

2018 Annual Sessions: Snapshots

- There were around 325 people in attendance including adults, children, staff and representatives and visitors. There were around 30 children and 15 young adults. This was a smaller turnout than previous years. The Quaker Life Council minuted its concern about the downward trend of Sessions attendance and commitment to address this for Spring Continuing Sessions and Annual Sessions.

Excellent (Don't change a thing.) 18.33%

Good (Very little improvement is needed.) 65%

Fair (Some improvement is needed.) 15%

Poor (Lots of improvement is needed.) 6.67%

- We received feedback from 62 Friends who provided the following general ratings:
- There were two areas about which respondents provided the most feedback when given the opportunity to comment. The first was about the joy of fellowship which is often given significant mention in Sessions reviews and the second was appreciation, mostly, for our business, the clerking and our struggles. Excerpts of the comments on each of these are below.
 - **Fellowship:** Loved hanging out with friends after dark; Fellowship over meals; I go by myself and sit with people I don't know; chance to meet new people and catch up with old friends; Meeting new people, especially when there was time for meaningful interaction with them; sharing ideas with friends; seeing Friends from other Meetings; getting to chat with members of the community I hadn't met with before; Opportunities for fellowship and connection.
 - **Business:** Seeing factions find some common ground; The painful honesty during business sessions; Quality of clerking; How the assistant clerks stepped into the void of Penny's absence to carry on the work; Small group sharing activities in Meeting for Worship for Business; I really liked how there was enough time on the Agenda to deal with things; Our work in Meeting for Business to address our oppression issues; The beautiful way the 3 clerks worked, interacted and supported each other; This year I was so happy to have the Listening sessions; Witnessing Quaker Process on a larger level the people and the way people worked with a situation if it didn't go to plan; I wanted Business sessions where people could express themselves and their experience instead of clerks dominating the microphone AND the narrative; The excellent clerking of meetings for business; The meaningful thing was the listening session on Sat. afternoon; The difficult parts of business sessions; I liked the balance although I did miss the items for business. It seemed we spent a lot of time preparing for business, but did very little business. I guess we were healing this year. Good idea; The movement of the Spirit during MFW for Business.
- Other areas that people referred to with some frequency were the benefits of the pre-Sessions retreat; appreciation for the youth programs and the All Together Time; appreciation for the sessions facilitated by Amanda Kemp and by Walter Hjelt Sullivan and the various opportunities for small group discussion.

- The two concerns that were referred to with frequency were the food and the lack of time for community, fellowship and interaction.
 - The comments about the food were all along the lines of wanting more variety, higher quality and better signage.
 - Need for More Fellowship: I would appreciate more time for relaxed interaction with Friends and for reflection. More time for "Evening Fellowship"; There continues to be a need for structured fellowship time...worship sharing can be a precious opportunity to build connection and this year it felt rushed/sandwiched or shoehorned in and not given the space it profits from; I was surprised at how often I said hello to Friends I didn't know, and they didn't reply. Some Friends were very nice, but many seemed a bit reluctant to meet someone they didn't already know.
- Other areas for growth or improvement that were mentioned multiple times include a desire for more worship ("More worship ... always more worship –I've been saying that for upwards of thirty years now"); more music and better music; the fire drill mishap; commuting restricts opportunities to participate fully.

2018 Annual Sessions: Something Different about these Sessions

Most reports heard by staff and the Leadership Team about the 2018 Annual Sessions indicate that Friends in attendance experienced them differently from the Continuing and Annual Sessions of recent years. One comment in the online evaluation provides a nice encapsulation of the comments: *During the initial reception of the clerk's Multicultural Audit Committee report I was distraught! I felt such a severance in our relationships among each other & with G!d. And THEN!!! more faithful Friends than I remained together to listen & love each other back into Community!!!!*

There are a number of variables that were different about these Sessions from the start that may be useful to hold in our awareness as we continue on our path of listening and loving into community.

