

SPARK

New York Yearly Meeting

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Address Service Requested

VOLUME 46 NUMBER 1

15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

JANUARY 2016

Spirit at Work



Holy Spirit, by Colleen Shay

Spirit at Work in NYYM

Editor's Introduction

Spirit is rising in New York Yearly Meeting. Great new things are happening all over the place. So we dedicate this issue to the *Spirit at Work in New York Yearly Meeting*, highlighting with articles some of the new programs and initiatives taking place in our meetings and committees.

And there's more! An emerging youth ministry with our new Children and Youth Field Secretary position. The *Tending the Garden* spiritual
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It has Always Been** p4

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Rising** p5

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and Ministry** p8

Robin Whitely

From a Place of Abundance

Emily Provance,
Fifteenth Street Meeting

A New Outreach Initiative

As you read through this month's issue of *Spark*, you'll discover a richness of life and energy. From Fredonia to Housatonic, from Adirondack to New Brunswick, there's a Light and a liveliness awakening among us. Whatever our challenges, every meeting carries rich spiritual gifts, and these are something to celebrate.

From a Place of Abundance is a new outreach program designed to spring from that very premise. How is Spirit moving within your local meeting? Are your members especially committed to pastoral care? Is your meeting really spectacular with its children? Are you committed to serving your neighborhood community? Is your meeting brimming with deeply grounded, experienced Friends? Does your meeting carry a witness to the world?

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Youth Institute 2016

Chris DeRoller & Mike Clark,
Powell House Youth Directors

Living into Community Together A program under the care of NYYM's Youth Committee

The average human body replaces nearly all its atoms every year or so, yet you retain the personality you have developed, the memories you have gained. Some things do fade with time or grow and change as the body ages, but still each body is distinct and precious.

Meetings are organic entities as well. Older friends move on, new friends arrive. People change in what they can offer and what they need from a meeting. Working with kids you see these changes in a shorter span but they exist at all stages. Meetings that are intentional in passing on their culture (personality, memories, and knowledge) and that at the same time are open enough to

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The White Privilege Conference

Jeffrey Hitchcock, Rahway &
Plainfield Meeting

April 14–17, 2016

In 1996 I attended the Friends General Conference Gathering in Hamilton, Ontario, where, after a hiatus from Quakerism two decades long, I went looking to connect with the racial justice activism I was exposed to as a youth growing up in Crosswicks Friends Meeting. It was nowhere to be found. Not a single speaker, workshop, not even a single book in the bookstore talked about race. Quakers, like many other groups at that time, no longer paid attention to racial concerns.

In 2002 I attended my first White Privilege Conference (WPC) in Pella, Iowa. There were no Quakers visibly present, nor were there any at subsequent conferences.

Times change. In the past few years Friends General Conference (FGC) has sponsored a substantial presence of Friends at WPC, and now Friends are deeply involved in bringing the conference to Philadelphia. FGC itself has brought forward a ministry on racism that has had broad impact among Friends. Several yearly meetings, including our own, have begun to look at matters of white privilege and racial

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Meeting News

Greater Canandaigua Midweek Meeting organizes refugee health kits

In December, in response to the Syrian refugee crisis, the meeting made health kits for refugees through the International Orthodox Christian Charities. Young Friends gathered with adults to assemble the kits, and then sent them to the Brethren Service Center in Maryland for shipment. The kits included one hand towel, one washcloth, one comb, one metal nail file or nail clipper, one wrapped bar of soap, one toothbrush, and six Band-Aids.

Queens Community Interfaith Prayer Breakfast at Flushing Meeting

On January 10, Flushing Meeting hosted an interfaith prayer breakfast that they had co-organized with the Queens Baha'i Faith Community. The breakfast was co-sponsored by the Flushing Interfaith Council, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Queens, the Flushing Jewish Community Council, the Hindu Temple Society, and the Sikh Center of New York.

News & Announcements

FWCC World Gathering in Peru

A number of Friends from New York Yearly Meeting attended Friends World Committee for Consultation's World Plenary this year in Peru. The gathering took place January 19–27 in the village of Pisac near Cusco, Peru. Attendees from NYYM included Isabella Aguirre, Melinda Wenner Bradley, Sylke Jackson, Emily Provance, Jillian Kiana Smith, and Gloria Thompson. You can see their running commentary at <https://www.facebook.com/NYYMatFWCC>.

Meeting for Discernment

Saturday, February 27, 2016
• 9–4 • *Westbury Meeting*

Meeting for Discernment is a chance for extended worship among NYYM Friends, to experience what is rising in our meetings and in our selves. It is a way to bring our meetings together and to get to know each other better. The meeting is a full day, with lunch provided in between.

The query for the meeting is, "What is alive, engaging, exciting in your meeting? What is alive in you?"

The snow date is Saturday, March 5. The address is 550 Post Rd., Westbury, NY 11590. To register, visit nyym.org.

