

# New York Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

## *InfoShare*

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### **Care and Aging Coordinator for PYM**

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is seeking a Care and Aging coordinator, a licensed Social Worker to provide pastoral care for Friends who are aging or struggling with mental-health issues. We seek an active Friend with an MSW and at least five years' experience in social work. Must have superior organizational skills, including record keeping, as well as communication skills. Must be able to work independently and collaboratively, and be able to travel for visitations. A criminal background check will be performed. Experience working with an aging population helpful.

Please visit [www.pym.org](http://www.pym.org) to view the full job description and the application process or contact Ginny Connolly, Human Resources coordinator, [humanresources@pym.org](mailto:humanresources@pym.org) or 215-241-7225.

### **AFSC Seeks Regional Director for Middle Atlantic Region**

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is looking for a regional director for the Middle Atlantic Office (MAR) in Baltimore. As the lead staff person in the Middle Atlantic Region (MAR), the regional director is the primary spokesperson for the Region, interpreting its programs and communicating the principles that undergird the work of the AFSC.

Anyone interested in applying for the position should log on to [www.afsc.org/jobs](http://www.afsc.org/jobs), click on "current openings," and click on the title for this position. Any questions should be e-mailed to [jobs@afsc.org](mailto:jobs@afsc.org). Please do not send résumés to this e-mail.

### **AFSC to Hire Associate General Secretary for Inclusion**

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is seeking an associate general secretary (AGS) for Inclusion to provide leadership for achieving and sustaining diversity as an indispensable element of AFSC'S program and administrative excellence. The AGS/Inclusion will serve as AFSC'S affirmative-action officer and will hold primary responsibility and accountability for ensuring equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination in all areas and for developing and implementing the organization's affirmative-action plan.

The AGS/Inclusion will work in the Philadelphia office.

Anyone interested in applying for the position should log on to [www.afsc.org/jobs](http://www.afsc.org/jobs), click on "current openings," and click on the title for this position. Any questions should be e-mailed to [jobs@afsc.org](mailto:jobs@afsc.org). Please do not send résumés to this e-mail.

### **NEYM YAF Gathering January 1–4, 2009**

Young Adult Friends (YAF) of New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) will gather January 1–4, 2009, at Portland Friends Meeting, Portland, ME. We will be exploring the theme of Quaker Sexual Ethics: What are they, how do these ethics enrich our lives, and what would we like them to be?

We will also throw in some amazing food, a kickin' coffeehouse, and general merriment.

Cost is \$75, on a sliding scale for those who need it. For further information contact Kimberly, [yafcoord@neym.org](mailto:yafcoord@neym.org); 207-754-9353.

### **Third Meeting for Discernment**

Saturday, March 14, 2009

9:00 A.M. until 4:30 P.M.

Poughkeepsie Friends Meeting

Lunch and childcare provided.

Some financial assistance for travel available.

All Friends are welcome.

Please look for the registration form in the January 2009 issue of *Spark*

As this experiment in faithfulness unfolds, it is already clear that these day-long meetings provide the opportunity that many Friends long for: to share what is vital in the Life of our meetings; to name what might be tenderly emerging; to worship for an extended period around queries or around that which rises in our gathered worship; to labor over issues that require greater time than is normally available in a session of meeting for worship for business; and to know one another's meetings in that which is Eternal. All Friends are welcome.

In 2008, the first meeting for discernment was held in March at Rochester Friends Meeting, and the second at Silver Bay during Summer Sessions.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2009, at Poughkeepsie Friends Meeting from 9:00 to 4:30. Each monthly meeting and worship group is asked to name one or two Friends to participate in the meetings for a three-year term—ideally one older and one younger seasoned Friend. If your meeting has already appointed one or more Friends in response to earlier invitations, please let us know their contact information, and we will be in touch with them directly.

If you are still considering who might serve, think of Friends in your meeting to whom others go for ministry and counsel; who are willing to engage in a deep laboring process with love and care; who have the gift of listening deeply; who are sensitive to how Truth is prospering among you; and who enjoy extended time for worship.

Vouchers for \$50 are available to assist with travel expenses for your meeting's appointees to the Poughkeepsie meeting. Saturday lunch and childcare will be provided, covered by a \$10 registration fee per person. For those who wish, the Steering Committee will help arrange hospitality for Friday night so Friends can arrive rested on Saturday morning, and for Saturday night for those who would like to stay to worship with Poughkeepsie Friends on Sunday.

