

Chronicles of Quaker Education



Testimonies in ACTION

Friends Council Grant Projects

The Friends Council on Education works to help Friends schools to understand and deepen engagement with Quaker testimonies and spiritual life in community. Friends Council's grants program aims to enrich student engagement by funding experiential, student-centered projects that are grounded in the Quaker testimonies.

This issue highlights creative projects that have been funded by Friends Council grants. Each is a dynamic example of Testimonies in ACTION. See more projects in the GRANTS GALLERY online: www.friendscouncil.org. Set your own project in motion—Submit your proposal by March 20, 2009.

Adding SPICES to School Life

A new book, written and designed by students at **Friends Select School**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, offers student interpretations of Quaker testimonies. The title, *Filling Our Classrooms with SPICES: Practicing the Quaker Testimonies at Friends Select School*, reflects the mnemonic device people often use to remember six core Quaker testimonies: simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship. Printing costs were offset by funding from the Friends Council on Education. Small groups of middle and upper school students discussed with lower school students how the testimonies help shape life in the classroom and throughout the school community.

Partner conversations were framed in age-appropriate ways. When peace was the focus, the question was: *How can I solve problems in a way so that everyone feels happy?* To explore the idea of integrity, lower school students considered the question, *What helps me to be my best self?* The book, which features quotations and drawings from these partner reflections, promises to be a rich resource for teachers and for families who wish to understand better how Friends Select is rooted in Quaker values. Copies are available for purchase: *Contact Nancy Kang Rosin: Nancyr@friends-select.org.*

What Is Peace?

Lincoln School, Providence, Rhode Island, designed a year-long process of community reflection with the goals of building bridges within the school community and the broader community, and a creative chronicling of a school-wide service project expressing shared beliefs.

Meeting weekly for a half hour before school, a group of 15-20 students and faculty from the upper and middle schools first engaged in the process of choosing a theme to focus on for the year. Consensus quickly emerged that this theme should be "peace." The group wrote a query to take to the upper and middle school communities with the goal of writing a testimony on peace that expressed the community's beliefs: "What is peace and what can we do to contribute to peace in our community?"

This query was the center of discussion and reflection in both small and large group settings of advisory and division group meetings for the upper and middle school. Meetings included both silent reflection and "pair-sharing" on the query.

Using the input from these discussions—which involved nearly 300 students and faculty—students drafted a testimony that represented the community's response to the query. A silent meeting of the upper and middle schools considered and approved the testimony as one that spoke the truth of the community.

Concurrently, a group of students met weekly to brainstorm how best to put this testimony into practice. The group designed a "day of service" to the larger community. Peace gardens were installed in local parks, hospice houses for AIDS patients, the home of an elderly Providence woman, and a community center. Vocal ensembles offered concerts at two local elderly housing complexes, while students interested in the arts painted a 90-foot mural at a local hospital. Students documented the day through photography. Friends Council funding contributed to the cost of digital photo equipment, printing, mounting and framing; and an honorarium for a photojournalist consultant who worked with students.

A series of student photographs from the day hang in the hallways at Lincoln, together with the peace testimony. This photo essay serves as a statement of the community's beliefs, a record of how the community strives to put those beliefs into practice, and an inspiration in future years to students and faculty to continue to formulate and act on a shared set of values. *Contact Will Shotwell: wshotwell@lincolnschool.org.*

Peace Testimony

We don't know if universal peace is possible. We don't even know if it's possible for each of us to become a completely peaceful person. But we do know that these two are connected. We know that we cannot be a peaceful community without being people of peace.

It is not enough to make rules so we can get along, while in our hearts we carry hard feelings or ill will. We must each start with ourselves, not just saying we want peace, but taking action every day to make peace with ourselves and those around us. This means being truthful and trustworthy even when it is difficult. It means being respectful of each other even when we do not like each other or are angry. It means living with kindness and humility rather than criticism or judgment. It means speaking out when we witness actions that divide rather than unite. It means listening past our differences until we can hear and know the inner goodness we all share. We know we are not many and most of us are young, but we also know that every act of trust, honesty, kindness, and love increases the trust, honesty, kindness, and love in the world. We believe these are the seeds of peace.