- Rather than a single clerk there was a team of three alternate clerks presiding with the support of the council clerks, the treasurer and the General Secretary. There was both a whole team supporting the clerks and none of the clerks were responsible for the full week.
- The agenda in recent years has become more focused on reports but the summer's agenda included more interactive conversation and discernment. Some Friends have expressed a desire for more and felt there was space for far more discussion and less talk from the clerks' bench.
- There was a spiritually grounding 24-hour retreat prior to sessions in which Friends went deep and committed to serving as elders throughout the sessions helping to hold the space.
- The three councils had been meeting together for six months prior to Sessions and their members have more relationship with one another than previously.
- The Leadership has been identifying patterns we engage in within the team, the council meetings and the larger community that narrow rather than expand our capacity and then support taking different steps.
- A sprint put together a clear document on minutes practices which was distributed to every sessions attender and referred to at each business session.
- The fewer people in attendance at Sessions may have supported a more intimate experience.

Database Conversion

We went live with Salesforce, our new database, in mid-September on the scheduled date!

Background:

- PYM has used Raiser's Edge (RE) database since 2000. It was not an optimal database for us because it is difficult to use for those who are not deeply trained in it, the reports it can provide are limited and it can't easily be integrated with communications or program needs. Additionally, the data has been entered in non-standard ways that have the effect of prohibiting us from extracting some of the information we want without significant time and brain-power. A long-term project has been to build a new database using Salesforce to meet PYM's fundraising, program and community-connecting needs.

Current Status:

- As of the first week of September our personalized instance of Salesforce is live with our historic data having been transferred into it.
- Staff participated in about a week's worth of training to build individual capacities around job-specific Salesforce tasks. In September the database was released fully into our care from the contractors who built it for us. We've found that our data is easy to access, and we can see how much additional data was stored in RE that we couldn't even tell was there. We can prepare fundraising reports comparing giving levels year over year and year to date with ease.

What's Next:

- The next year will be one of fine-tuning.
- There is a fair amount of detailed data clean-up that is still required before we'll be able to use it to its full potential.
- There are additional tools that need to be integrated into Salesforce for communications and event management.
- Once we are fully operational, program and communications staff will be able to track event participation, participant satisfaction and areas of interest in news and events. Each staff person will be able access the data they need on their own without relying on the busy schedule of someone else. Program, event, communications, and donations data will be centralized, allowing us greater connection with our community's needs and interests.

Funding this instance of Salesforce:

- The \$65,000 cost for this database was covered by individual donors, several meetings and two granting organizations. As a result, we did not need to draw on our capital reserves.
- A restriction by one of the donors asked that all who provided financial support for Salesforce be named as a way of lifting-up the philanthropy within our community. Donors to this project include: Charles Lockyer on behalf of the Abington Meeting community, Germantown Meeting, Haverford Meeting, London Grove Meeting, Moorestown Meeting, Newtown Meeting, Princeton Meeting, Jonathon Rhoads Trust, Shoemaker Trust, John Spears and Robert Taylor. ***We are hugely grateful to these Friends and Friends organizations for providing the financial support for a tool that provides so much support for the efficient functioning of our community.***

Business and Finances:

- Our fiscal year ended September 30th. The year-end prompted a variety of tasks including communications with monthly meetings and quarters about their final covenant payments, getting out last minute grants and payments and closing the fourth quarter books.
- The annual fund raised \$311,770 This result is below our goal and our last two years' totals of around \$340,000. However, given the diversion of attention this year to the database conversion, the changes in staffing over the year and the complications with getting out the final appeal (problems and delays with the printer, and that we did this mailing during the data migration to Salesforce) we find the final number not discouraging.
- The income from monthly meeting covenants is being processed. We do know that it will come in below budget.
- Bottom Line for FY18 budget: The FYE financial statements are not finalized or audited, but we do know that expense reductions and investment income, which met or exceeded budget, helped offset lower contribution income and the year will end in the black.
- We manually analyzed a sample set of 40 gifts. In that review we documented 65% of our donors increased what they gave over the prior year; 27.5% did not change their gifts and only 7.5% reduced their giving.
- We are in full swing preparing for the audit which begins on November 12
- We now have a draft brochure for the Legacy Fund program and are testing it with target audiences prior to printing it.
- There were several property-related matters at Arch Street, including evaluating bids from electrical contractors for the relighting of the East Room, getting approval from the Philadelphia Historical Commission for storm water management solutions, and nearly finalizing negotiations on an access agreement between PYM and the developer of a neighboring townhome project.
- The Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust met for an all-day retreat for the board, non-board committee members, supported by PYM and Arch Street staff. The focus included an exploration of mission, vision and resources, and a facilitated Resource Development Workshop.
- For many years PYM has provided staff to support the distribution committee of the Tyson Fund and received a fee for doing so. After several internal discussions about the value of staff time compared to the value of receiving the fee and additional conversations with the Tyson Fund members and Friends Fiduciary, we completed a transfer of staffing responsibility from PYM to Friends Fiduciary. At the meeting to make the transfer there was a good deal of appreciation for the years of support given by PYM's Director of Grant Making, Carol Walz.