Creating One Spiritual Community: Integrating Children into the Spiritual Life of the Meeting—A retreat for all ages

Sunday, March 12, 2016 •
Brooklyn Meetinghouse •
9–4

How can our meetings better integrate our children into the spiritual life of our meetings? How can we give them a voice in their experience of Quakerism and an awareness of Quaker process? Participants will leave with new energy, new ideas, and new tools to implement these ideas.

Sessions will explore both the worship and the community aspects of Quakerism, including:

- Children in the circle of meeting life—joys and challenges.
- Supporting children's spiritual development.
- Hands-on approach to teaching children Quaker process.

Some parts of the day will be multigenerational and child-care will also be provided.

Who should attend? Religious Education Committee members, Ministry & Counsel Committee members, parents, families,

and anyone with a concern for the spiritual life of our children. It is recommended that meetings send two or more participants to the session. There is no cost to attend.

Facilitators:

Mary Harpster has served on Ministry & Counsel and Religious Education Committees. A First Day School teacher, she develops programming that gives the students input into meeting life.

Melinda Wenner Bradley leads religious education workshops for yearly meetings, FGC, Pendle Hill, and Friends schools. She serves on the NYYM Youth Committee and is the former clerk of the Children's Spiritual Life Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Learn about solitary confinement

Friday, February 19 & Saturday, Feb 20, 2016 •
Montclair Meeting

Montclair Meeting is hosting an event with Five Mualimm-ak to learn about solitary confinement.

Friday night, the youth will join Five in building a replica of a solitary cell inside Montclair meetinghouse. Saturday's morning session will focus on the experience and effects of being confined in solitary and an afternoon session will focus on what can be done to end the use of solitary confinement as punishment.

Mr Five Mualimm-ak is a formerly incarcerated person who has been directly affected by solitary confinement. He is now Founder and CEO of Incarcerated Nation Corp and is engaged in activism to prevent the torture of prolonged isolation in our prisons.

For more information, contact Mary Pugh Clark: marypughc@mac.com, 973-338-4393.

An Invitation to Spring Sessions youth program

April 2, 2016 • *First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, Somerset, NJ*

Please join us for Saturday's youth and children program provided by the Pachamama Alliance, an international network standing with indigenous partners to protect the earth while working to shift the dominant worldview toward a just, sustainable, and spiritually fulfilling life for all.

Youth Program (ages 13 – 18)

The Pachamama Alliance's youth program, called "The WakeUp," is an interactive, multimedia workshop about the challenges and opportunities of our time. Through music, powerful videos, dynamic group processes, and from-the-heart conversations, participants explore ways to embrace commitments to individual and collective change. Thousands

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SPARK (ISSN 00240591)

New York Yearly Meeting News
Published five times a year:
January, March, May, September,
November by

New York Yearly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends
15 Rutherford Place
New York, NY 10003
212-673-5750
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www.nyym.org

Editorial Board:
Communications Committee

Editor: Steven Davison

SPARK deadlines are the first of the month preceding the publication month. Permission is granted to reprint any article, provided Spark is acknowledged as the source.

Periodicals Postage Paid
at New York, New York
Postmaster: Send address
changes to:

SPARK

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Notices

New Members

Maureen DeRasmo – Poughkeepsie
Jonathan Fluck – Brooklyn
Solange Therese Muller – Bulls Head-Oswego
Paul Sireci – Brooklyn
Anne Liske – Albany

Marriages/Covenant Relationships

Beth Gill & Mark Harper, members of Chatham-Summit, on October 10, 2015, under the care of Chatham-Summit

Births

Elliot James Whitely, on November 28, 2015, to Christopher Whitely, member of Chatham-Summit, and Kara Richardson Whitely

Transfers

Alethe and Christopher Fatherley, and their children Gordon and Marisa, from Fifteenth Street to Wilton
Kathy Kola, from Yellow Springs Friends Meeting to New Paltz Meeting

Deaths

Dorothy Badgley Adams, member of Poughkeepsie, on November 30, 2015
John Forman Applegate, member of Manasquan, on August 13, 2015
Mary Louise Baum, member of Albany, on November 21, 2015
Boyce Bengel, member of Brooklyn, on January 17, 2016
Paul Busby, member of Fifteenth Street, on December 8, 2015
John Anton DeVeer, member of Bulls Head-Oswego, on December 2, 2015

of young people around the world have found The WakeUp to be a profoundly moving, sometimes life-changing experience. This is a large claim, but it is grounded in integrity. Don't let your teens miss this uniquely inspiring and empowering day!

Children's Program (ages 6–12)

Using a variety of age-appropriate creative methods, children in this program are immersed in the beauty and grandeur of the earth's landscapes, oceans, animals, and all living things. Brought together in a spirit of joyful play and community, children will revel in the opportunity to express their unique skills and personalities as well as to bond deeply with one another. They will end the day feeling a strong sense of connection to our magnificent planet and to one another.