Heather M. Cook, Chatham Summit Quaker Meeting  
clerk, Steering Committee for Meetings for Discernment  
burritolass@comcast.net; 908-377-9665

### **NYYM First Day School Wiki Site Up and Running!**

First Day school teachers, parents, and Friends with interest in educating our youth, NYYM's Task Group on Youth has a wiki site up and running.

A wiki is a site that lets us post lessons, ideas, links to Web pages, queries, advices, and more.

If you would like to join us in creating a forum where we can communicate with each other across New York, please e-mail Mark at mlariviere@earthlink.net and tell him you would like to be invited into the NYYM's wiki site. You'll receive an invitation to join.

## **Innovative Religious Education for Reluctant Teens**

Kathy Slattery, Orchard Park Meeting

In our small meeting outside Buffalo, NY (Orchard Park), we were challenged to meet the religious-education needs of teens who were rebelling. The four had come to a point where going upstairs to First Day school felt like a punishment, at least to some of them. We had to try something different!

In the previous three years, we had used parts of the best, most current curricula written for 10-year-olds and older. We had three adults who shared in the preparation and lessons. But attendance of the teens was uneven, due to parents' fluctuating work schedules and to the teens' own busy schedules.

Five key elements emerged in designing and implementing a vibrant program for our teens:

1. Religious Education, and engagement with adults in a Quaker context, should be *enjoyable*—even something to look forward to!
2. We needed to find an *engaging medium* to work with.
3. *Trust* and *affirmation*—adults who *listen well* are good facilitators, and participate from the perspective that we have much to learn from each other.
4. Discussion must arise out of questions and queries that are *relevant* to their lives, right now.
5. Because we need to speak to their condition, discussion needs to be *flexible* and *open-ended*.

Together, parents, teens, and adult facilitators (who needed to be recruited!) worked on a new approach to RE for teens. What interested the teens was going out to a local coffeehouse for discussion. That's something they would enjoy, and would be special to them. The *medium* we chose for the first year of our experiment was watching selected episodes of the old TV program *Joan of Arcadia* on DVD. This wonderful program, which aired for only two seasons, features Joan as a contemporary 16-year-old who begins to see God in many and varied forms (tree-trimmer, bespeckled young girl, "Goth," lunch lady, painter, and handsome teen, to name a few). When God appears to Joan, God asks Joan to do something—something that makes no sense to Joan and that is seemingly out of

character, or at least a stretch for her. Sometimes she gets a glimpse of the possible meaning of her action; sometimes she misses the point. With her diverse family and friends, current themes and issues, and humorous insight, each episode offers a lot of material to work with.

This year we are using a different medium—black-and-white photography—in working with the monthly coffeehouse discussion group. We are working with the broad theme of “Experiments with Light” and the monthly experience of taking black-and-white photos around an assigned exercise. Sometimes, we watch a short video segment of an artist such as James Turrell or Jim Brandenburg or Andy Goldsworthy, to understand different ways of seeing and to open up possibilities for our picture-taking. We take photos in the vicinity of our meetinghouse. Then we go to a local coffeehouse and talk about our experiences, about the artists’ approach and Quaker parallels, and how those resonate with us. We ask questions, and are always amazed at the capacity of our teens for insight, depth, and articulation.

This program has generated a lot of positive energy. The teens value the sessions, are engaged by and with the medium, and appreciate the opportunity to speak and adults who listen. The two facilitators continue to experience a synergy that brings out their unique gifts, and a great deal of creativity in bringing forth the gifts of each individual teen. The facilitators always find the discussion holds a personal lesson for them, and voice their thanks to the teens for each amazing session. And we have more adults in meeting who are curious, interested and drawn to the medium we are using and possible lessons for them!

We have several objectives for our innovative and experimental teen Religious education. But most importantly, we are conveying Quakerism as a vibrant way of life, experiencing Quaker process, and learning the possibility a creative medium such as photography holds as a spiritual discipline. These are lessons the teens and facilitators will carry with them into their future.