Approved jointly by the Lincoln Upper and Middle School community, April 2007



Testimonies in ACTION:

See proposal guidelines and details:
www.friendscouncil.org

Friends Council Grant Projects



Nurturing A Love of Growing Things: Community Garden

Frankford Friends School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has worked for years to transform an abandoned lot next to the school into an all-native demonstration garden to beautify the neighborhood and teach stewardship of the environment. Parent work parties and weekly garden classes of mixed age partners have built up the soil and have planted a variety of native shrubs and perennials that attract butterflies. A neighbor of the school helps with regular watering.

Using worms and compost bins purchased with funds from the Friends Council on Education, students created over 10 pounds of compost. All students contributed to the creation of a wall mural overlooking the garden and a sign that lets the community know that it is their garden too. 7th and 8th grades met every week with the prekindergarten and kindergarten students to garden and “make dirt.” On garden workdays families helped spread compost. Students collaborated with **Friends Select’s** Middle School Service group to spread mulch and move bricks for a walkway.

Frankford Friends’ Summer Camp grew and harvested a “salad garden,” as a demonstration of organic farming and healthy eating. Campers planted a winter crop of vegetables for the students to maintain throughout the fall and winter, and are planning a soup-making project using the bounty. The garden increases community involvement, deepens student understanding of the testimony of stewardship and nurtures a love of growing things and the environment. *Contact Penny Colgan-Davis, pcolgan-davis@frankfordfriends.com.*

Exploring Social Justice and Equality Through Student Films

Middle school students at **Oakwood Friends School**, Poughkeepsie, New York, explored the history of the Underground Railroad in the Hudson Valley by visiting known safe houses and interviewing area experts. A visit to Nine Partners Meetinghouse and the site of the Nine Partners School provided a tangible sense of the journey of escaped slaves. Students created a documentary film, “Compass to Freedom,” collaborating to write the script, to cast the actors, to record footage, to play and record the background music, and to edit the film. A grant from the Friends Council on Education funded field trip expenses, honoraria for speakers, and camera equipment. “Compass to Freedom” won the “Spirit of the Festival” award in the 2008 Bridge Film Festival at Brooklyn Friends School. *Contact: Nancy Doolittle, ndoolittle@oakwoodfriends.org.*

Friends Council funds helped **Cambridge Friends School**, Massachusetts, to submit their first film to the Bridge Film Festival. Cambridge’s eighth-grade class worked with award-winning filmmaker Jared Katsiane (CFS ’79) to create a narrative film, “Last Snow.” Friends Council funding contributed to an honorarium for Jared’s work. The film explores how homophobia manifested through gossip, teasing, and bullying, leads to tragic results. “Last Snow” was selected as a finalist narrative film at the Bridge Film Festival. “This is an important message about being accepting of people who are different from you,” reflected one student filmmaker. *Contact: Ray Pasciuto, r.pasciuto@cfsmass.org.*

(Below) Cambridge Friends students with filmmaker Jared Katsiane, a CFS alum.



Frankford Friends students installing a mural in community garden



The Space Between the Logs

Teaching with Fire in Friends Schools

It might be taped to your computer monitor, or flapping from your fridge door. Many of us keep a dog-eared copy of a poem or excerpt of an essay nearby, to re-read, remind and refresh us as we go about our day. Inspired by Sam Intrator and Megan Scribner’s collection of poetry and essays, *Teaching with Fire* (Jossey-Bass, 2003) we asked members of the Friends Council’s SPARC and Leadership programs to reflect on a piece of text that helps to sustain them in their lives and work in Friends schools.

Below find a poem and reflection from a Friends Council collection that will honor the hallmark reflective aspect of teaching in Friends education, and give insight into teaching as a calling in Friends schools.

Online extra: Find another essay and text on our web site: www.friendscouncil.org.

Acts of Faith

Friends describe colors to me:
trumpets are red they say,
clarinets blue, and oranges
taste like orange. I believe them.
I know no reason not to.

I buy books to take home to readers
or to read with special equipment for the blind.
It is an act of faith. In the bookstore
all the pages are blank.

At the cashier, I pay with a bill
the grocer said was a twenty.
Or I sign a blank slip
wherever the cashier tells me.

“No big deal,” I say to myself
walking out the door.
The yellow sun shines lemonade;
that means the sky is blue.
I smell the city, oil and brown.
“Nobody knows everything,” I’m thinking.
“Everybody has to breathe.”

