

Friends Council
Education

Chronicles

OF QUAKER EDUCATION

WINTER '00

Schools in the Inner City: *Partnership with the Community*

Germantown Friends School (GFS) is located in an inner-city neighborhood in Philadelphia. It was not always this way. Fifty years ago, Germantown was the second largest shopping area in Philadelphia. People came from all over the greater metropolitan area and New Jersey to enjoy its shops, restaurants, and theaters. In the 1950s, as in many neighborhoods in cities around the country, things began to change. White middle-class flight was a reality and the once thriving community became more and more economically depressed.

In the late 1950s, GFS received a tantalizing offer. A benefactor offered to donate beautiful acreage of rolling farmland in a suburban location so that the school could relocate, far from the problems and tensions of a declining neighborhood. However, the decision whether to stay or go was not as simple as one might think. The Germantown Friends Meeting and the School Committee wrestled with the decision. "Our first interest was remaining a Friends school," explained Steve Cary, clerk of the School Committee at the time. "We were a school that belonged to Germantown Meeting and we thought that if we were going to be a Quaker school, we were better off being on the same property as the Meeting."

The school also stayed because of a feeling of responsibility to the community. "Germantown was in trouble," said Steve. "People were fleeing and we felt that it was important to try to help Germantown and be a part of the community." As Ellie Elkinton, admissions director explained, "If we were going to stay in Germantown, we had to know why we were staying. We had to be relevant to the Germantown community. GFS has been an anchor in northwest Philadelphia and has prevented many families from moving out, including GFS faculty and administration." In 1965, the Community Scholarship program began. It currently provides full scholarships to 25 students in grades 5 & 12, most of whom reside in Germantown.

Dick Wade, head of school, remarked, "For a long time, we thought it was enough just to be here. Beginning in the 1990s, we realized that we had to develop a relationship with the community that was one of institutional mutuality. We are always looking for ways that GFS can serve the community. We recognize that our school's survival depends on the survival of Germantown. Now we show up for community meetings and are an integral part of this community."

Kathy Paulmier, community involvement coordinator, commented, "I am a resident of the community so I can go to community meetings as a resident, school representative, or monthly meeting representative. My role is to act as a liaison between the school and the community. We try to match the resources of the school with the needs of the community." Both the School Committee and the Parents' Organization have community involvement subcommittees whose mission is to raise the level of awareness and empathy toward urban issues and create partnerships with other organizations in the community.

Germantown Friends School facilities are open to the Germantown community in a myriad of ways. "Our gym is used 365 days a year from 7 PM through midnight," remarked Dick. "Our library is open to the public. In March, we hold a big community event in which local churches sing with the GFS choir, followed by a reception. In the summer, we hold a reading and computer skills clinic. We also run Summerbridge on campus, which is directed by a GFS parent." Summerbridge is a national program in which 75 promising inner-city middle-schoolers are taught by high school and college students, five days per week during the summer and continue in a weekly enrichment program during the academic year. The goal of the Summerbridge is to prepare these students to be enrolled in a college-preparatory

public or private school program.

"It is important to remember that the school's relationship with the community is one of mutual respect and learning," explained Kathy. "Not only is Germantown an integral part of our curriculum, our students are learning tolerance, compassion, and a sense of responsibility to the larger community." Germantown students use the community for an array of out-of-classroom opportunities in history, urban affairs, politics, and the environment. Dick added, "Germantown provides us with an incredible learning lab for our students. There is tremendous power in learning from difference -- ethnic, economic, urban versus suburban. The students at GFS learn to view the world with greater complexity." Rita Goldman, director of multi-cultural affairs remarked, "Cities are not dead yet! The students learn how to navigate in a city environment and take public transportation. These are life skills they can use wherever they go."

"Let's face it," said Ellie. "Parents do not send their children to Germantown Friends School because we are doing good things for Germantown. They send their kids here because of our strong academics and our Quaker values, but everything we do with the community comes out of Quaker testimonies and beliefs. Parents eventually understand the connection between Quakerism and our partnership with the community. Their children definitely learn to feel a sense of connection and responsibility to the neighborhood. For many, supporting the local community becomes part of their lives as adults because of their experience at GFS."

