

Friends Council
Education

Chronicles

OF QUAKER EDUCATION

SPRING 2002

Peace Education: *Perennial in Friends Schools*



In November, students at Moorestown Friends School, Moorestown, New Jersey, rededicated their Peace Pole, originally installed in 1988 by the "Kids for Peace" club of 4th - 6th graders. It says, "May peace prevail on earth" in four different languages: English, German, Japanese and Russian. Photo courtesy of Betsy Anderson, Moorestown Friends School

Since September 11 schools everywhere are helping students to process complex world events. Students in Friends schools are perhaps more aware of complexities of the world situation because of their prior knowledge and experience of Quaker values, including pacifism. At many

Friends schools, there is a heightened awareness of the implications and relevance of the peace testimony. "Because we are building on a foundation of learning, there is awareness that this contemplation of peace is part of a long-term discussion. It allows the conversation to be deeper and more meaningful than if the notions of peace and conflict resolution were new concepts," noted Betsy Anderson, Moorestown Friends School, Moorestown, New Jersey.

"The events of September 11 have not changed our teaching of the peace testimony, but have given us another 'application' of this teaching," said Matt Bradley, Head of School at West Chester Friends School, West Chester, Pennsylvania. "Friends schools are already doing what many other schools began doing in reaction to these events."

How is peace taught in Friends schools? The concept and practice of peace is studied explicitly through courses on Quakerism, social studies, peace, justice, and social change. But nonviolence is also taught implicitly through caring interaction every day, through meeting for worship, through conflict resolution programs, and through problem-solving approaches. For this article, we chose four examples from Friends schools across the country to show a variety of approaches to promoting peace in the life of a school. Find more examples of peace education in this issue and on the FCE website: www.friendscouncil.org.

Friends School in Detroit

Students at Friends School in Detroit (FSD), Detroit, Michigan, have been working to improve the lives of children in Afghanistan for more than three years--long before recent world events brought heightened attention to Afghan suffering. FSD students are part of a private-public partnership with students from the Detroit metropolitan area, organized into action through Wayne State University's "Civic Literacy: Youth/Urban Agenda" project. Student fundraisers and support helped contribute about \$20,000 to the opening last spring of a new elementary school in Afghanistan. Students have also sent clothing, school supplies, and handmade banners to the Afghan students. Since the U.S. military actions began, FSD has learned the Afghan school is still open, but some students need to

walk more than two hours to get there and suffer from malnutrition. The school is having trouble paying the teachers, and they need a new pump system for clean water. "The main thing they need now is money," said teacher Julie Poll. "We can collect boots and warm clothes, but it's better to give them money to buy them in local markets." Eighth grade students have written to President Bush asking him for a \$10,000-20,000 donation to support the school, but have not yet received an answer. The project is part of the Human Rights class for 7th and 8th graders at FSD. Linked with study of the Quaker testimonies, the meaning of justice is explored as it relates to their lives. The connection with the Afghan students has made this war immediate and painful for the students at Friends School in Detroit. "The day after the terrorist attacks, we gathered at school to express our feelings," Julie remembers. "The students asked, 'What's going to happen to our friends?'" Since September, students in the course have been studying the hidden costs of war and the collateral damage suffered. "The students know it could happen to them, too." To support these efforts and learn more, visit www.kids4afghankids.org.

Friends Select School

Teachers and administrators at Friends Select School (FSS), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, examined ways in which they approach the subject of peace and pacifism, and found that peace and nonviolent resolution of conflicts are woven into the fabric of life at the school. "There is a widespread view here that we need to work for equity and justice, for without justice, there is no peace," said Deborra Sines Pancoe, chair of the Religious Thought Department at FSS and member of the school's Quakerism committee. Lower school classes hold Meetings for Community. Using a conflict resolution model, children pose a problem, describe it, brainstorm possible solutions, and bring the issue back for reassessment by the group. By grades 3/4, students begin clerking these meetings. Many curricular topics at all levels are seen through a lens of conflict resolution. Students talk about conflict and misunderstanding of each other and link these topics to modern events. Teachers pose the question, "What would be a Quaker response to this action?" "At FSS, we realized that the tragic events of September 11, 2001, have not really changed what we do here. We keep doing what we do--emphasizing the need for peace and justice in the world, and stressing individual and collective responsibility for bringing about a peaceful world," Deborra said.