Daniel Simpson

Published in Atlanta Review, December 2003

I’ve always loved my friend Dan’s poem, “Acts of Faith,” because I’ve watched him choose to live with a light heart in a world filled with adversity. Could I ever do that, I wonder? He reminds me of my work with first graders, and the faith I have in their minds and hearts. There was the time I gathered a group of children together and we all held Nina’s hands as she trembled and finally crossed the classroom to step over her fear and pet Dan’s guide dog. There was the time Michael and I laughed and cheered when he finally could read the word “went,” and then he learned many new words the next week. There were the times we all shared about when we felt left out or when our feelings were hurt, so we could remember for a while that we didn’t want to do that to each other. And there is my faith that, if we read and talk about stories of people who fought for freedom and justice in the face of slavery and racism, these children might grow up and find ways to create a just and peaceful world. Teaching, I realize, is also an act of faith.

*Marcy Morgan,
Friends School
Haverford*



SPARC

Your Teaching Life

2009-2011 Group Now Forming

SPARC Reflections:

“I grow from the stories we share to better understand our lives as teachers and persons, coupled with specific strategies and ideas that we can take back and use.”

“I value the clearness process, and that through helping another, you find perspective for yourself.”

“Not a workshop in isolation — SPARC has the cumulative effect of an ever-increasing sense of trust and community.”

“Sharing worship is beautiful and edifying. It reminds me of how important worship is to me and how valuable it is to my classroom and school.”

“Our movement activities made me feel like a kid again. I had the feeling of being free.”

The SPARC program (Spirited Practice and Renewed Courage for teachers in Friends schools) is based on the principles of teacher formation from Parker Palmer’s “Courage to Teach” work. A group of 24 teachers from Friends schools are selected to take part in this collaborative community, using reflective tools for self-directed professional development. Together, over a two-year cycle, the group explores the art and calling of teaching.

Visit www.friendscouncil.org for more information, and to submit your application, due by January 16, 2009.

Quaker Youth Leadership Conference Inspires

David Slezak, Tandem Friends School

For the first time in its eleven year history, the 2008 Quaker Youth Leadership Conference for Friends high school students was hosted by three schools in New England: **Moses Brown** and **Lincoln School** in Providence, Rhode Island, and **The Meeting School** in southern New Hampshire. The Quaker Youth Leadership Conference encourages all students in Friends schools to take up leadership for the Quaker core of their schools. Twenty-two Friends Schools sent nearly 200 participants to the three-day event with the theme of “Leadership Through the Arts.”

Students create the program, which this year included a session with performance artist/activist Peterson Toscano, worship, and workshops. A key part of the conference is service. This year, students worked in a former steel factory converted into a community arts center, assisting public school students in writing letters to their government about issues of justice in their world. Students worked with CityArts, a community arts organization that provides free art education to children in Providence. Service groups intentionally mix students from different schools to encourage new cross-school connections. Later, the students use queries to reflect on the service work, as well as similarities and differences among their schools.

Eleven students from **Tandem Friends School**, Charlottesville, Virginia, attended the Conference. On the train ride home, they reflected on their experience:

- “This conference was so eye-opening. I had never sung in a Meeting for Worship or slept on a hard gym floor with hundreds of other like-minded kids. But there was something oddly familiar about the experience, about the faces that welcomed me with their warmth...the ready and non judgmental love that was shown to me by all and which I hope I showed in return.”
- “I helped students at Martin Luther King School write letters to their governor and tell him what they think should be changed in Providence. My students concentrated on taxes and litter. They seemed so aware of the world for sixth graders. My experience at this school was the defining moment of the conference for me.”
- “Overall, I think this conference was an opportunity to witness the traditions and feel of many Quaker schools and to come back to Tandem loving it more than ever before.”
- “One of the things that struck me most was the way in which people really wanted to make changes...people came because they honestly wanted to make a change in this world and it was inspiring.”
- “On this trip I learned a lot about myself and the people in our group. I also learned that art makes a difference in peoples’ lives every day in many ways.”

Wilmington Friends School, Delaware, will host the next Quaker Youth Leadership Conference for Friends high school students, February 5-7, 2009. Contact Richard Bernard, rbernard@wilmingtonfriends.org.

Quaker Pilgrimage to England

Sarah Sweeney-Denham

In June, 30 Quakers and Friends school educators took part in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s Quaker Pilgrimage to England, which I co-led with Irene McHenry.

Our group represented 20 monthly meetings and 9 Friends schools over five states from California to North Carolina, to New York, ages 5 to 84, creating a new and powerful bridge for Quakers and Friends school educators. We gained a broader sense of Quakerism through the friendships that were created in the group and among British Quakers in the Lake District of northwest England.