GFS along with William Penn Charter School and Greene Street Friends School, two other Friends schools located in Germantown, are embarking on a major project to work with community organizations to save the historic Germantown YWCA. Targeted for closing due to financial problems and a decaying facility, the YWCA has been a hub of community life for decades. Kathy asserted, "The three Friends schools have formed a partnership with community organizations and plan to involve all the resources at our disposal to help save the Y-- fund-raising, management, community organization, and maintenance skills. Our students will learn what can be accomplished if enough people care and take action."

"GFS hopes to be on the cutting edge of what it means to be a diverse, multicultural community in admissions, community involvement, and curriculum. We have come a very long way from the 1950s," asserted Rita. Dick added wryly, "It certainly is easier to demonstrate Quaker values and testimonies when you are part of an inner-city neighborhood."

Frankford Friends School was founded in 1833, in what was then farmlands surrounding Philadelphia. Over the decades, the farmland gradually gave way to a thriving area that included hospitals and industries. Both professionals and working-class families made their homes in northeast Philadelphia. "We had 160 students in our glory days of the 1960s," J. Terrence Farley, head of school, remarked. "Many professionals sent their children to Frankford Friends even though we have always had a commitment to providing a Friends education to a diverse population. That is why our tuition has always been one of the lowest for independent schools in the city."

Since the 1960s, the area around Orthodox and Penn Streets and surrounding neighborhoods has seen a rapid decline. "Many families who could afford to have moved to the suburbs, causing a tremendous decline in the economic base of the area. At one time, most of our faculty lived in the surrounding neighborhoods," said Madge Trickey, business manager who has been with the school for 29 years. "I am the last employee who still lives in the community."

How has the school survived? "Through very careful money management," said Terry. "Our enrollment is down to 110 because we just do not have wealthy areas of the city nearby to counterbalance the poverty in the surrounding community. What is so amazing and so heartening is how attached and committed the Frankford Friends School community, including the Frankford Monthly Meeting, parents, employees, and alumni, are to this school. Families may move out of the area, but they want their children to graduate from the school. They continue to support the school in any way they can."

In 1993, Frankford Friends Meeting and School participated with 103 other organizations in the community to write the Frankford Plan, a plan of action to redevelop the area. Meetings of the consortium were often held at the Frankford Meetinghouse because it represented neutral ground. "We have made progress," commented Madge who, along with her husband, represented the Meeting and School in writing the Frankford Plan. "It took a long time for the area to

decay, so it will take awhile to come back."

Meanwhile, Frankford Friends School uses the community to study history, swims at the New Frankford Community Y, and walks the two blocks to the city library. "I feel like we are definitely part of this community and here to stay," said Terry, "but we are also an oasis of Quaker values for the students and families who come here."

Schooled in Diversity: *History of Racial Diversity in Quaker Schools*

An Interview with Pat Macpherson

How did you get the idea for the "Schooled in Diversity" Research Project?

I got the idea from Joyce Canady Carter, Class of 1953, who came to Westtown 18 months ago to plan her reunion with her class. She mentioned that she was interested in the experiences of other African-American students at Westtown in the 1940's and 1950's. We know that two African-American women committed suicide after Westtown. It raised questions for Joyce and for myself. It must have been so isolating for these young people to be the only blacks in their class. The experience would have been made more difficult because Westtown is a boarding school so the sense of social isolation would have been much greater.

I was also intrigued about having Joyce and other alumni actually interviewing the people that they knew. In activist research, you try to empower the people that you are studying by making them the researchers. They can ask and answer their own questions. It is about giving voice to people who have not previously had voice or audience. This seemed like a wonderful application of those principles. Through the research and the upcoming conference and publication, we can give public voice to this untold story.

How did the vision of the project evolve from just studying alumni from the 1940s & 1950s to all alumni? Why did you decide to include other Friends schools in the project?