Wellsprings Friends School

Students in last year's grammar/composition class at Wellsprings Friends School (WFS), Eugene, Oregon, produced a newsletter, "Visions," to promote and celebrate student activism. Students wrote short pieces that explained their beliefs and work surrounding issues such as closing the School of the Americas, working for fair sentencing laws, and freeing Tibet. "Peacefully, I will use my rights and privileges to speak out and make a difference!" wrote student Molly Sheffield. Students also worked to increase awareness of peacemaking work among youth by awarding the WFS Peace Prize for an essay about a peacemaker. The contest was open to all young people in the area. Last year's winning essay was entitled, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Peace Loving Warrior," written by an area 4th grader. This year, students in the "Social Problems and Peacemaking" class organized the school's second annual Peace Festival. Speakers from a number of different religious traditions came to talk on the theme of peace.

Wilmington Friends School

At Wilmington Friends School, Wilmington, Delaware, teacher Rick Grier-Reynolds' 10th grade course "Peace, Justice, & Social Change" underwent some change this past fall, as a new unit was added that focused directly on the underlying causes and effects of the terrorist attacks. Offered for more than 20 years, the course is designed to help students break down the complex issues at work in world events, as well as realize the realities of personal empowerment and the power of the individual to initiate social change. In the unit "Understanding 9/11," the class examined policy options and compared their own opinions, debated the pros and cons of UN peacekeeping units, analyzed President Bush's strategy to combat terrorism, and researched nonviolent responses to terrorism. Other units in the course examined the sources of violence, environmental threats and sustainable societies, and creating a culture of peace and nonviolence. Upper school students gained greater perspective through regular "Lunch and Learn" presentations by speakers on topics such as "Islam and the West: Clashing Perspectives," "The Media and the War on Terrorism," and issues surrounding civil liberties and homeland defense. The Peace and Ecology Club organized the series.

Communicating Quaker Values:

Excerpts from Heads' letters to their School Communities

Last fall, Friends Council on Education, a national association of Friends schools, published *Coping Strategies and Positive Actions: A Compilation of Friends' Initial Responses to the Terrorist Attacks*. It contains moving

communications from heads of Friends schools to their school communities, letters that helped assure families of great care and support for their children, ways to move forward from a painful time, and ways to encourage understanding and dialogue. This thoughtful communication is ongoing in Friends schools. Here are some recent excerpts in which heads help communicate Quaker values in school life.

We will teach our children the truth

Our students and staff hold a wide variety of beliefs. While all advocate a peaceful and just world, we represent the pluralism of our society as we think about how to achieve it. There will be those in our midst who believe that the taking of human life is wrong and cannot be justified for any cause. There will also be those who believe that military response is the appropriate and necessary means for ensuring peace and protecting life. There are only a few convictions of which I am certain and they are these. We will conduct our dialog on these matters remembering to respect each voice and each perspective. We will do so recalling our core Quaker peace testimony and seeking to make sense of it in application to these events and times. We will teach our children the truth: causes of violence range from injustice to evil, and the creation of a just world is a complicated business achieved only through extraordinary effort and sacrifice. We will work together to support the victims of violence and to serve to rebuild communities in the wake of violence.

--Lisa Darling, Head of School, **Wilmington Friends School, Wilmington, Delaware**

Finding the way

A parent called and wondered why we were not flying the American flag out front or why we didn't have flags in the classrooms or require the pledge of allegiance to the flag. These are not easy questions to explain, but they do fit into the general Quaker testimonies, certainly shared by more than Quakers. Friends Seminary does not normally fly the American flag outside--it has in the past few years flown the school banner designed for its bicentennial--nor has it ever, probably, flown the American flag in the classrooms. Not to fly the flag should not be considered anti-American --it merely means that a flag institutionally flown engenders a danger of thinking through too narrowly the options for peaceful solutions and seeking restraint. Quakers from their inception have been skeptical of emblems of power, such as flags or crosses or other icons symbolizing institutional or, on a greater scale, imperial presumptions of loyalty. Such icons inhibit discourse and "finding the way" through a collective openness to truth no single individual --or no single power--can embrace. It is also the Quakers' reluctance to require the repeating of public oaths or pledges of loyalty--indeed to repeat public prayers such as the Lord's Prayer or the Apostles' Creed, as many religious schools do--because of the fear that the power of an institution supersedes the individual's right to question the validity of the statement, or to question and explore a wider range of loyalties and commitments than the symbol to which one pledges might encompass.

