philips

New York State Council of Churches

NYYM Representatives' Report for 2019

Regina Haag was appointed as one of our representatives to the NYSCOC at 2019 Spring Sessions. Robert Kazmayer (Sunfire) was appointed as our second representative to the NYSCOC at 2019 Summer Sessions. Both Regina and Sunfire have attended all of the Executive Committee meetings held between the time of their appointment and the end of the year, either in person or by electronic means.

Peter Cook, Executive Director of NYSOC, was present at the 2019 Summer Sessions and reported to the body on the activities of the Council. His report is documented in Minute 2019-07-59 found on page 94 of the 2019-2020 *Yearbook*.

Regina accepted the position of Chair of the NYSCOC Social Justice Commission, and during 2019 organized a lobbying day that was held in 2020, arranging for Jim Cason, FCNL Associate General Secretary for Strategic Advocacy, to present at that event.

Both Regina and Sunfire, along with nine other Friends, on October 22, 2019, attended an all-day seminar with the theme

of “Who Is My Neighbor,” sponsored and organized by the NYSCOC. Sunfire submitted an article on that seminar, which was published in the *Spark* issue of January, 2020. Go to nyym.org/content/our-responsibilities-neighbors to read a copy of this article.

Prisons Committee

The Prisons Committee sees as its mission the support of the Quaker Worship Groups within NY State Correctional Facilities (If any were to be started in NYYM parts of New Jersey, we would support those as well.), We work to assist returning citizens and organizations that carry out similar missions. We are committed to increasing the awareness of the broader community of New York Yearly Meeting to concerns around mass incarceration, not only within our geographic area but nationally.

At this time, there are 8 Quaker worship groups and 2 Quaker study groups in NY State. Study groups are a response to the NY State requirement that there be 5 registered Quakers and at least 1 outside volunteer to establish a new worship group although already established groups don't have to have the same number of registered Quakers to continue in some facilities. A number of facilities allow men who are not registered Quakers to attend worship groups.

Our budget is designed to support our mission. We endeavor to support the worship groups by sending in materials, supporting volunteer travel and recruiting new volunteers. In addition, birthday cards, Christmas cards and calendars are sent to all who are or have been part of a worship group. People are frequently transferred in NY State Correctional Facilities. We keep track of the men's locations. In addition to the regular mailings, men in solitary confinement and men who have been serving for many years are sent inspirational materials to support them. The men express much appreciation for these remembrances. Often these communications are the only mail the men receive.

A new initiative was begun in 2019, the Inside-Outside Letter Writing Collective. Volunteers are not permitted to write or phone people in NY State Correctional Facilities. The Collective looks to connect people on the outside who are willing to

write the men who would like to correspond. As of May 2020, 35 matches have been made. This has become an increasingly important initiative as all visitors, volunteers and programs have not been permitted to enter correctional facilities since mid-March because of COVID-19.

Several years ago, when we received funds from the Trustees, we began giving reintegration grants to men who had been registered Quakers on the inside and who had maintained contact with Friends during their incarceration. These help the men with expenses upon their release. It takes a while for men to access benefits, get jobs and so on. This money eases the transition, especially if families are not able to help. Releases are unpredictable, and we did not fully expend these funds last year.

To help members of the yearly meeting understand more about our outreach, we participated in and helped to edit a special issue of *Spark*, “Life Behind Bars” this fall.

We have also supported organizations such as Hopper House (for women returning from prison), the Fortune Society and the Osborne Association, which provide re-entry services. Fortune, in particular, is an organization that has been of great assistance to members of our worship groups. We have also supported the printing of the AFSC’s *Survival Manual for Women* in Spanish. This is a manual to help women survive solitary confinement. Their situation differs in important respects from the circumstances that men experience. The original manual was created many years ago for men. People from prisons all over the country request them.

The support from the yearly meeting is appreciated by the committee and those we serve.

Pamela Wood, Clerk

Right Sharing of World Resources

In 2019, RSWR brought its field representatives from India, Sierra Leone and Kenya to the USA for consultation and inaugurated a 3-year matching campaign.

In October 2019, the field reps from India, Sierra Leone and Kenya met with the board of RSWR to exchange knowledge

and ideas. Although RSWR's general secretary and some board members have been visiting the partners in-country each year, most board members have only limited experience, or none, of the conditions under which RSWR's partners work. And the representatives didn't know each other at all! In the consultation, everyone had a chance to ask questions, compare notes and share expertise.