Witness Activities Fund grant applications

Download application form at nyym.org/sites/default/files/WitnessActivitiesFund-ApplicationForm.docx.

Each year, the Witness Coordinating Committee sets aside a portion of the Sharing Fund to use in supporting the leadings of individuals and monthly or regional meetings to work on peace, environmental, and social justice issues. This line in our budget is known as the Witness Activities Fund (WAF). Individuals who apply for support of their leadings are asked to obtain the support of their local meetings for their projects; it is hoped that when a local meeting takes an individual's work under its care, the project will become something in which that meeting is invested. Contact the yearly meeting office (office@nyym.org) for an application form.

Quakers in Business Gathering

May 2016 • New York City

What did integrity mean to early Quaker business people? Join us at a special gathering in New York City in May where Quaker business person Karen Tibbals will share her Quaker Studies thesis findings that might surprise you. (Hint: It's not

Meeting for Discernment

Saturday, February 27, 2016 • 9–5

Westbury Meeting
550 Post Rd. Westbury, NY 11590

*What is alive, engaging, exciting in your meeting?
What is alive in you?*

Save the date!

on price retailing.) If you wish to be notified of the time and date of the gathering, please contact the yearly meeting office. Those who are involved in or interested in business are encouraged to attend. For more information, email the office at office@nyym.org with the subject line Quakers in Business.

Job Opportunities

NYYM Children & Youth Field Secretary

Application deadline: February 5th, 2016.

In another indication of new life rising in New York Yearly Meeting, the yearly meeting seeks a gifted and energetic Friend to serve in our new Children and Youth Field Secretary position.

The Children and Youth Field Secretary's major responsibilities are to work with families with children (ages 0-18), their meetings and Religious Education Committees, serving as a locus and a catalyst for networking and community building; doing mentoring, coordinating, outreach, and helping meetings to develop and sustain First Day School programs or other programs that nurture the spiritual life of children. This work will necessitate considerable travel, meeting face to face with young families where they live and worship. This is a .7 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) position, including many

weekend commitments.

The Children and Youth Field Secretary shall be a member of the Religions Society of Friends (or a committed and active participant in a Friends meeting) with a strong understanding of Quaker testimonies and practice. This Friend must have strong verbal and written communication skills, including public speaking. He/she should also be skilled at supporting and investing the gifts and energies of others, be personable, and have a firm grasp of current electronic communication technologies and social media.

The full job description can be found at nyym.org/sites/default/files/CYFSJobDescription.pdf.

Resumes and cover letters can be sent to menzelbarbara014@gmail.com. For more information, contact NYYM General Secretary Christopher Sammond at nyym.gensec@gmail.com.

Peacebuilding en las Americas Coordinator—Mexico

Application deadline: March 30.

Peacebuilding en las Américas (a Friends Peace Teams initiative) is seeking a Coordinator with administrative and fundraising skills, fluency in English and Spanish, and experience with AVP. For more information and a detailed job description, contact: PLA@friend-speaceteams.org



What is it that makes you love your meeting?

That's where your outreach needs to begin—where the energy is, and where you have the most Light to shine. Outreach can be an opportunity for witness and service, and as you build upon the authentic Life within your meeting, you'll create opportunities to meet with seekers who are searching for a spiritual community just like yours.

From a Place of Abundance, under the care of New York Yearly Meeting's Advancement Committee, is a one-day workshop, but it's not a hit-and-run. Your facilitator will visit your meeting beforehand, to worship and talk casually with Friends, to begin to get to know your community—and your facilitator will stay in relationship afterwards, too, visiting in person at least twice in the following year, to help with follow-up questions and to serve as a bridge to other available resources.



What will a day of Abundance look like? Well, through worship, discussion, and activities, Friends will:

- explore the question of sacred responsibility to speak Truth as we find it;
- take a look at the dominant culture of the meeting;
- get to know a little bit about the meeting's neighborhood community;
- consider that neighborhood community's awareness of the meeting;
- recognize opportunities for outreach that already exist;
- *identify the meeting's spiritual gifts and celebrate that abundance of giftedness!*
- discern outreach initiatives that help the meeting connect authentically with its neighborhood community;

How can we better live out our visions, callings, gifts, and ministry, with authenticity, integrity, and courage?

On an unseasonably warm day in December, young adult Friends gathered at Fifteenth Street Meeting for a one-day retreat focused on finding and illuminating Truth, on making connections between our inner and outer selves. Considering the intersections and gaps between our Faith, our dreams, and our realities, we dug into the big questions of why we are here and what we are being called to do. What represents the deepest and best within us? What matters most? How do we and how can we better live out our visions, callings, gifts, and ministry with authenticity, integrity, and courage?