Program, Events and Ministry:

- A thread gathering focusing on historic meeting houses and burial grounds was well attended by more than 50 Friends at Downingtown Meeting. As a result, several email communications groups are being set up to continue the conversation (contact Zachary Dutton, Associate Secretary for Program & Religious Life, zdutton@pym.org to participate) and some beginning steps are being formed to gather resources relevant to the topic to share among meetings.
- The Quaker College Fair is an annual event co-sponsored by PYM and Friends Association for Higher Education and was held on October 6th. PYM staff provided marketing support (print, email, and social media) and served on the discussion panel.
- The Youth Engagement staff ran a retreat for youth with some of the youth staff at Newtown, providing quality programs and making space for spiritual community for the children and youth there, so people who are parents could participate in the retreat. This is an example of work that we did not previously have staff capacity to support.
- Staff supported the Spiritual Formation Weekend Retreat designed all who are interested in a deeper communion with Spirit, spiritual formation, and/or spiritual nurture to refresh, renew, deepen, nurture, and learn.
- We held a well-attended (50+) Friends in Fellowship (Malik Neal, the founder of the Philly Bail Fund spoke) at Lehigh Valley Meeting.
- We held a Pop-up Friends in Fellowship event with Cordell Carter of the Socrates program at the Aspen Institute at Friends Center on a Tuesday morning. Cordell enjoyed getting to know more about Quaker and Friends loved his presentation.
- The planning of fall, spring and summer sessions are under way at various levels. Fall Continuing Sessions work is focused on publicity and program refinement; we're seeking a location for Spring Continuing Sessions and working with Young Adult Friends to plan the programming; we're working on a three-year contract with The College of New Jersey for Annual Sessions.
- We are working with Friends Counseling Service to ensure that the Friends Counseling Service Advisory Panel (a committee under QLC) is fully populated and poised to provide policy and clinical practice stewardship for the service. The business model of the Friends Counseling Service continues at a sustainable pace.
- Staff supported the logistics with respect to payments, communications, and marketing for the Spiritual Formation Collaborative retreat.
- All this years' youth events are scheduled.
- Networking and meeting visitation has commenced within the area of Youth Engagement. The team is focusing on developing relationships with the meetings that are most successful at supporting youth work and religious education. As a result, over time, they will get to know the families and youth workers with whom to network to build a community of practice and enhance the support we are able to give each other as a yearly meeting community across meetings.
- We have begun recruiting Resource Friends to serve in the practice area of youth work and religious education.
- We are also working on developing a Resource Friends practice area for young adults. As inspirational starting points, we have calls set up with FWCC to understand how they are engaging their young adults through their "Young Adult Friends Development Fund" and meeting with young adults who have received granting funds through the Travel & Witness Granting Group to run special projects.
- We are planning the launch of the Bridge Contacts program. There will be "soft launch" at the fall continuing sessions.

