

June 17, 2016

Dear Friends,

New York Yearly Meeting extends an invitation to consider participation in the **Monthly Meeting Partner Project**. Along with New England Yearly Meeting, NYYM has received a substantial grant from the Shoemaker Fund to help us collaborate with **partner meetings**. The heart of the project is intensive work with six monthly meetings or worship groups over the next three years as we seek new ways to nurture multigenerational community life and worship and best support the spiritual lives of children and youth.

The Children and Youth Field Secretary and other yearly meeting staff will work closely with the partner meetings, who will commit time, energy and resources. With this letter you are receiving questions for discernment and application to the project.

NYYM staff will provide outreach materials for Partner Project meetings, and the CYFS will work closely with the community to create a welcoming climate for young families. We'll explore possibilities not just for children and youth religious education programming, but all-ages worship and religious education, and the issues of schedule and space in preparing a place for children and families in the meeting community.

Partner meetings will be asked to commit considerable time and energy, in addition to being open to change. The project includes surveys conducted in the Yearly Meeting as a body as well as in the partner meetings, where age-cohort focus groups conducted by NYYM staff and volunteers will open conversations about current experience as well as visioning. Hands-on work done by the partner meetings will implement strategies for growing multigenerational meeting communities using a collaborative, results-focused approach that emphasizes best practices.

This work will look different in each partner meeting, speaking to the condition of that community while also seeking to stretch our experience of outreach and inclusion. The intention is to partner with a variety of monthly meetings and worship groups —large, small, urban, rural, unprogrammed, and pastoral. At the end of the three-year project, NYYM and NEYM will analyze and publish a report that will be made widely available to the Quaker community on the web.

The General Secretary and CYFS will discern the initial sites for the Partner Project. The first two meeting communities will be involved in the project from 2016-19. Whether or not this project is a good fit with your meeting community at this time, the Yearly Meeting hopes to support your work with children and families, and Melinda is happy to serve as a resource to you. Information sessions about the Partner Project will be held at Summer Sessions, and meetings are invited to communicate questions to the CYFS at childrenyouthfs@nyym.org.

The opportunity to work with Friends at the monthly meeting level, the heart of our religious society, is exciting. Through listening and sharing we have much to learn from one another as we seek to envision multigenerational spiritual community in new ways. **Will you answer this call to work and learn together?**

In faith and friendship,

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