Roy Stephenson from Britain Yearly Meeting 1652 Committee served as our guide and teacher as we followed in the footsteps of George Fox. Daily travels and worship helped us to consider contemporary relevance, meaning, and inspiration from the story of the early Friends. This Pilgrimage is sponsored every two years by the Education Standing Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and is designed to provide an experiential journey to the roots of the Religious Society of Friends. (Mark your calendars now for the next journey: Summer 2010.)

As we traveled in George Fox’s footsteps and learned about the context and content of his journey, we asked ourselves how we might have experienced it:

- Do we have a sense of that divine inner light?
- Have we shared our vision with others, even other Friends?
- Would we have had the courage to do what early Friends did, losing our possessions and being imprisoned as a result of sharing our convictions?
- What is the vision of Friends today?
- How do we put spiritual equality into practice?

Worship and discussion were enriched by our visits to early Quaker meetinghouses, Margaret Fell’s home Swarthmoor Hall, Firbank Fell, and Lancaster Prison, and by the lush British countryside, a patchwork of dry stone walls, sheep pastures, and mossy rocks. Each night we returned to Glenthorne, a Quaker guest house in the village of Grasmere.

We used a map provided by Britain Yearly Meeting’s 1652 Committee outlining Fox’s path to trace our daily trips. When one Pilgrim asked another what her favorite part of the trip had been, she replied that it hadn’t happened yet—which sounds like she’s leaving way open for more revelations! So am I.



Hiking up the original Pendle Hill.
(Above, right) Brigflatts Meeting, est. 1675.

Did you get your copy? New Publications

Advices and Queries for
Friends School Community Life

Friends schools have the potential to be places of transformation and growth—for the adults as well as the students within them. Intentional focus on the elements of supportive and centered community make personal, and organizational, transformation more likely to happen.

Faith and Practice —
Germantown Friends School

Prepared by a committee of parents, faculty and staff, the pamphlet clarifies Quaker language and offers queries for members of the school community to consider as they seek to find the best in themselves and in each other.

The New Friends School Kit
Now Available

How do you start a Friends school? The Friends Council’s *New Friends School Kit* is designed to support those inspired individuals and groups who feel led to start a Friends school. A downloadable document and packet of Friends Council resources provide key information, and inspiration, for the journey.

Purchase online: www.friendscouncil.org

Leadership Strength and Vision for the Future

The Friends Council on Education’s Leadership Institute engages rising leaders in Friends schools to develop their capacity and skills for the distinctive practice of leading and sustaining the Quaker ethos of a Friends school. Of the 29 graduates of the program, five have been named heads of Friends schools and more than 80% have moved to positions of increased leadership responsibility in schools across the country. The Friends Council created the Leadership Endowment Fund to make the Institute accessible for selected leaders from diverse Friends schools throughout the country. The Fund is nearing its final phase thanks to generous support from member Friends schools, alumni of the program, strong supporters, and foundations. Special naming opportunities are available for gifts to the Fund from \$5,000-\$50,000. Contact Amy Ward Brimmer for more information: Amy@friendscouncil.org.

News from the Network New Heads: Welcome!

Congratulations to the following school leaders, newly named as Heads of Friends schools:

- Peter Sommer, **Cambridge Friends School**
- Janet Himel, **Chappaqua Friends Nursery School**
- Wendy Bertsche, **Fairville Friends School**
- Larry Clements, **Friends Community School**
- Brenda Boggess, **Greenwood Friends School**
- Jenny Eckert, **George Fox Friends School**
- Kevin Cerula (*Acting*), **Orchard Friends School**
- Ruth Joray, **The Quaker School at Horsham**
- Dan Hendey (*Interim*), **State College Friends School**
- Geraldine Faivre, **Westbury Friends School**
- Dorothy Henderson, **Woolman Semester**

Best wishes and gratitude to these former heads who are embarking on new adventures: Jody Althouse, Connie Belfiore, Tina Butler, Ida Edelman, Janet Hough, Bob Lentz, Barbara Marchese, Mary Newman, Shana Maziarz, Linda Uberseder, and Carol Williamson.



Reflections

Governance Matters

“The Governance Matters program was great. The value and benefit of brainstorming with new people and knowing how many others share our job as trustees cannot be overstated.”

“The regional workshop propelled us ahead as a team, and helped jump start newer trustees in their understanding of purpose, role, and responsibility.”