My desire, drive, and calling to facilitate opportunities for young adults stem from an urge to meet people where they are, to provide spaces for younger Quakers (or seekers) not only to experience God and Truth firsthand, but also to name that experience, to know and acknowledge the reality of the Inward Light in each of our own souls and in the context of the world. My commitment to this work comes from an understanding that many younger or newer Friends have never been given the language or tools to link their experiences of the Divine with their practice as a Friend. I recognize that for some, the space I create could be the deciding factor in whether a person remains involved in Quakerism or

- talk about how the meeting can be easy-access and welcoming; and
- explore ways in which Friends can really integrate newcomers into the meeting.

We're ready to pilot this program in four meetings in 2016. Is your meeting ready to embark on a joyful adventure? If so, contact the yearly meeting office to learn more at office@nym.org, subject line From a Place of Abundance. 

merely follows Quaker values outside of our formal structures. I have been guilty of the latter myself for many years.

The temporary absence of our Young Adult Field Secretary gave me the opportunity to step up and fulfill a previously unknown desire and gift. I personally have found new life in that I am now clear in my leading to help create these intentional spaces for fellowship and learning, for deep worship and personal renewal. I am led to build opportunities for people to explore their Faith and their doubt, to ask the big questions, and to feel safe and loved wherever they are in their spiritual or life journeys.

Feedback tells me that this is what many young adults miss and seek in their experiences with Friends, and I believe that if we do better at meeting the needs of our younger and newer attenders, including teaching them not only about what we do but also about why and how we do it, we will be much better positioned to spread the good word and grow as a community.

As a Friend who grew up amongst Quakers, I have witnessed and felt the effect of young people leaving the Religious Society of Friends as they grow older. As a youth development professional and educator, social science has taught me that a young person's self-removal from any setting, person, or situation is linked with needs not being met and/or skills not being sufficiently developed. Research tells us that before a person can be fulfilled on physical, social/emotional, mental, AND spiritual levels, he must feel safe

and secure, that he is loved and belongs. She must feel good about herself, know that she has a voice, and have the skills and knowledge to do what is expected.

Therefore, before we can expect a young person (or any person) to fully and faithfully participate in our religious community, we must be sure to meet their needs and to equip them with the tools and language and skills necessary to experience Truth and to know God. While it may intuitively seem that we are doing this in our meetings (after all, we are all about inclusiveness and love and acceptance and so many of us came to Quakerism because it offered a safe alternative to other more rigid or judgmental perspectives), my own personal experience and my conversations with both involved and uninvolved young adult Friends suggest that we have a long way to go. Just as a teacher must reflect on his contributions to students' misconduct or disconnectedness, so too must we take responsibility for our role in young folks' premature departure, alienation, or estrangement.

If we do better at meeting the needs of our younger and new attenders, we will grow as a community.

In considering new life and Light in our meetings and yearly meeting, it may seem that the yearning for and subsequent rise in retreats and opportunities for young adults represent a new wave, a distinctive shift from disconnectedness to intentional engagement. As a person who has grown up in this community, I would caution us from drawing such conclusions. Our energy and hunger for divine experiences are not new. Our desire and drive to be better connected to God and each

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Exposing Light

Marissa Badgley

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other have always been there. In recent years, our Young Adult Field Secretary finally put words to the longings young adults have been experiencing for generations. She gave voice to our frustrations relating to a committee-driven culture that often focuses on age in lieu of individual gifts. She named our struggle with worship that often lacks centeredness, with Friends whose Quakerism focuses on outward service rather than the inward Light that opens us to direct communion with God. She called on our community to step up and acknowledge that which has always been.

Gabi made us feel safe both in our certainty and our uncertainty. She made us feel loved at our cores. She made us feel that we belonged to something profound and gave us open and welcoming spaces to ask questions, to be connected, to experience gathered worship. For some of us, even those of us who had been involved with Quakers for years, these experiences were new. For some of us, our needs both as individuals and as a community were being considered, named, and met for the first time.

We will find Truth and new life when, in the absence of words, the Spirit pulls us together.

And then our Voice had to take a leave of absence, and suddenly there were no more words.

I do not blame any person or group of people for the silence that followed Gabi's unexpected hiatus—I know that there was probably a lack of clarity about what needed to be done to continue the work, to build on the momentum that had been growing for years—but that silence and lack of effort spoke loudly,

Many of us understand intellectually that acknowledging and sharing our vulnerabilities opens up possibilities to deepen relationships and grow spiritually. But so few of us practice this—including me. So here goes.

ARCH has seen some dramatic changes in 2015. One of our founding coordinators, Barbara Spring, has retired. We dearly miss her leadership, her enthusiasm for all things death, and her way of telling hard truths that seems both effortless and effective. This is a loss for our program.

especially to those not previously “tagged” by the yearly meeting for gifts or legacy or ministry. This is why I hesitate to proclaim that new life is rising amongst young adult Friends. Our life and Light is enduring and authentic, and we are getting better at meeting our own needs, at finding and creating community outside of our local meetings. However, what does our impulse to create our own spaces say about our inclusion in the larger body? If we only feel safe and loved and supported with one another, how could that possibly point to new life in the yearly meeting?