Communications and Technology:

- The fall edition of Faith in Practice hit mail boxes in late September. This is a 12-page storytelling issue featuring YAF graphic storytellers Joey Hartman-Dow and Ramona Sharples and political cartoonist Signe Wilkinson.
- We are experimenting with our regularly-scheduled email to Friends highlighting Quaker activity in PYM's footprint. It has shifted from a monthly to a weekly communication and we are testing which day it gets highest response rate and which kind of content prompts the highest response.
- Our website is on the website content management system WordPress which is rolling out significant changes that will affect our website. We are revising the 'invisible' structure so that the transition will be as seamless as possible.
- We have begun a continuous study of user experience of the website. As we learn we are renewing and re-designing parts of the website, including improving site navigation and putting a donate button on the homepage
- Russian spammers discovered the section of our website called PYM Connect. As they sought to enter this section of the website with their fake IDs, we denied access and deleted each fake ID. For security reasons, and to protect the PYM community, we deactivated PYM Connect on 10/11/2018. Please note that most comments on PYM Connect were more than a year old.

Staff and Administration

- Two hires in August concluded our staff structure changes:
 - Zakia Williams began in August as our Director of HR and Inclusion. Her first steps have included meeting with each staff person to hear about their work with PYM and their perspective and thoughts about staff anti-racism work. She is also managing the ongoing conversation among staff about the Staff Voice policy.
 - Wendy Kane began in August as the Transitional Meeting Engagement and Data Coordinator. This is a one-year position to allow us flexibility as we gain experience and clarity on what an effective permanent job description would look like. For this period Wendy is front-loading work on cleaning up and beginning to use our new database, launching the Bridge Contact function of our governance structure and testing approaches for building strong relationships with monthly meetings.
- Two summer hires provided continuity and support:
 - Lori Sinitzky stepped on as our Young Friends Program Facilitator just before Sessions. She will serve as co-coordinator with Kody Hersh through the end of the calendar year when Kody is relocating away from PYM. Before that point a Young Friends Program Assistant will be in place – those interviews are currently underway.
 - Meg Rose who has been part-time as the Young Adult Friends Engagement Coordinator became full-time just before Sessions with the added responsibilities of coordinating Sessions. She was able to overlap with the Interim Sessions Coordinator Eric Berdis who left for graduate school in August. Combining YAF and Sessions responsibilities allows for some interesting synergy as well as for combining two part-time positions into a single full-time position. There is the additional value of Meg's experience with PYM decreasing the transitional learning curve in the Sessions role.
- Our Controller of the last eight years, Cliessa Nagle, will be moving on to a new position in another organization after the conclusion of the fiscal audit in November. We are in process of transferring responsibility for benefits from the Controller's office to HR and Cliessa is working closely with Zakia Williams on health benefits for 2019.

- The Community Engagement Team has integrated the Transitional Meeting Engagement and Data Coordinator position onto the team. With Wendy's inclusion the team now includes staff from Program & Religious Life and Advancement & Relationships which helps to integrate the work of the two departments.
- We have begun annual performance reviews. Most will be completed by Thanksgiving with the exceptions of the youth staff whose reviews will be conducted in December and the General Secretary review which is held in the spring.
- We've been working steadily, although slowly, toward updating staff policies so they are in alignment with the governance and legal changes. It has been reviewed multiple times by staff and the Personnel Committee. The next step is a review by an employment lawyer and a final review by staff and the Personnel Committee. Then the committee will forward it with a recommendation for approval to the Admin Council. Our approach has been to ensure that it is current with this round of updates and then to start immediately on another round that looks at our policies with an inclusion and anti-racism lens.