I thought that it would be extremely interesting to try to look at the different historical decades to see if they corresponded to different eras in diversity. I wondered if the experience of African-American students changed radically by the mid-60's when I was at Westtown. If we interviewed alumni over 50 years, could the researchers identify different eras and would those eras be correlated to the critical mass of non-white students that were at the school? If you have just a few African-American students, is that going to be an assimilation era? The Black Power movement began in the 60s and went well into the 70s. This should create a very different experience for black students. Then, as you get more people of color, not all African-Americans, the politics of diversity get much more complicated. Is there an emerging last stage of a multicultural community that would allow people, especially whites, to move beyond their defensive positions and build something together? This certainly would be the goal for our schools and society, in general.

It was in talking to FCE that the idea of doing the research at other schools came to mind. It did occur to me that it would be useful at Germantown Friends School because the School Committee has done a lot of work on increasing diversity. This costs money among other things and needs a lot of leadership. We could use what we learn from research like this to inform our deliberations and planning as a board. How could we possibly understand where we are with diversity today, unless we have some glimmer of understanding about the impact diversity has had in the school in the last 25 years? We say things like, "We benefit from diversity," but what does that really mean? We need the whole story of what has happened before we can move forward. This just fed my sense that this was a project worth doing and worth trying to make public.

What are we asking from a school to take part in this project?

Schools need to come up with a realistic plan for research into their own history. Westtown has a huge database for their alumni. Small schools do not have that. It may be much harder for them to find their alumni of color. I think interviewing alumni is a great way to do this work if it is possible. I also think that you can study the story of the school's desegregation in other ways and try to bring more voices into that story. There may be an official version that is perhaps a bit self-congratulatory about how it happened. You need to get beyond that. People who were there at the time and were not at the center of power may have interesting things to say about the impact of desegregation on their lives and on the school. There might be faculty from the different decades who could think about these questions and

may have observations to make. White alumni can help as well. We found a young white woman from the class of '79 to interview her black classmate. They had this experience in common and yet, clearly, the white woman was struck by how differently the black woman had experienced her entire time at Germantown Friends School.

What is the next step in the research?

Each school will need the kind of a coordinator that can drive this project forward. Alumni who have interest and time can do the research. All the interviews are taped and then transcribed. In January, as many of the researchers as possible will come to Westtown for an interpretation of the transcripts. At the meeting, we will talk about what we see in the interviews.

There are four general questions that we are asking of the research:

1) What common features are there to black students' experiences over 50 years? 2) How have black students' experiences changed over time? 3) How have black students been affected by white attitudes? and 4) How have white attitudes changed over time? I don't know if these four questions are going to be the glue that holds the findings together and keeps us focused, or whether people are going to see very different things in the research.

Have we made any progress over the years?

The value of Quaker beliefs and actions has been very important for a lot of African-Americans. They found that the respect for every individual was a critical part of Quaker community. Many experienced that belief as real and not just something that the schools paid lip service to. Black alumni were very much in appreciation of the ideal of the interracial community in the school, even though it was not perfect. They felt that it was a functional model, worth working toward.

However, there is also hypocrisy in the schools and there are ways in which whites are sticking their heads in the sand about these issues. This makes the African-American alumni and myself all the more keen to have white educators look at the reality so that we can deliver the real promise of Quakerism. What we are reaching for in terms of a multicultural community is possible, but white educators need to overcome their fear about what we are going to be told from black alumni. That is why I am hoping that because we are presenting the research from the African-Americans' point of view, participants will be able to focus on the richness of that experience. Whites are not personally accused or evaluated and, if they can immerse themselves long enough in the findings, they will perhaps feel safe enough to begin to shift their point of view.

What is your vision for the use of this research? We are not just doing this to write a history book.

We can use the research to discern what are the factors that help us to move toward our goal of creating a multicultural community and what are the factors that are harmful to creating such a community. It is not about looking to blame particular people or to have a grievance session, but rather to search together for what was creating the experience for students of color in the different eras.

When a person presents her experience of a situation at a fairly intimate level, that person is offering something of herself to others. Teachers do not get enough of the kind of nourishment in which people talk frankly about their experience of the power politics in schools. I think that the time is right, both historically and because of the strength of our Quaker school community, to talk about power and racism in our schools. It is safer to listen to the experience of other schools, rather than your own, but it can give you a place to start with your own school.