“These workshops are one of the most exciting and important things happening in the Religious Society of Friends today. They can really help us live our faith.”

If you are reading this article and you are currently serving or have served as a Friends school trustee –Thank you! More than 1,200 wise, dedicated and energetic volunteers across the United States are serving Friends education by caring for the long-range sustainability of Friends schools. These trustees take up the strategic visioning, mission focus and fiduciary responsibility necessary for our schools to survive and thrive in this 21st century.

Each November, Friends school trustees from across the country gather at Pendle Hill Quaker retreat center to reflect on their essential experiences in the governance of their schools and raise issues of concern to gain fresh perspectives from colleagues. Recently, generous funding from a family foundation made possible one-day regional workshops for trustees creating time and space for vibrant networking across schools and reflective study using real case examples and principles of good practice for Friends school boards.

This year, we are thrilled to announce another new dimension for Governance Matters that will allow even more trustees, heads and administrators to

participate in thinking together about the financial sustainability of Friends schools. Regardless of geographic location, through interactive online webinars, trustees will break ground for professional development by participating in 6 webinars focusing on advancement and financial sustainability. The webinars will make possible connections for more people to learn with and from each other without the costs of travel. We envision small clusters of people in front of computers, or even entire boards, siting together in front of a large projection screens interacting with knowledgeable presenters in a live discussion in a virtual conference hall. The webinar series will provide rich opportunities for interactive learning in every school community.

Each of the Friends Council’s 81 member schools and all 5 of the membership applicant schools can register 5 computers for each webinar session, December through February, free of charge, made possible by a benevolent Quaker foundation, the technology company Learning Times, and the volunteer presenters from many Friends schools.

The webinars have a special focus on philanthropy and stewardship for the financial sustainability of small Friends schools. Our moderator, Ginny Christensen, will be joined each time by experts speaking out of long experience in advancing the mission and sustaining the health and well being of Friends education. Join us! Registration is open now at www.friendscouncil.org, and will close on **November 15th**.

Ginny McHenry

Quaker Education

CHRONICLES OF

Testimonies in Action

FALL 2008

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Experiential Professional Growth for Faculty, Staff, and Trustees in Friends Schools

Workshops

Three separate offerings

January 28-30, 2009 • February 19-20, 2009 • May 7-8, 2009

Facilitating Quaker Decision-Making in a Friends School,

Arch Street Meeting House, Philadelphia, Monday, February 9, 2009

Mindfulness: Skills for Powerful Learning and Inner Peace, Pendle Hill,

January 14-16, 2009

Heads' Gatherings

Annual Fall Heads Gathering, October 2-3, 2008, Pendle Hill

Heads of Schools with Secondary Divisions, April 16-17, 2009,

Sidwell Friends School

Heads of Friends Elementary, Nursery, & K-8 Schools,

April 26-28, 2009, Chestnut Hill Meetinghouse

Governance Matters!

Governance Workshop for Trustees & Heads:

November 7-9, 2008, Pendle Hill

Financial aid available.

Peer Network Events

New! Admissions Peer Network, May 11-12, 2009, Pendle Hill

New! Deans of Students Peer Network, April 20, 2009,

George School

New! Division Directors & Assistant Heads, April 27-28, 2009,

Chestnut Hill Meetinghouse, Philadelphia

Bridge Film Festival, March 27-28, 2009, Ackworth School, England

Development Peer Network, May 5, 2009, Abington Friends School

Diversity Peer Network, November 10-11, 2008, Pendle Hill

Early Childhood Educators, March 2-3, 2009, Pendle Hill

Friends Environmental Educators Network (FEEN),

April 29 – May 1, 2009, Friends School Haverford

Heads' Assistants Peer Network, December 4-5, 2008,

Sidwell Friends School

Register Now: www.friendscouncil.org

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Humanities Peer Network, December 3, 2008,
Plymouth Meeting Friends School
Librarians, February 27, 2009, Abington Friends School
Public Relations Peer Network, January 12, 2009,
Germanstown Friends School
Quaker Life in Lower & Middle Schools, October 27, 2008,
The Quaker School at Horsham
Quaker Youth Leadership Conference, February 5-7, 2009,
Wilmingon Friends School
Service Learning Peer Network, November 17, 2008,
Germanstown Friends School
Upper School Religion Teachers, December 8, 2008,
Wilmingon Friends School
Visual Arts Peer Network, October 31-November 1, 2008,
Pendle Hill