--Richard Eldridge, Head of School, **Friends Seminary, New York, New York**

Heart and mind

Since the tragic events of September 11, all of us here at Friends School of Baltimore have struggled to make sense out of a world that seems forever altered. We went to meeting for worship and sought spiritual sustenance in the simple act of being together. And in the midst of despair and anguish, we found a thread of hope, an inner voice that encouraged us to reach out and help those in need. The collective response of students centered squarely on what they could do to help. They raised money, collected supplies and blankets. Of course, in a learning community, compassion without knowledge or increased understanding is an opportunity wasted. In the face of crisis, our students not only took action, they immersed themselves in the underlying issues in an effort to gain perspective on our changed global landscape. They listened to presentations by congressmen and professors. They shared ideas gleaned from various media reports of international events during weekly brown bag lunch seminars. And they're opening this dialogue to include peers from other area schools; plans are underway for a daylong summit this spring, hosted by Friends and dedicated to the study of international peacemaking efforts. Compassion and knowledge. Heart and mind. It is the delicate balance between these two ideals that distinguishes Friends School of Baltimore.

--Jon M. Harris, Head of School, **Friends School of Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland**

What "thee thinks" matters most

In the days and weeks following the tragic events of September 11, as students and faculty members struggled to understand the unfathomable and grappled with a wide range of emotions--from the initial shock and abject horror at

what had occurred to anger and sorrow and fear--many in the Sidwell community expressed a desire for insight into Friends traditions in respect to pacifism and nonviolence. Of course, there isn't a linear response. Generally, the view that a Quaker holds is the result of reflective and spiritually based thinking; the perspective is almost always that of one specific individual. There is never the thought that any single person's reasoning can be seen as solely appropriate for the corporate whole. Disciplined personal reasoning, Friends believe, should stand at the bedrock of one's religious, spiritual, and philosophical thought. Clearly, there must be respect for community, and for the ideas and values of others, but it is always the sovereign obligation of every individual to grapple with and discover his or her own sense of truth. In many ways, this same practice is intended to be the essence of a Sidwell Friends education: It is never what "they think," but what "thee thinks" that matters most.

--Bruce Stewart, Head of School, [Sidwell Friends School, Washington, District of Columbia](#)

[For more information on Coping Strategies and Friends education, contact Sarah Sweeney-Denham at Friends Council on Education, \(215\) 241-7245.](#)

JOIN US!

Friends Association for Higher Education Annual Gathering
Wilmington College, Wilmington, Ohio: June 20-23, 2002
 Educating For Peace and Social Justice

Join with college and secondary school educators from around the country to consider the answers to these queries:

What are schools and colleges doing to promote "zones of peace"?

What are our institutional responsibilities for social and civic engagement in our local communities and neighborhoods?

How can we live and learn to "take away the occasion of war"?

How can academic subjects/disciplines teach peace and social justice issues?

How do we plant seeds among students so that peace and social justice concerns take root in their lives?

Registration Costs: Individual - \$130; Family - \$180; Student - \$65

For program listings, registration materials, and housing details, visit the Wilmington College website: www.wilmington.edu/fahe.htm or call Mark Denniston, Local Arrangements Chair, at (937) 382-6661, ext. 264.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Diversity & Equality in Friends Schools

Chronicles of Quaker Education is published by the Friends Council on Education. Its purpose is to encourage, support, and assist Friends schools in using Friends values and philosophy as the foundation for their educational vision, administrative practices, and classroom teaching.

The Fall 2002 issue will focus on diversity: How can Quaker education make changes in urban environments? How do Quaker schools live out the testimony on equality? Please send your ideas or articles relating to this theme to be considered for publication.

E-mail: FCESarah@aol.com
 or phone: (215) 241-7291.

EQUAKES

Virtual Conversation on E-Quakes

How do Quaker schools handle "honor codes"? What are some new or tried-and-true resources for teaching Quakerism? How are Friends schools reacting to terrorism and the U.S. war against it?

You can join these discussions and pose your own questions by subscribing to E-Quakes: A Friends education listserve. Subscribers can post information, ask questions, share ideas, and discuss concerns.

KEEP FCE IN THE LOOP!

Is FCE on your school's mailing list?

Send us your newsletters, press releases, and published articles, so that we can know what is happening and effectively represent our member schools.

BOARD & COMMITTEE

To subscribe, e-mail your name and your relation to Quaker education (teacher, board member, etc.) to QuakerEd@aol.com

FCE on the Web: www.friendscouncil.org
Our website is rapidly expanding! Visit it often and watch it grow and change! See our newly revised resource lists for educators, including sections on Quakerism and peace; peace testimony texts and lesson plans; free downloadable literature; archived issues of the Chronicles; information about FCE events; a directory of schools; and a popular job openings board.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Friends Council on Education is to promote the development of the theory and practice of Quaker education. It helps schools define and maintain their identities, visions, and missions as religious institutions under the care of the Religious Society of Friends.