Will this research give us information to help us move towards the multicultural community you described before?

Yes. For school committees, for instance, to understand what African-American students are getting or not getting out of their schools, what their parents hopes and dreams were in sending them to Friends schools, how teachers may inadvertently or unconsciously react to growing numbers of students of color in their classrooms - there are just all sorts of issues that people in schools need to understand better in order to commit to managing the diversity they have and then, perhaps, deciding that more diversity is better. For some schools, more diversity is not going to be very feasible and, given what their school is all about, they can in good conscience say, "This is who we are and how we are made up." In a sense, the research will help people to think beyond some politically correct idea about multiculturalism.

Everyone can learn from listening to people with less power. You can learn about what your power structure looks like from someone who is on the margin. The school can decide whether they want to try opening up the power structure. Even though, this project is focused on racial diversity, specifically with African-Americans, this could be used to begin studying other kinds of diversity.

What will be happening at the April 5, 2000 "Schooled in Diversity" Gathering?

I want to include a kind of overview of the history of different eras of diversity because I think it is a great framework to use as a starting point. Also, I have invited African-American alumni there to present or answer questions about their era so that the history is not something that is canned and controlled by white people like myself, but is articulated by the alumni. I think that is going to be the most powerful selling point. The third component has to be the "How-To." Panelists will describe how they researched the desegregation history at Germantown Friends School, Westtown School, and Media-Providence Friends School and how this can be done at other schools. Some of the alumni will talk about how they got involved in this work, and then, how they got others involved by using their own network.

We want to roll this out to as many Friend schools as possible because we think we have something to say from the findings of this project, not only to Friends schools, but to the wider education community.

Pat Macpherson is coordinator of alumni relations at Westtown School, Westtown, PA. She is also clerk of the School Committee at Germantown Friends School. Pat will be presenting the model and findings of this project at the University of Pennsylvania Ethnography Conference in March 2000. She will be facilitating a training session for other Friends schools to participate in the "Schooled in Diversity Project" on April 5, 2000 at Westtown School. The "Schooled in Diversity Project" is being sponsored by the Friends Council on Education. For more information, contact Carolyn Friedman at FCE.

Discipline in a Friends School: *Teaching Children to Care*

What good is academic learning if young people don't learn to become contributing members of society?

-- Jane Nelson, Positive Discipline

The word discipline is derived from the Latin root disciplina, meaning learning. A Friendly approach to discipline requires a social curriculum that flows through every classroom activity and teaches children self-control, while creating and strengthening community.* New Garden Friends School, a Pre-K-8 school, located in Greensboro, North Carolina, has been teaching a social curriculum for the past six years. All other learning that occurs in the school emanates from teaching children how to behave individually and in community. "It all started about six years ago when we realized that the students' behavior in our all-school meeting for worship was completely out-of-control," reported Donna Peterson, a kindergarten teacher. "As a faculty, we did not know what to do about it. Nothing we tried had a long-term effect on the behavior of the kids. I happened to see a newsletter published by the Northeast Foundation for Children and it seemed like they were offering a method to manage behavior. I attended a one-day workshop and that was the beginning."

Donna presented what she had learned to Marty Goldstein, co-head of the school, who was so excited about the possibilities of the program that he attended a week-long training session in Massachusetts. The curriculum, "Teaching Children To Care," was then presented to the entire staff at a retreat. We had all the pieces of the puzzle, but the program helped us fit them together," said David Tomlin, co-head of the school. "It was really so simple and didn't cost anything, but time. However, it has had an enormous impact on our community. Some educators may worry about taking time out from academics, but as Ruth Charney writes in her book, teaching children how to behave is hardly a waste of time if we envision our schools as centers dedicated to social growth and ethical behavior."