### **Flushing Meeting Needs Sprinkler System**

Naomi Paz Greenberg, Flushing Meeting

Over the last few years, we have shared with you the details of the seemingly endless process of beginning the restoration of Flushing meetinghouse. It was at Flushing, in 1696, that Friends first gathered in what is now New York. Over the past four years, costs continue to soar as

the amount of money available for this project remains unchanged.

One of the most crucial elements of our meetinghouse restoration, the installation of a sprinkler system, is no longer covered by grant monies.

The sprinkler system will cost \$125,000 to install. We have been promised \$25,000 in a separate matching grant. In these times when individual Flushing Friends are feeling the consequences of the ongoing economic crisis, we are unable to raise all of the rest of the money for this necessary improvement on our own.

Please contact Naomi Paz Greenberg, [naomipaz@nyc.rr.com](mailto:naomipaz@nyc.rr.com), for further information.

### **Heeding God's Call: A Gathering on Peace**

Please hold in your prayers Heeding God's Call: A Gathering on Peace which will be held at the Arch Street Meetinghouse in Philadelphia, January 13–17, 2009. This gathering of people from more than 50 Christian denominations will seek God's guidance as they develop explore ways that Jesus' call to peacemaking can be made more manifest in our suffering world. The planners ask for our prayers that participants will return to their denominations and their home congregations with a deeper commitment to God's call to peacebuilding, with renewed energy, and with greater attentiveness to the Spirit that dwells within us all, calling us to restore God's world for all God's children. More information can be found at [www.peacegathering2009.org](http://www.peacegathering2009.org) .

For information: Prayer and Pastoral Care Task Group for Heading God's Call: A Gathering on Peace, c/o Philadelphia Yearly Meeting/ 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102; 267-519-5301, [admin@peacegathering2009.org](mailto:admin@peacegathering2009.org).

### **Christopher Sammond's Travel Calendar**

December 1–January 31, 2009

December

2–10	Vacation
21	Hudson MM, Hudson ,NY (tentative)
28	Nine Partners Worship Group, Nine Partners Monthly Meeting/Lyall Federated Church, Millbrook, NY (tentative)

January	
2–3	Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee, Dundee, NY
9–11	Spiritual Nurture Working Group, Dundee, NY
25	Visit Cornwall MM, Cornwall, NY
30–31	Traveling Friends Advisory Group, Powell House (tentative)

### **AFSC Mexico Summer Project**

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is seeking motivated volunteers for the 2009 Mexico Summer Project, from June 25 to August 8, 2009. This is an opportunity to learn about diverse cultures and experiences and to learn ways to address the political, social, ecological, and economic challenges of the present and the future.

The project is carried out in collaboration with Servicio, Desarrollo y Paz, A.C. (SEDEPAC), a prominent Mexican nongovernmental organization. AFSC and Quakers in Mexico launched the program in 1939. In developing and implementing the 2009 Mexico Summer Project, SEDEPAC and AFSC will work closely with Unidad Indígena Totonaca Nahuatl (UNITONA), an indigenous-development organization in the area. The program is celebrating its 70th year and continues to provide positive life-changing experiences for diverse youth and local communities.

Participants will live together in indigenous communities in the mountainous northeastern region of Puebla, Mexico. After four days of orientation, including a two-day home stay with a local host family, participants are divided into five groups. Each group of about 10 to 14 spends the next seven weeks living as a family in an indigenous village where they engage with the local community in cultural and recreational exchanges, assigned work projects for sustainable development, and workshops on various topics important to the local community and the group members.

AFSC seeks applicants who are interested in service, advocacy, and social justice—both in Latin America and in their own communities. Participants must be 18–26 years old and able to communicate well in Spanish, the language of the project at all times. AFSC requires that participants undergo a preproject physical exam. They must participate for the full seven weeks of the program, and be willing and prepared to live with a small group of peers in a remote rural area of Mexico.

Costs

Participants are responsible for a \$1,350 project fee, which covers food, lodging, and transportation related to the project. Participants are also responsible for the cost of their travel to and from Mexico City. A nonrefundable registration fee of \$250 is due upon acceptance and the remainder in June 2009. Some scholarship assistance is available.

For brochures and information: American Friends Service Committee Mexico Summer Project, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 215-241-7162; [mexicosummer@afsc.org](mailto:mexicosummer@afsc.org)