

Indian Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Report for October 2019 through September 2020

During the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 ten individuals were active as Members and Attenders at seven meetings held during the year. We were joined by Tom Armstrong, Granting Committee Liaison. Due to the Corona virus restrictions the Committee did not meet in March, April, May or June, but resumed meeting by Zoom in August thanks to assistance from PYM Grants Associate Lucas Richie who also participated in our August and September meetings.

Grant Requests Funded

We are the Seeds of Culture Trust was granted \$1,250 (of \$2,000 requested) for artist and performer fees to be given to Native Americans participating in performances and panel discussions at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (November 2019) and Philadelphia Free Library One Book Finale (March 2020). We Are the Seeds of Culture Trust is a non-profit organization of Indigenous peoples in Philadelphia who come from a diversity of regions and cultures. The Trust creates opportunities for Indigenous artists to present their work with events to show that Native American people are still here evolving and creating. (October 12, 2019)

Dr. Ana Maria Tekina-eiré Maynard was granted \$1,000 (of \$2,670 requested) for her project Sharing the Wisdom of the Elders: Transmitting Medicinal Plant Traditions. This supported Dr. Maynard's travel to Puerto Rico to consult with Taino elders about medicinal plant traditions as well as education projects in Texas for the Puerto Rican community there. (October 12, 2019)

The Committee approved a grant of \$500 (of \$1,500) requested to be used for costs related to showing the documentary film "Warrior Lawyers: Defenders of Social Justice" at community and conference events. The Committee had approved a grant of \$1,500 to filmmaker Audrey Geyer at our September 18, 2018 meeting to support production costs for this film. (December 14, 2019 and January 11, 2020)

The Committee approved the \$2,000 requested to be used for regalia, travel expenses and other production costs of "Teaching Disco Square Dancing to our Elders" produced by Passage Theater Company of Trenton, New Jersey. The play has the theme of teen identity and the importance of cultural roots for Native peoples. It is anticipated that the performances will be important learning experiences for teens as well as adults of many backgrounds. Before restrictions on events due to Covid 19 went into event, Passage Theater Company was able to bring the production to Trenton area schools and the public in early March 2020. (December 14, 2019 and January 11, 2020)

In April the Indian Committee received a grant request from the Camden County Historical Society which is working in partnership with the Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Tribal Nation and Penn Treaty Museum to develop an exhibit on Native Americans of southern New Jersey for 2021. A request was made for \$2,000 which would be used to support Nanticoke Lenni Lenape artisans preparing items needed for the exhibit. The exhibit would help visitors understand not only the history of the Lenape in this area, but also their continued presence today. The Committee had discussed this grant request by e-mail in April 2020 and reaffirmed its approval for a grant of \$2,000 to the Camden County Historical Society. (August 19, 2020)

Other Engagements and Ongoing Education

The Committee purchased the film “Our Fires Still Burn” produced by Audrey Geyer and received approval for funding the purchase from the Quaker Life Council. The film will be shared with any Monthly or Quarterly Meetings who would like to view it. The film was shown at the 2019 PYM Annual Sessions.

The PYM First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative shared its draft of “Guidelines for Those Seeking Healing Relations with Indigenous People: Lessons of Lenapehocking” with the Committee. We were also informed of Collaborative events such as the October 2019 showing of the film “Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code.”

Committee members continued to share information about and participate in a number of events in the Philadelphia area including Indigenous Peoples Day (October 2019), the Pendle Hill conference “Working Toward Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples” (held virtually in August, September and October 2020), Roots of Justice meeting (March 2020), and film showings and workshops organized by the First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative.

The Committee began planning for a session at PYM Annual Sessions, but abandoned this with the Covid 19 alterations to these sessions and suspension of our meetings in March through July.

We took note of interest on the part of Baltimore and New York Yearly Meeting Indian Affairs Committees to meet with us and keep in communication. This will be action for the future.

The Committee began discussion of fundraising plans to increase our Fiduciary Funds to make up for monies lost to our use when the unrestricted Erdman Fund was withdrawn by PYM. This would include the opportunity to match contributions with funds donated by a Committee member.