



New York Yearly Meeting Year in Review • 2016

Nurturing Our Monthly Meetings

The Spiritual Nurture Working Group continued its vital work of nurturing our practice as Friends through the **Tending the Garden** workshops. Held in monthly meetings and at Powell House, Friends explored topics such as deepening worship, vocal ministry, discernment, and facilitation training.

Our **Aging Resources Consultation and Help** (ARCH) program, which helps monthly meetings to care for their aging Friends, restructured its staffing to expand its coverage. Supported in the past exclusively through outside grants, this year individuals and Meetings from NYYM began providing substantial support.

Friends concerned about outreach have formed the

Outreach Working Group, working to create a network of Friends devoted to local outreach for monthly meetings. This group will offer mutual support and share best practices and encouragement as we seek to reach out to local communities.

NYYM is collaborating with NEYM in an effort to learn about how to better foster vital multi-generational meetings. The **Monthly Meeting Partner Project** will focus on working with selected individual meetings to help them better welcome and integrate young families with children.

More than 50 Friends attended the gathering focusing on integrating all ages into worship and the life of the meeting. The **all-ages inclusive event** was sponsored by Nurture Coordinating Committee and was led by Melinda Wenner Bradley before she was hired as our Children and Youth Field Secretary.

The 2016 **Youth Institute**, hosted by Powell House and supported by the Children and Youth Field Secretary and Youth Committee, included 30 participants from all age groups, almost half of them children, teens, and young adults. Seven workshops

presented a variety of approaches to nurturing youth, and JYM youth clerks also participated for the first time, attending two workshops on clerking. Multigenerational plenary sessions gathered the group to discuss where the life is in our meeting communities, and how to nurture inclusion of all ages.

NYYM and New York Quarterly Meeting supported the first ever **Quaker Party** where over 120 young adult Friends gathered in NYC for fellowship, worship, and to learn about the work of the wider Society of Friends.

Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting's M&C continues to offer opportunities for extended worship three times a year, across its broad geography. They also sponsored a

retreat for those with a concern for pastoral care.

A throng of Friends celebrated **Ann Davidson's 22 years of service** as Director of Powell House in a weekend of loving remembrance of her service to this yearly meeting. We welcomed Regina and Dennis Haag as the new directors.



The first ever Quaker Party, 15th Street meetinghouse.



Scarsdale Meeting's Tending the Garden retreat at Powell House. Photo by Anne Wright.

Witness: Our voice in the world

NYYM issued a press release **responding to the deaths of black men and police** in Minneapolis, Baton Rouge, and Dallas, lamenting the violence, and naming the systemic racism that we as a nation need to address.

NYYM supported over 100 Friends in attending the 2016 **White Privilege Conference** in Philadelphia. A follow-up consultation as to how NYYM should move forward with anti-racism work will gather Friends at Powell House November 4-6.

The Indian Affairs Committee and Earthcare Working Group framed a minute **supporting the Standing Rock Sioux** in their opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline. Many monthly meetings united with this minute, and NYYM issued a press release featuring the minute.



Demonstrating in support of the Standing Rock Sioux

Your Staff:

Christopher Sammond, General Secretary, continued to lead spiritual nurture retreats for monthly meetings, represent NYYM in the wider body of Friends, and nurture emerging ministries. He designed and got grant funding to support the Monthly Meeting Partner Project.

Helen Garay Toppins, Associate Secretary, facilitated the Farmington-Scipio Fall Gathering, centered on *Quakers and Race; What Can We Do Now?* In addition she co-facilitated *Shall We Dance? When Gender Meets Race*, this year's Women's Weekend at Powell House. This November, she will co-lead *Beyond the White Privilege Conference* at Powell House, an opportunity for Friends to convene and share how to actively continue the work of

racial justice in our communities and within the Yearly Meeting.

Steve Davison, Outgoing Communications Director, worked hard to finish the total redesign of our web presence, making it more user-friendly and available to seekers. Steve retired as director in July but continues on as Website Coordinator. **Sarah Way** became our new **Interim Communications Director**.

Melinda Wenner Bradley, Children and Youth Field Secretary, worked in her first months of service to support local meetings and individuals with resources, to grow opportunities for collaboration across the yearly meeting, and to launch the Partner Project.

Gabi Savory Bailey, Young Adult Field Secretary, has focused on creating opportunities for multi-generational worship, and opportunities to work together in meaningful, spiritual ways, especially those that include young adult Friends and families.

Callie Janoff, Director ARCH Program, facilitated workshops and retreats for Meetings, provided aging consultations to individuals and families, and published the *Quaker Values and End of Life Decision Making Workbook* to guide Friends and serve as a tool for outreach.



Christopher Sammond (standing) with Friends at a Facilitation Retreat for the Tending the Garden retreat series, Powell House