Retreats and activities exclusively among young adults are only one piece of a complicated but exciting journey toward renewal. We will find Truth and new life when, in the absence of words, the Spirit pulls us together rather than into different corners of the same spiritual realm. Ultimately, this will be about community and a collective consideration of why we are here and what we are being called to do. I think it begins with nurturing the life we already have and allowing our communal experiences of Light and Love and Truth and God to echo so loudly through the world that the world has no choice but to experience it with us. 

ARCH — New Spirit Rising

Aging Resources, Consultation and Help

Callie Janoff, Brooklyn Meeting, ARCH Director



“I have learned that others step in when the need is made known.”

~ Nathalie Bailey,
Chatham-Summit ARCH Visitor

This year also found me taking on a new role with ARCH as the full-time director of the program. I've been pinching myself since July because I'm so happy and excited to be doing this with you.

“I am so grateful that I have met the Friends who are so dedicated to Quaker aging issues. This work is wonderful and makes me feel good about being a Quaker.”

~ ARCH Visitor

But my joy is tempered by the large amount of work to be done. I struggle to cross off more things than I add to my to-do list every day. This can feel overwhelming.

“My patience has increased because the elder members move at a slower pace and need us all to be attentive to details that we hardly consider as important. Our connections have become deeper and there is a sense of unity and love shared from the elders to us and to the little ones that attend.”

~ ARCH Visitor

And there are even more changes coming in 2016. We are in the process of hiring new regional ARCH coordinators to serve local Visitors and coordinate with the needs of aging Friends closer to where they live and worship. I have faith that this will be an improvement to our program, and eventually save money. But I'm worried about the impact this will have on our budget in the short term. We exceeded our funding goal for 2015 (thank you!), but our 2016 goal is more than triple that. How will we raise the funds to pay for them?

“I am more tolerant of my diminishment, more aware of the need to ask for what I need, to get my affairs in order, and to prepare for the next stage.”

~ Patricia Glynn,
Brooklyn ARCH Visitor

Our program is going through something like what many of us do as we age. We experience loss. We get overwhelmed. We worry about money. We want everyone to think we are still doing okay, and so we resist asking for help and try to project an image that meets other's expectations of success and ease.

“I have come to the conviction of how important it is to emphasize the benefits of being old, and am interested in how we can self-determine our own ‘success’ and contentment in the sunset years.”

~ Betsy Root,
Perry City ARCH Visitor

We learn from our ARCH Visitors that by allowing one another to be vulnerable, and sharing in the joys and struggles of our journey through the final years of our lives, we grow both our community and our inner light.

“I find my heart opening and my comfort level with aging and its attendant gifts and challenges increasing; simply being with what is, supporting, helping, loving, respecting, being grateful for the gift of accompaniment.”

~ Linda Chidsey,
Housatonic ARCH Visitor

Change can be hard. It can look and feel like falling. But when I feel the ground moving beneath me, and reach out for help, that reaching is exercising my faith and with your help, we soar. 

JYM Volunteers

Does someone in your meeting have the gift of working with kids? Junior Yearly Meeting is looking for Friendly adults to work with Friends grades 1–12 at Summer Sessions, July 24–30. For more info, contact JYM Coordinators RebeccaWolf@gmail.com or ellierosenberg7@gmail.com.

The White Privilege Conference

Jeffrey Hitchcock

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justice. And within the past eighteen months, we have seen the emergence of what even seasoned civil rights veterans of the '60s acknowledge is a new nationwide movement for racial justice.

The White Privilege Conference is the best opportunity I know for Friends to introduce themselves to this new movement. I pray that we are able to enter the space of the conference as seekers. I know we struggle with these issues. We long to affirm the universal goodness of God within us, and yet our spiritual community remains predominantly white in composition. We feel Truth transcends our cultural forms, but when we ignore race we remain rooted in our majority culture. How might we begin to see another way?

If people of color did not resist racism, there would be little resistance at all...

I suggest we go to the White Privilege Conference planning to acquaint ourselves with new ideas and perspectives, and to hear about the experiences of people seasoned in the work of racial justice. We might aspire to learn about new possibilities. And we might experience what it feels like to be fully present in a multiracial surrounding and community in which people of color perform significant leadership roles as workshop leaders, as speakers, and as conference administrators in equal numbers with white people.

