

Youth Institute Summary Report
March 27-29, 2015
Powell House Conference and Retreat Center

On March 27-29, the Youth Committee in conjunction with the Powell House Youth Directors held it's first Youth Institute. The objectives of the institute were to provide take home skills, broaden and deepen connections among Friends, and to uplift a multigenerational approach to youth programming. These were joyously and wonderfully met over the intense day and a half we were together.

The institute was intentionally held simultaneously with the Friends General Conference Faith and Play training workshop led by Melinda Bradley to make optimal use of the Powell House facilities and to allow for those working with youth to intermingle during meals and free times. Between the two programs there were 40 participants from 22 monthly meetings and 3 yearly meetings. 25% of the participants were under 25 years old and about 15% were mid-sixties and up. 30 participants including all of the younger friends were in the Youth institute.

Plenary sessions of the youth institute consisted of worship through community building activities and games intermingled with small group discussions. Friday evening, friends spoke of why they were Quakers, what they experienced in meeting for worship, and at its best, what they experienced in their faith community. They then shared why they wanted children to participate in Quaker meeting and what they hoped children would experience in worship and with their faith community. Saturday morning began by looking at what people need to be whole and then sharing what meetings were doing well for their children. Saturday evening we focused in self-selected small groups on 4 questions that arose during the day:

- How do you make the intergenerational activities (worship/religious education/gatherings) work?
- How can small rural meetings attract folks under 50 and young families? What kinds of outreach to the community can we do that would let folks know who we are and that we exist.
- Re-thinking our definition of good kids and bad kids. What do they need from us? What can we learn from them?
- Following a review of the advices and queries around sexuality and teens in three different yearly meeting Faith and Practices this question arose: Do we encourage teens to explore transient but interesting and satisfying sexual encounters or do we encourage them to reserve sex for committed relationships?

We offered six 90-minute workshops during the day on Saturday:

- Creativity and Spirituality
- Spiritual Development in Youth
- Using Games in Spiritual Work
- Teens and Quakerism Today
- Exploring Sex and Gender Issues
- Service/Learning Projects: Identifying and Leading

The workshops were facilitated by Friends from around New York Yearly Meeting with significant experience in working with youth (or being youth). They were highly interactive and experiential, raising many good questions and forging strong bonds between participants. Additionally there were a number of resource lists and informational materials prepared and disseminated.

Sunday Morning we looked at next steps specifically around future youth institutes. Participants completed a survey to identify potential topics, formats and locales. The youth committee will use this information to help design future events. See Appendix A for a list of suggested topics to delve into. We closed the institute with a moving experimental worship session that morphed into traditional open worship.

Appendix A: Suggested Topics for further Consideration
From the March 27-29, 2015 Youth Institute

- Intergenerational Play
- Engaging the entire meeting in multigenerational RE and worship
- Integrating children into worship
- Integrating older youth into committee work in a meaningful way
- Experimental worship
- Helping people of all ages explore and express their faith
- Attracting and keeping young folks and families.
- How to reach critical mass in FDS
- Learning and Practicing the actual teaching of FDS curriculum
- Creating engaging, exciting Quaker curriculum
- How to use art in spiritual education
- Incorporating the out of doors in youth work
- Fostering activism
- Sex and Gender, Sexuality and Teens
- Good Kids/Bad kids, Accepting different kids,
- Thoughts about working with youth
- Quaker Feminists and Activists
- Quaker Teens and Current Events
- Going off to college and finding other Quaker meetings
- Quaker Quest type program for young adults
- Training on how to be a Quaker Mentor to youth
- Coming of Age process
- Quaker Parenting
- Quaker Nurture of kids in the modern world (Sexuality, Angst, social media, alcohol, violence in video games etc...)
- How to have mental health discussions with teens.
- Spiritual growth in youth
- Growing joy together
- Safety issues
- Music, youth and spirituality
- Youth discernment/conflict resolution
- Developing youth leadership skills

Appendix B: Financial Summary

Youth Institute

Program Costs (approx): \$3320

Publicity Materials – \$100

Program Packets - \$140

Staff time Pre and Post – 40 hours @ \$20/hr is \$800

Staff time during the event – 60 hours @ \$20/hr is \$1200

Facilitators' comped program fee - 3 @ \$220 and 2 @ \$110 is \$880

Childcare - \$200

Lodging and Food (2 nights and 6 meals) 30 @ \$100 per person: \$3000

Total Cost: \$6320

Billed: \$5335

Received: \$3100 - \$3500 (some individual payments pending)

\$220 from PYM MMs

\$640 from NYYM MMs

\$665 from NEYM MMs

\$225 from NEYM

\$1850-2250 from individuals

Powell House absorbed the remaining balance of approximately \$3000

Faith and Play Training

Program Costs: \$770

Facilitator Fee \$250

Facilitator Comped \$100 (lodging & food)

Facilitator future conference credit \$220

Staff Support (publicity/registration) 10 hours @ \$20 is \$200

Lodging and Food (2 nights and 6 meals) 8 @ \$100 per person: \$800

Total Cost: \$1570

Billed \$1590

Received \$1155

\$150 from NYYM MM

\$1005 from individuals