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Student Voice: *Do I Fight For My Country, of for My Cause?*

Last summer, Delaware Valley Friends School teacher Jim Talone designed an extracurricular project that would enable students to learn through filming and interviewing people about their lives. He hoped it would help students get actively involved in their learning and simultaneously document the experiences of many Quakers living in the Philadelphia area. At the time, he had no idea the project would also serve to help the group grapple with a new war between the United States and the terrorist network in Afghanistan. During the fall, the five students filmed a documentary made from interviews with Quakers speaking about their experiences in the Vietnam War and World War II. The team is currently editing the documentary, which they aim to finish by the end of the school year. Student Amanda Hunt writes about the project.

The events on September 11 moved many of Delaware Valley Friends School's students and faculty to share fears and console one another. As we faced the possibility of war within the very first week of our school year, Jim raised the question of Quakers in wartime. When World War II or Vietnam first erupted, where did Quaker values stand? If one chose to declare oneself a conscientious objector, what was the public backlash?

Our team, consisting of one teacher and five students: Jim Talone, Lara Hamdan, Maura Macfeat, Jennifer Mulligan, Alex Quinn, and myself, were inspired to create this piece. We were struggling with our own morals at the time, wondering whether if faced with the question ourselves, we would go off to combat, or whether we did not believe in war as a solution for political, religious or social conflicts in any situation. We had watched our country suffer a devastating and permanent blow to American spirit and pride. We had watched, over and over, as our aggressors used our own citizens as artillery against us, shattering a monument and ultimately our innocence. There was so much emotion, and we wanted to channel that, to use that energy in the creation of something.



As a group of six people, we are a small force setting out to conquer a big task; with over seventeen hours of tape

accumulated after interviewing seventeen different people, we must now carefully inspect each piece, select a few precious moments from each and create our most coveted masterpiece. Our intention is to present to the audience a documentary that poses the same question all of these people faced, as Quakers, in the onset of a war: "Do I fight for my country, or for my cause?" Their responses were incredibly varying, some surprising us, but all shared common intellect, strong values and opinions, and a determined spirit. We feel honored that each of these people so graciously opened their homes to us, allowing our team to poke and prod at their life histories and all of their battles fought in order to defend and protect their rights and beliefs as individuals.

--Amanda Hunt

12th Grade, Delaware Valley Friends School

Principles of Peace

We Seek to Apply at Olney Friends School

Since September 11, quite a number of us in Friends schools have been asked about our peace testimony, and how we implement such ideas in a school. At Olney Friends School we have tried to articulate what the working principles, peace-forces, actually are, based on our own experience. I have gathered a working list of principles, from our Quaker/radical Christian heritage and other traditions, principles which seem to be operative in our life together here. We are making use of them in our Quakerism class. Some seem quite graspable to the students, others quite difficult to practice--but they are engendering some real conversation and questions, which may be enough at this point.

Preparing for peace:

1. Peace is of God:

Peace is the continuous, creative work of love that is of God, who is unconditional Love.

But peace needs human instruments, to become effective on earth.

2. Peace comes through prayer:

Peace is a sacred gift, a healing energy we must daily ask for through prayer--we do not own it, but are called to share what we receive with all, and especially with those who seem to be our enemies.

3. Naming obstacles to inner peace:

There are elements in our heart, mind, and body that may block our receptivity to peace--our first prayer is for receptivity, for help in identifying and offering up those negative habits of feeling, thought, and action that are keeping us from living and sharing the energy

Practicing peace:

7. Loving others as oneself:

When we practice leaving our selfishness, respecting others as if they were ourselves, peace can begin to happen (Luke 10:25-37). This respect may, in time, expand to include not only the human family, but all living things and the earth which sustains us.

8. Direct, timely address of concerns:

As described in Matthew 18:15-21, conflict, and the misperceptions that may have given rise to it, are best resolved at the "local" level, with a one-on-one talking through of the conflict, and of steps for healing, by the parties directly involved. If still needed, a trusted third party should be brought in to listen and mediate. If, after this, there is not yet resolution, a community leader or disciplinary body may be required to decide the matter.

9. Embracing natural and cultural differences:

Many frictions and hurts between people arise from fear and misunderstanding of natural, cultural differences in gender, age, personality, ethnicity, language, and worldview--we seek to become a people of peace by honoring and affirming such human differences as gifts which make the community whole.