At the beginning of the year, using a process of consensus, each class develops a set of rules for their behavior in the classroom and in the school, which are then posted in the classroom. Rules may include the "Stop" rule -- asking

someone to stop an annoying behavior, the "Golden" rule -- treating others as you would like to be treated, taking care of classroom materials, and doing your best work at all times. Physical or threatening behavior is not tolerated. Monica Sherry, a first/second grade teacher remarked, "With the younger children, we need to develop rules that cover a wide variety of their activities because they are just learning how to behave in a group. In fact, we spend the first few weeks of the school year modeling appropriate behavior like how to sit in circle, and then practicing that behavior with the kids." Donna added, "In the earlier grades, we often use puppets to act out a situation or interaction that did not follow the classroom rules. The children interpret what should have happened. The kids will often say, 'Don't you think we need a puppet show about that?'"

The program also involves a step system of time-outs for students who do not follow the rules. "Time-out is not a punishment," said Ann Sherman, a third/fourth grade teacher. "We present it to the kids as a time when they can collect their thoughts. Students in time-out have chosen to break a rule that we have all agreed to. This gives them the opportunity to reflect on their behavior and make another choice. The kids are learning to change and control their own behavior."

New Garden Friends School modified the program for their middle-school students in order to keep the process fresh. "We found the middle school students asking to have the same rules they had last year," reported Jen Gebo, the middle school science teacher. "They were getting bored with the process and it was losing its meaning. Now, at the beginning of the year, the whole middle school takes time out each day to come to agreement about what values are important to us as a community -- things like friendship, humor, curiosity, diversity. Then we decide what guidelines we need in order to support those values." Time-out in middle school is called Centering. "You may not believe this, said David, "but we have had middle-school students say, 'I need to go to Centering because I was the one talking.'"

The system of behavior in this school community is clear and visible to both teachers and students. "Because this is a school-wide program, teachers have the freedom to discipline students in other classes. The expectations for behavior are the same whether a student is in Pre-K or eighth grade. Teachers feel more in control," remarked Donna. The faculty agreed that they are actually saving time by working on guidelines for behavior proactively in the beginning of the year, rather than reactively in bits and pieces throughout the year. "And it is so much less stressful," added Monica.

How has this program impacted the community at the school? "The whole process is really about building community and how we treat each other in that community," replied Jen. "It takes a lot of communication to build community. We work very hard at communicating when we are trying to come to agreement by consensus. We all get to know one another and each student learns about give and take -- what is important to him or her as an individual, and what is important to others, both teachers and students. Both have to be honored. That creates community."

"I think I would have to say that the administration and faculty at New Garden Friends School are social curriculum evangelists!" laughed David. "Prospective families cannot get over how respectful the students are to the teachers and to each other. We have purchased about fifty books for parents because they have been so impressed with the results. I had a student from high school return to tell me that he was being bullied in his new school. He knew he couldn't use the "Stop" rule that we use here, but that somehow he would have to develop his own action plan to stop being bullied. He approached the bully and said, 'Why do you need to be doing this? How can we work it out?' The bullying stopped. That student had internalized the system. Though every situation won't work out that well, we had given him tools and taught him a way of behaving in the world that he can use for the rest of his life."

* Charney, Ruth. Teaching Children to Care. Northeast Foundation for Children, 1991.

Copies of the book, Teaching Children to Care, can be purchased for \$15.00 (a 40% discount from list price) from the Friends Council on Education. Contact April at 215-241-7245 or e-mail quakered@aol.com to order.

**SPIRITUALITY IN ACTION: QUAKERS IN EDUCATION IN THE NEW
MILLENNIUM**

presented by: Friends Association of Higher Education, Friends Council on Education, and Earlham at Earlham College & Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, Indiana on June 22 - June 25, 2000

Keynote Speaker: **Parker Palmer**

Noted Quaker Teacher and Writer; Author of such inspiring books as *The Courage to Teach*, *The Active Life*, *To Know as We Are Known*, *The Company of Strangers*, and *Let Your Life Speak*.

Educators from Friends colleges and PreK - 12 schools, as well as Quakers in education in non-Quaker institutions, are gathering to discuss the future of Friends beliefs and values in education.

Why should you make this conference a priority to attend?

Presentations of academic papers, courses, and programs by seasoned educators that will help us to prepare for the future.

Panels of teachers, college presidents and school heads, student life and campus ministry administrators, Quakers in non-Quaker institutions, and others who will help us identify the critical issues facing Friends education.