The objective of the matching campaign is to create a reserve fund from which new projects can be funded as soon as they are approved, rather than having to wait until RSWR can raise the funds for them, which can take several months. In the past, partner groups couldn't know when their money would arrive, and that made it hard to plan their businesses. In the matching campaign, new or lapsed donors' contributions in 2019, 2020, and 2021 will be matched 100%, thus doubling their contributions. Continuing donors who increase their contributions will see the additional gifts matched 100%.

Updating this report to early 2020, news from the field is that with the COVID-19 lock downs, women in partner organizations are unable to run their businesses and face starvation. The board agreed to send money for food assistance to all current partners, and RSWR is raising money to extend this aid to as many former partners as possible.

RSWR, Inc. is supported by NYYM through the Sharing Fund. Your contributions to the Sharing Fund may be making the difference between life and death for some people, not only in the USA, but in India and Africa as well.

2019 BY THE NUMBERS:

- 41 groups received an RSWR seed grant
- 1,092 women received a loan from initial grant funds
- 3,276+ lives changed by RSWR

World Ministries Committee (WMC)

World Ministries Committee (WMC) has a limited budget with two lines: one to fund general grant requests for Quaker work and projects in "the wider world," and one much smaller line specifically used to fund requests from Friends United Meeting

(FUM).

In the past year, since summer 2019, we have been able to fund some wonderful projects, all in Africa and Latin America. These were as follows:

- to Friends Peace Teams to enable AVP workshops for Colombian war survivors and their children;
- to Friends Peace Teams to support Growing AVP in San Salvador and support of new AVP facilitators in El Salvador;
- follow up to water purification tank and hygiene training including printing pamphlets for the CAB Nursery Teacher's Centre and primary school and kindergarten in Uganda;
- organized efforts toward ending human trafficking in Belize;
- training community health volunteers in Kenya in "Preventive Health and Peer Training Techniques" under care of Nairobi YM; this is a follow-up to a health project in Kenya previously funded in part by WMC
- support of new AVP facilitators in El Salvador in order to "grow AVP" in San Salvador;
- AVP in Belize City, Belize: Provide a facilitators' training for the first Belizean AVP facilitators and provide basic AVP training for young people from gang areas in Belize City;
- Donation to the Ugandan Safe Transport Fund. This fund supports "conductors" who transport "passengers" out of the country to safety and finds refuge for them. "Passengers" are LGBTQ citizens, and include members of Bulungi Tree Shade Friends Meeting whose lives are in imminent danger. (To date, 14 countries have accepted Ugandan LGBTQ refugees);!
- \$5000 for FUM Africa Ministries Office, COVID-19 solidarity fund; FUM is working globally to raise funds to answer the immediate needs of vulnerable communities touched by FUM ministries that are experiencing the economic and physical impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. (For

additional information: www.friendsunitedmeeting.org/news/reaching-out-in-generosity);!

- to Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)-Americas: for translation and publication into Spanish of Brian Drayton's *On Living with Concern for Gospel Ministry* to be used for training of traveling ministers in Latin America.!
- "Peace baskets" to be delivered in El Salvador by Friends Peace Teams/AVP coordinator and staff there, for the Phase 3 period to take place in September and October. "Peace baskets" will be delivered to families in economically marginalized and high-conflict urban neighborhoods in the area of San Salvador. The baskets include beans, rice, pasta, sugar, non-perishable food, disinfectants, hygiene items, and messages of peace and emergency contacts. Recipients of the baskets are encouraged to pass onto their loved ones and neighbors some of the food and sharing messages of peace.

Two or three grants are still possible before the end of the year. Because of COVID-19 these grant requests need some changes in what they plan to accomplish. Some trust money is expected in the committee's budget line at the end of June, as well as Sharing Fund money, so it may be possible to fund these grants.

For additional information, please go to the NYYM website or contact the clerk of this committee: sweisfeld@juno.com. Applications for grant funds are on the NYYM website.

As always, World Ministries Committee welcomes all applications from meetings and organizations affiliated with NYYM. The committee will do its best to make it possible for Friends to bring "Quaker love" to the wider world.

in Peace and Friendship,

NYYM World Ministries Committee: Edward Doty, David Herendeen, David Gerhan, Martha Gurvich, Arlene Reduto, Lisa Stewart, Susan Weisfeld