10. Resolving unjust differences:

Some humanly and socially-imposed differences among people, however, such as acute disparities in wealth, power, privilege, life expectancy, and opportunity, are not to be celebrated, but changed as inherently unjust. Peace calls us to a life of patient work toward resolving these disparities.

11. Lifting up the good in others:

There is good to be found in every person, no matter how disturbed or violent--the more we trust and lift up the good in others, the more likely they are to awaken to the good within, and to respond in kind.

12. Reducing, transforming violence:

When suddenly faced with violence, let us stop and pray for a moment of non-reaction, so that, in that moment, we might be guided into a nonviolent response. As Jesus tells us in the words "resist not the evildoer" (Matt. 5:39), only a nonviolent response

of peace.

4. Naming seeds of violence:

Much violence is rooted in inwardly harbored fear and pain--understanding and meeting our own fear and pain prepares us to understand and meet it in others, and the violence which may flow from it.

5. Sharing truth in love:

Honest listening and honest speaking to one another, in kindness, are basic ingredients for a peace-seeking community.

6. Right means become right ends:

The long-term goal we seek can become reality only when we choose means each day that are consistent with that goal--we build world peace by peacefully meeting the needs of this hour.

will reduce the force of a violent action--especially effective is the practice of forgiveness, which is the prayerful absorption of another's negative energy, transforming it into active love.

--Ken Jacobsen

Head, Olney Friends School, Barnesville, OH

LOOK FORWARD TO A NEW YEAR! FCE WORKSHOPS, 2002-2003

<p>FOR TEACHERS & ADMINISTRATORS</p> <p>Educators New to Quakerism</p> <p>Quaker Testimonies in School Life</p> <p><i>click for details</i></p>	<p>FOR HEADS OF SCHOOL</p> <p>New Heads Workshop</p> <p>Elementary & Secondary Heads Meeting</p> <p><i>click for details</i></p>	<p>FOR TRUSTEES & HEADS OF SCHOOL</p> <p>Issues and Answers on the Critical Responsibility of Friends School Governance</p> <p><i>click for details</i></p>
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*R*eflections Letter from the Executive Director *The Peace Testimony and Quaker Education: Philosophy and practice in today's world*

During the first weekend in February, I had the rare and wonderful opportunity to join a group of Friends school educators and Paul Lacey, author of *Growing into Goodness* and clerk of the American Friends Service Committee board, to discuss Friends schools' responses to the current world situation. We explored the gamut of practical questions, from, "How do we talk about the peace testimony in our classes with integrity amidst our own confusion?" to philosophical questions, such as "What is peace? Does peace mean an absence of war?" We began our exploration with a reflection on three aspects of the peace testimony:

- What does the peace testimony mean to me as an individual witness?
- What does the peace testimony mean as a group witness (a school community witness)?

- What does the peace testimony mean as an international influence?

In keeping with Quaker tradition, we ended the conference with as many questions as when we began, yet we covered deep personal territory and wrestled with personal, classroom, and whole school responses to the peace testimony. Throughout this provocative conversation, we spoke with honesty and discovered that no one is alone in still thinking about the complex issues raised by September 11, particularly the issues around nonviolent resolution of conflict. Teachers felt strongly that what we can do, as educators, is to influence the growth of children into adults who can create a different world and that what we do with our students has a ripple effect on parents.

There is a tremendous amount of work going on in all Friends schools as we bring the peace testimony into focus and wrestle with its meaning in the 21st century. Inspired by those educators, who have communicated about their work to us, I offer the following queries for further dialogue in our schools.

- The original text most frequently cited for the peace testimony is the 1660 declaration by London Yearly Meeting, which begins, "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end." What would the peace testimony look like in 21st century language and context?
- How do we, as Friends school educators, continue our own spiritual growth and exploration, reflecting on issues of pacifism when our own foundations have been shaken?
- How can we be together now as adults in a safe and caretaking way while working productively with others whose value systems may not resonate with nonviolent conflict resolution?
- What do we do in school with personal feelings and thoughts about issues of pacifism that are not in support of what our government is doing in current world situations?
- How do we help students learn about the roots of poverty and violence and the effects of violence and war?

The examples we set as role models in our school communities, the values we espouse and live by, the honesty with which we approach dialogue, the respect we give to different viewpoints, and the seizing of the teachable moments--which are present every day--will keep us moving forward as a network of change agents, necessary in today's world.

--Irene McHenry, **Executive Director**