Workshops in which participants will have the opportunity to ask the important questions, explore common problems, and share ideas.

Worship opportunities.

We invite you to submit papers and presentations that will turn "Spirituality in Action" in our institutions and lead us forward into the new millennium. As you plan your proposal, we encourage you to be innovative and bold. Some suggested themes include, but are not limited to:

- Does Friends Education have Anything Distinctive to Offer to Students and the World in the Year 2000 and Beyond?
- Frontiers in the Curriculum of Friends Pedagogy
- Do Friends Testimonies still have Validity in the 21st Century?
- Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of Students and Ourselves in a Secular World
- Who Will Be Our Teachers? Who Will Be Our Students? Who Will Govern Our Schools?
- How can Friends Education Strengthen and Nurture the Religious Society of Friends?
- The Challenge of Diversity in Friends Schools and Colleges
- Embracing Conflict in our School Communities
- Educating for the Moral Growth of Our Students
- Countering our Materialistic, Violent, Consumer Society
- Teaching Peace, Justice, and Social Change in a Complex World
- The Challenge of Building Community in a Post-Modern Society
- Confronting the "Isms" (Racism, Sexism, Classism) in the 21st Century
- What Will We Need to Know Regarding Technology in the Next Millennium

Send one-page proposals by March 1, 2000 to:

Kate Holz at the Friends Council on Education

Conference Costs: \$125 plus room and board.

Registration Packets to be Mailed: February 28, 2000.

DON'T MISS THIS EXCITING EVENT **Student Film Festival on Quaker Values**

Brooklyn Friends School (BFS) is sponsoring The Bridge Film Festival and is asking middle and upper school students in Friends schools to create and submit films that focus on issues and concerns that reflect Quaker values. The festival will promote value-based filmmaking as a counter to the negative values often portrayed in the national media. The Bridge Film Festival provides a wonderful way for middle and upper school students to connect with other Friends school students on important issues.

Ten films will be selected as finalists by a distinguished panel of judges. The Academy Award-winning actress, Susan Sarandon, is the Honorary Chairperson for the event. The films will be screened at Brooklyn Friends School on May 6, 2000 and will receive awards in many categories. BFS has received a grant to duplicate and distribute the finalist films to other Friends schools with middle or upper school programs.

For more information, contact Andy Cohen at 718-852-1029, X458 or e-mail: acohen@brooklynfriends.org.

FRIENDS SCHOOL BEST PRACTICES LIBRARY

The Friends Council on Education is creating a Library of Best Practices in Friends Schools. This Library will allow Friends schools to share their knowledge and experience with other schools in a variety of areas related to Quaker testimonies and beliefs. Best Practices can be short or long, lesson plans, activities, policies, or procedures.

SO, open up the file cabinets, your desk drawers, and the notebooks that have been sitting on shelves, and send the Council your schools very best efforts in translating Quaker beliefs into practice. Library Topics include:

- **Religious & Spiritual Studies for Students**
- **Meeting for Worship Orientation and Practices**
- **Educators Orientation to Quakerism**
- **Quakerism and the Curriculum**
- **Quaker Decision-Making/Meeting for Worship for Business**
- **Service Learning**
- **Peace, Justice, and Social Change Studies**
- **Conflict Resolution**
- **Community-building Practices**
- **Diversity Practices and Programs**
- **Student Government**
- **Inter-generational Programs**
- **Discipline**
- **International Exchanges**
- **Friends School Mission Statements**
- **Governance – Board Structure and Function**
- **Evaluation and Development of the Head of School**
- **Evaluation and Development of Teachers**
- **Faculty/Staff Policies**
- **Meeting/School Relationships**
- **Parents' Associations**
- **Tuition Remission Policies**
- **Fundraising Practices**
- **Admissions Practices**
- **Publications/Resources**
- **Technology in a Friendly Context**

Send submissions to Kate Holz. If your Best Practice can be sent via e-mail, so much the better! Since it is the Year 2000 rather than the Year 1000 (as the FCE Technology Committee keeps reminding me!), we hope that the Best Practices Library will be available on our website as well as on hard copy in the office.