Staff Visits to Quaker Organizations and Meetings

- Olivia Brangan, Community Engagement Coordinator, attended the **Bucks Quarter Peace Fair**, and worked in the Bucks Quarter tent and at the "welcome table".
- Melinda Wenner Bradley, Youth Engagement Coordinator, and Kimani Keaton, Children's Program Facilitator, visited **Third Haven Meeting** for a Family Open House.
- Grace Sharples Cooke, Associate Secretary for Advancement & Relationship, visited the following communities:
 - **Wicomico, Third Haven, and Chester River Meetings**, meeting individually with each community over three consecutive days.
 - **Pennswood Village** Quaker retirement community – serving as a guest speaker at their annual dinner.
 - **Gwynedd Meeting** - for Worship and as a featured speaker on Fundraising and Outreach
- Zachary Dutton, Associate Secretary for Program & Religious Life visited **Yardley Meeting** to attend a gun violence presentation and talk about Resource Friends.
- Meg Rose, Young Adult Friends and Sessions Coordinator, visited **West Philly Meeting** about the YAF-led ministry on immigration and shutting down Berks Detention Center.
- George Schaefer, Care & Aging Coordinator travelled to a **meeting in Denver** at their invitation share information on aging issues
- Christie Duncan-Tessmer, General Secretary, visited the following communities:
 - **Gwynedd Meeting** (on a different week from Grace) for Meeting for Worship and spoke afterwards about her 2017 participation on the National Council of Churches delegation to the Middle East.
 - The **Upper Susquehanna Quarter** Family Overnight Retreat (for one night and participated in all of the activities) plus she met with many Friends more individually.
 - **Friends General Conference's annual meeting of Central Committee**; Lori Sinitsky, Young Friends Program Facilitator, also attended as she also works for FGC.
 - A lovely "Friend-raiser" event held by **Westfield Friends School**
 - The **National Council of Churches annual meeting** and semi-annual board meeting.
 - The annual **gathering and retreat for General Secretaries** and General Superintendents of Quaker Yearly Meeting
- Christie and Lynne Calamia, Executive Director of Arch Street Meeting House, attended **Chester Meeting** for worship and for their event about the meeting's history.

PYM Staff:

General Secretary, Christie Duncan-Tessmer, cduncan-tessmer@pym.org, 215-241-7210
Executive Assistant, Mary Walsh, execassistant@pym.org, 215-241-7234

Associate Secretary for Program & Religious Life, zdutton@pym.org, 215-241-7008
Community Engagement Coordinator, Olivia Brangan, obrangan@pym.org, 215-241-7238
Young Adult Friends and Sessions Coordinator, Meg Rose, mrose@pym.org, 215-241-7228
Care & Aging Coordinator, George Schaefer, gschaefer@pym.org, 215-241-7068
Youth Engagement Coordinator, Melinda Wenner Bradley, mwennerbradley@pym.org, 215-241-7171
Young Friends Program Co-Facilitator, Kody Hersh, YoungFriends@pym.org, 215-241-7171
Young Friends Program Co-Facilitator, Lori Sinitsky, YoungFriends@pym.org, 215-241-7171
Middle School Friends Program Facilitator, Elizabeth Croce, MiddleSchoolFriends@pym.org, 215-241-7171
Middle School Friends Program Assistant, Colleen Hayes, MiddleSchoolFriends@pym.org, 215-241-7171
Children's Program Facilitator, Kimani Keaton, ChildrenAndFamilies@pym.org, 215-241-7171
Children's Program Assistant, Amy Connelly, ChildrenAndFamilies@pym.org, 215-241-7171

Associate Secretary for Advancement & Relationship, Grace Sharples Cooke, gscooke@pym.org, 215-241-7115
Transitional Meeting Engagement and Data Coordinator, Wendy Kane, wkane@pym.org, 215-241-7232
Communications Designer, Joyce David, j david@pym.org, 215-241-7230
Web Manager, Malcolm McAttee, mmcattee@pym.org, 215-241-7215

Associate Secretary for Business & Finance, Linell McCurry, lmccurry@pym.org, 215-241-7205
Controller, Cliessa Nagle, cnagle@pym.org, 215-241-7214
Accountant, Celeste Richardson, crichardson@pym.org, 215-241-7206
Director of Grant Making, Carol Walz, cwalz@pym.org, 215-241-7201
Grants Associate, Nick Gutowski, ngutowski@pym.org, 215-241-7218

Director of Human Resources & Inclusion, Zakia Williams, zwilliams@pym.org, 215-241-7223
Office Administrator, Ashanta Washington, awashington@pym.org, 215-241-7211

Arch Street Meeting House Staff:

Executive Director, Lynne Calamia, lcalamia@historicismh.org, 215-413-1804 x101
Maintenance, Gary Jackson, gjackson@historicismh.org, 215-413-1804
Buildings and Grounds Assistant, Stephan Williams, swilliams@historicismh.org, 215-413-1804
Coordinator of Visitor Learning Programs, Amanda Schaeffer, aschaeffer@historicismh.org, 215-413-1804 x102
Event & Rental Coordinator, Tarra Raspanti, traspanti@historicismh.org, 215-413-1804 x104