We can listen and learn from racial justice activists, from fellow seekers, and most of all, from people of color. For, if there is one simple truth I have learned to face in my own 30-year-long history as a racial justice activist, it's that the vibrancy, the urgency, the brilliance, the strength, the driving force, and the openness of Spirit in the movement to



THE WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE

April 14–17, 2016

end racism in our society is led first and foremost by people of color. And here is the hardest truth I have learned: if people of color did not assert their humanity and resist racism, there would be little resistance at all—so great is the power of white complacency. And yet the resistance by white people to racism is of critical importance to the struggle. The Beloved Community is no small thing to dream of, and long for. We all have a part in that.

...yet resistance by white people to racism is of critical importance to the struggle.

The White Privilege Conference is a place for us to listen, to learn, to experience, to be informed, to see possibilities, to connect, and ultimately, a place from which to return with a deeper understanding of what it will take to live into our values as Friends with integrity. I hope you join us. 

Courtesy of Jillian Kiana Smith



White Privilege Conference 17

April 14–17, 2016 • Philadelphia, PA

The White Privilege Conference (WPC) meets annually, each time in a different city. This April it takes place at the Downtown Marriott in Philadelphia. Founded 17 years ago by an African American man, Dr. Eddie Moore, Jr., WPC is for people who want to undo the effects of white privilege and work for racial justice and equity.

Pre-conference institutes take place on Thursday, April 14. Friday morning, April 15, the full conference opens, running through Sunday afternoon. About 2,500 people will attend WPC's keynote talks, 120 concurrent workshops, film viewings, action-planning sessions, a significant youth program track, and more. This year's theme is *Let Freedom Ring—Re-Imagining Equity and Justice in the United States*.

Diversity, respect, and community characterize WPC. Speakers and facilitators, about half of whom are people of color, discuss not only race, but also class, gender identity, ethnocentrism, and other dimensions of privilege. Participants include educators, students, human service professionals, non-profit staff, activists, and faith leaders. While the greater numbers are white, many are people of color and the conference is richly multiracial in texture. Conference norms and a shared purpose lead people to join in community.

Friends General Conference has been instrumental in bringing WPC to Philadelphia, along with American Friends Service Committee, Friends Council on Education, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, several Friends schools and colleges, and many non-Quaker organizations, more than 30 in all.

New York Yearly Meeting has joined the WPC Host Team and plans to send a delegation of 100 NYYM Friends. A Task Group has formed to help Friends attend, and sends periodic email updates to interested Friends. The Task Group is also developing financial support. Friends are responding. Over 50 Friends have committed to going. Registration is now open. FGC offers a discount.

For more information, look to NYYM.org, FGCquaker.org, and WhitePrivilegeConference.com, or write jeffhitchcock@euramerican.org and ask to be placed on the Task Group's WPC information list.

Upcoming Spark Themes

March: Family-friendly Meetings

May: Conversations on Racism

September: Vocal Ministry

Send us your articles!

Photo collage of the Friends World Conference for Consultation Gathering in Peru, January 19–27, 2016. See page 2.

Youth Institute 2016

Chris DeRoller & Mike Clark

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evolve are more likely to thrive and to spiritually nourish their members and the communities around them.

The Youth Institutes celebrate this intentional work, drawing on the experience of people from meetings throughout New York Yearly Meeting and neighboring yearly meetings. We spend some time reflecting on why we do this work and what is important for us to pass on. There are hands-on workshops to choose from, with take-back-to-your-meeting activities. There is much joy and a first hand experience of a rich multigenerational community forming over the course of the conference. In the words of last years participants:

- The small group discussions were great, especially the queries on Saturday night.
- So glad I came!
- Loved the listening exercises.
- This is what I enjoyed: adults of varying ages being playful and vibrant, games that made us think, challenging games, games that left us in a pile of laughs, games that left us centered, games that sparked our creativity, and being part of a community that was open to discussing and thinking about a lot of topics that might be particularly hard or challenging.
- I attended the creativity and spirituality session. I loved the focus on “defining your own criteria.”
- Teen spirituality: really good and important conversations. Great, intimate group discussion, great topic and question sheet, stimulating, relaxed guidance.
- Community building: it was great, personally, to get to play. Something I have been lacking in my life. I feel a lot more comfortable with initiating community building games and play now.

- Gender and Sex workshop: I found it very enlightening and interesting and realized I had much to learn. I also realized that the young people were much more versed in the subject than I am.
- You can be sure that I will be at the next one, and am looking forward to it with joyful expectations.

This year’s institute will be April 22 to 24 at Powell House. Here’s a preview of workshops and presenters.

Friendly Sex: Explore how Quakers approach sex and sex education in our communities and with our youth. Share new and old Quaker approaches to supporting youth in having consensual, happy, and healthy sexual experiences. Natalie Braun (Old Chatham Meeting) has worked as a peer sexual health educator and youth worker with a variety of groups over the past 10 years, including as a Young Friend in Residence with New York Yearly Meeting. In her work, she strives to create safe spaces for youth and adults to learn, grow, and question.

