

General Secretary Report on Staff Activity to Councils Mid-November through Mid-December 2017

Business & Finances

- Worked with the executive committee of the Arch Street Meetinghouse Preservation Trust to confirm the steps needed to transition authority for the direction and goals of the Arch Street Meeting House staff from the PYM office to the Trust. This includes approving the job description for Executive Director rather than Director, identifying a transition team, setting up a timeline and revising slightly the draft Memorandum of Understanding that will support the transition.
- Completed the first third of a written document defining the roles and responsibilities for the property, business processes, communications and other areas of decision-making for the Arch Street Meeting House. The next section on business and finance practices will be completed next then the document will be reviewed again by Executive Committee.
- Completed the December appeal and sent it to the printer. Each one of the 6000+ appeals had a personalized note regarding giving history which was done by hand since we are between databases.
- The second half of the Nietzsche bequest has begun coming in and is expected to be completely in our account by the end of the month

Program

- Solidified the Friends in Fellowship program. This is a series of seven events that brings friends together for conversation and talks by fascinating people, each one focused on a different career path. Event topics include education, law, environment, quaker farming, art and media, holistic health and medicine. One to three speakers have been identified for each topic and invitational postcards are going to all households soon.
- A plan for transitioning the leadership and the capacity for supporting religious life and programming for youth was concluded in advance of the Youth Engagement Coordinator's hire.
- Chris Crass

Communications & Technology

- The content and the design for the Fall issue of Faith IN Practice was completed and it landed in mailboxes. This issue is four pages longer than our most recent issues for a total of 12 pages. The issue focused on the extensive and amazing work that is happening in our meetings and with the support of our meetings and provides a glimpse into our ministries. The issue is a representation of what the yearly meeting is – a container and connector for the meetings and Friends across our geography and 100+ meetings. Only the Yearly Meeting exists to bring us all together.
- We subscribed to Zoom, a service that supports user-friendly video and phone conferencing at a reasonable price. It has been put into use immediately by staff, committees and collaboratives. We are looking into purchasing screens for the offices that will allow us to hold meetings that are attended in person and by video on a regular basis.

- The database project is continuing. After a pause in the data transfer process due to illness we are moving back on track and mapping out realistic timelines to convert our convoluted data so it will be accessible in the new database.

Staffing and Administration

- **Two positions were hired and onboarded:**
 - Melinda Wenner Bradley began on December 4th as the Youth Engagement Coordinator. Melinda has been active in work with and for youth in our yearly meeting as well as in other yearly meetings. In fact through her leadership in Faith & Play she has travelled to other countries to support the spiritual lives of Quaker youth.
 - Ashanta Washington also began on December 4th. Ashanta is the Office Administrator and supports the daily administrative needs of the office as well as supporting collaboratives and committees and councils with their administrative needs. She comes to us with a history of dedication, broad experience and an enormous amount of enthusiasm.
- Two more positions were posted:
 - Associate Secretary for Advancement and Relationship. This new position will unite a Meeting Engagement Coordinator (position to be posted once this one is filled) and the development and communications functions into a single team that focuses on connections between the yearly meeting and meetings and individuals
 - Executive Assistant. Cierra Saunders is moving on to a different career path at the end of this month. Cierra's flexibility and her care for detail as well as her quiet, steady presence will be missed.
- Tricia Coscia, Community Engagement Coordinator, after many years of service and several different roles is moving on to a new career path as well. Tricia has done a tremendous job of helping our yearly meeting pivot in a new direction of engagement, guided by our strategic directions. She has set us up to be able to support the yearly meeting community well and has been a gift to us in so many ways. For the immediate needs of continuing to plan the logistics for continuing and annual sessions the Sessions Assistant, Eric Berdis, will step up to keep us moving along.
- We completed three personnel policies that need approval in advance of the timeline required for revising the Staff Handbook: the Grievance Policy, the Social Media Policy and the Staff Voice Policy. Each of these were drafted by a different staff person who researched best practices and the policies of similar organizations. They were reviewed and commented on by staff and revised. The Staff Voice Policy was also reviewed and commented on by the Quaker Life and Administrative Councils and then revised. They were given to an employment lawyer for review and approved by the Personnel Committee.
- Final reviews of the job description for the new position Director of Staffing and Inclusion were received from Quaker and non-Quaker people with experience in human resources and in anti-racism and inclusion work. The Administrative Council reviewed the process and the reviewers. The position has been sent out to be posted.
- We began the process of annual reviews which will soon be completed
- The staff began using a web-based time tracking system. Each individual can use it to the degree of detail that serves them but everyone is using it at a high level to track the amount of

time given to the basic roles of staff such as Program, Communications, Fundraising and Granting. We'll use the system for three months then review the learnings from it.

- The Staff Handbook is in good enough shape that it could be shared with the Personnel Committee. The revision comes with a transition document that explains where each section from the original document can be found in the revised handbook. It will also be reviewed by staff for their feedback. A revision that takes into account the feedback will then be reviewed one more time and given to Personnel Committee for approval. Our expectation is that this revision is a solid and acceptable work that will be revised over time as the new position of Director of Staffing & Inclusion comes on board and our anti-racism work deepens.

Anti-Racism

- I spoke with a variety of people with expertise and experience in the fields of HR and/or anti-racism and inclusion about the job description for Director of Staffing and Inclusion to ensure that it meets our goals and is a doable job. Minor, but meaningful, revisions were added and it will be posted any minute.
- The National Council of Churches Task Force on Truth Telling and Racial Justice, of which I'm a member, met for two days to confirm its title and direction. The ACT Now, End Racism initiative will launch with a prayer service at the Lincoln Memorial on April 4th, the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. That will be followed by an event on the mall with an expected 20-100k attenders and then an evening event in the Museum of African American History and Culture. The initiative will continue with a clarion call to the member churches of NCC to end racism within their own bodies and in the country.
- I attended the Conference of National Black Churches. The governing board members of NCC have been invited to attend for the last three years. I was one of three white "heads of communion" to attend. The theme was "Overcoming the Burden of Bias" and the plenaries focused on education, economics, civic organizations, health care and truth telling. The Chairman of CNBC thanked the NCC in particular for attending and remarked that the work NCC is doing on racial justice (see previous point) is tremendous and likely in part inspired by our participation in CNBC, a statement with which NCC's General Secretary and Chairman both agreed.

Visits and Meetings

Video call with General Secretaries of the yearly meetings in the northeast

Worship with Wilmington Meeting Dec 3

Worship with Ujima Friends Peace Center Dec 3

Friends Center Board Meeting, Dec 8

Friends Fiduciary Board Meeting, Dec 12

Conference for National Black Churches Consultation, Dec 12-14

NCC retreat for heads of communion, Dec 14-16