Youth Institute 2016
April 22-24 • Powell House

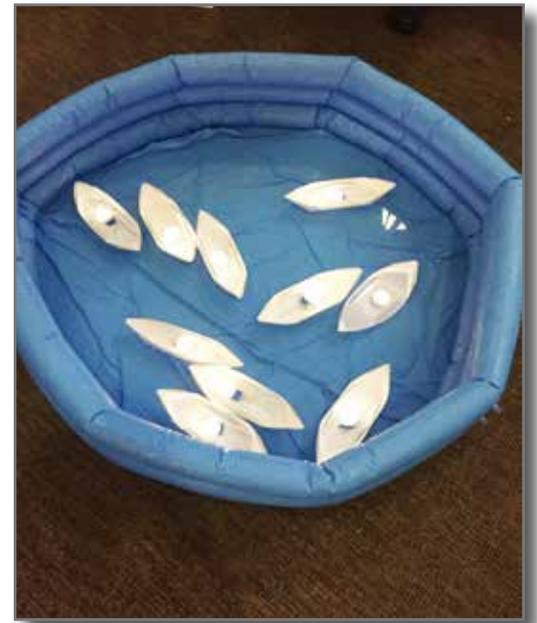
Worshipping with Youth: Explore the myriad ways of Quaker worship and how we can help younger Quakers experience and benefit from meeting for worship. How do we explain “centering down”, “hearing God’s voice,” “holding in the light,” and “connecting with the God within”? Activities, book list, and great fun will result from an hour and a half together. Theresa Oleksiw, (Portland Friends Meeting) has been teaching Quaker youth and their teachers for decades. She has served as the Youth Minister at Durham Friends, a youth leader in New England Yearly Meeting, as well as a 3rd

grade leader at New York Yearly Meeting Sessions.

The Empathy Labyrinth: Explorations in Mindfulness, Self-Empathy, and Compassionate Communication: What is most alive for you in the present moment? The empathy labyrinth is a tool that guides you from self-criticism and blame to a consciousness of greater awareness, harmony and abundance. Rebecca Wolf (Rochester Meeting) is a reading/writing specialist and has been teaching all ages from preschool to college since 1997. She is passionate about helping her students realize their full potential. She enjoys clerking and has worked on many committees within Rochester Meeting.

Exploring Spirituality through Creativity: How does creativity connect with our lives? Where does creativity reside within us? We can create from a quiet place, from a place where words and thoughts aren’t needed. All that is needed is an open mind, an open heart, and the willingness to let your hands lead for a little while as we work and play. Mark LaRiviere (15th Street Meeting) is an artist and founding program director of the Children’s Arts Guild, a program that supports children (and adults) in becoming emotionally intelligent, socially engaged, and productive citizens of the world.

Youth and Spirituality: How can we encourage spiritual growth in our youth and ourselves? If our spirituality involves continuing revelation, what tools are useful to practice and pass on? We will consider the ministry of listening. How can we listen to our youth to hear them deeply and make them feel cherished? How do we help them learn the spiritual joys of listening? Julie Glynn (Brooklyn Meeting) is a mother of three teens and a long time First Day School teacher. She grew up in Brooklyn Meeting and likes to bake and ask questions.



Floating boats of light
from the 2015 Youth Institute

Service-Learning Programs for Teens:

Identify what opportunities exist within our meetings and our local communities, as well as further afield. Share experiences in providing opportunities that are meaningful for the youth and the people they work with. Mike Clark (Old Chatham Meeting), a Powell House youth program director since 2000, has led two NYYM high school service-learning trips to Honduras and one to El Salvador. He also took a group of 30 youth to the People’s Climate March in NYC.

Games in Spiritual Work:

Explore the art of community building and broaden your repertoire of group activities. This is a play-as-you-go workshop in which you’ll learn a variety of games and other activities and how they foster spiritual growth in a group. We’ll evaluate how and why the activities work and look at ways to modify them for specific situations. Chris DeRoller (Old Chatham Meeting) is a Youth Director at Powell House. She has spent the past 20 years working with children, teens, young adults, and older adults to create supportive, happy, spirit-filled spaces.

Quaker process: A hands-on approach to teaching children and teens Quaker process. With Mary Harpster (Rahway & Plainfield Meeting).

Quaker teens and current events: Feminism, intersectionality, and other current events. With Leila Archibald.



Outreach as New Life and Ministry

Robin Whitely, Chatham-Summit Meeting

“We envision a Yearly Meeting that supports and amplifies our witness”

[one of NYYM’s Leadings & Priorities, approved 2014]

I have a framed picture of a polar bear on the wall to the right of my computer. He (or she) is splayed on his belly, huge forepaws folded neatly one over the other as if in prayer, eyes, ears, and nose directed unerringly at me. Underneath this imposing bear and his unshakable gaze is the simple caption: “Everything Is Connected.” I shiver. The word “responsibility” comes to mind.

And so I believe it is in New York Yearly Meeting . . .

All the new life arising among us is connected. Somehow.

Looking back, “new” ministries, for the most part, arise directly or indirectly out of earlier ministries. Looking forward, the various streams of this new life eventually come together in various ways, building upon and helping each other. All of this activity, and the nurture of it, can be called Inreach. Without it, we wither as a vine without water. We have no possibility of life, no possibility of growing into the realization of George Fox’s vision on Pendle Hill in which he saw “a great people to be gathered.”

One of the ministries that has shown new life among NYYM Friends over the past several years is the ministry of Outreach, the yang of Inreach’s yin—each the complement of the other. Early Quakers had this combination in abundance. They were on fire. At the same time, they did not shy away from letting people know not just the basic who-where-what, but more importantly, the *why*, the joy of Quaker worship and community.

A growing number of Friends in NYYM appre-

ciate the essential connection between Inreach and Outreach and are eager to support both. This new tide of interest—and yearly meeting support—brought nearly thirty Friends to a NYYM Quaker Outreach Roundtable on October 10, 2015, hosted by Shrewsbury Meeting.

Here’s a brief synopsis of that one-day workshop:

The morning session featured three speakers with considerable expertise in Outreach, two of them members of New York Yearly Meeting: Chad Dell of Manasquan Meeting and Karen Tibbals of Rahway-Plainfield. The third speaker, Beth Collea, serves as New England Yearly Meeting’s Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator (a combined position that invites discussion!).

Chad stressed the essential connection between Inreach and Outreach, that there must be rich soil for seeds to sprout and grow. But he added a new word to the equation:

Inreach + Outreach = Upreach.

He was pointing to the necessary follow-up to outreach initiatives. A garden (with new attenders, new members, new initiatives) requires thoughtful and constant attention. It does not end with putting seed in the ground.

Karen, coming from a deep background in marketing, focused on thoughtful analysis of who our target audience is, what the message(s) should be, and how to devise the message. She described a simple marketing tool called the Golden Circle. First you ask Why (why do we reach out?). This lies at the very center of two larger concentric circles: How (what values and principles do we follow?), then What (what are the tangible results?). Karen even proffered a response to the Why: “to lead someone into the Light—



Inreach + Outreach = Upreach

and leave them there.” Lovely.

Beth, in speaking to the fascinating results of NEYM’s Outreach Pilot Project, shared gems of wisdom, like “meet people where they are”; e.g. logistically, young families or young adults may be more easily gathered for socializing and worship on Fridays or Saturdays. But also, of course, “don’t leave them where you found them.” She underscored the social component of spiritual formation and suggested a reordering: reverse the path of Believe—Behave—Belong. In other words, to become a knitter, first find someone who knits.

Then there was a soup metaphor. Heating a large quantity of soup goes much faster if it’s heated in smaller batches and then combined—a colorful way of saying we must help each other in order to grow. All aspects of the life of a meeting are important and need our attention. Nurtured as they arise, then coming together as they will, they can make a delicious soup and they can make it much faster.

The afternoon session focused on Friends sharing outreach activities in their home meetings. Glenn Josey spoke of Joyful Wednesdays at Fifteenth Street Meeting; Anne Pomeroy of midweek worship at New Paltz; and Robin Whitely of AVP as social activism outreach at Chatham-Summit Meeting. Emily Provance of Fifteenth Street Meeting led a discussion of outreach sources available to meetings and tentative next steps that meetings can take.

At the end of the day, Friends left with plenty of notes, a pocket folder full of information on outreach, and, it is hoped, a greater sense of

what “next steps” might mean for their meeting.

We plan to keep Roundtable attendees in touch with each other and with emerging outreach ideas through scheduled conference calls and the web. Friends who did not attend the Roundtable but are interested in becoming more engaged in outreach, either for their home or regional meeting or the yearly meeting, are urged to contact co-organizers of the Roundtable, Emily Provance at eprovince@hotmail.com or Robin Whitely at rlwhitey@comcast.net.

Outreach is a very real challenge for Quakers, especially in this day and age. Without thoughtful, strategic, proactive outreach to communicate the joy and the promise of the Quaker message, it stands little chance of being heard, let alone understood or embraced. Then all the new life we see and feel rising among us is for what? For whom? Only us? 

Spirit at Work in NYYM

Editor’s Introduction

(continued from page 1)

nurture programs. A new website and logo under development. The first-ever AVP camp for youth at Chatham-Summit Meeting. A testimonial minute that arose in Sing Sing Prison Worship Group that will be published in *Friends Journal*.

We’ve written about some of these developments in previous issues of *Spark* and *InfoShare*, and you can expect to see more about them and other new life in the yearly meeting in future issues.

And we invite you to tell us about the new Light that you see rising in your meeting or elsewhere in the yearly meeting. Email steven@nyym.org and look for it in future issues of *Spark* and *InfoShare*. 