



**West Chester
Friends School**

Learning and Living in the Light



“At Meeting”

Watercolor

Circa 2004

Lee Broderick

Alum Parent Artist

How We Do Things in our Friends School

www.wcfriends.org



West Chester Friends Classroom Building Richard Bollinger Pennsylvania Fine Artist

“Growing the Light In Every Child”

Welcome to our Friends School community!

A Quaker school offers your child a combination of academic excellence and spiritual depth. 'Friends' believe Truth is continuously revealed. Truth seeking, inquiry, reflection, creative expression, critical thinking, dialogue, worship, and service all work together to find Truth. Here are some of the gentle and practical ways your child and family will experience the “growth in the Light” day to day at West Chester Friends School. You will learn more about Quakerism, and what we do here with the children, to help children 'grow into goodness'.

Learning Through Inquiry and Reflection



Near Ruidoso, New Mexico Watercolor Anne Wyeth McCoy 1915-2005 WCFS Class of 1927

“Let us try then what love will do.” **William Penn ~ 1644-1718**

Early English Quaker, founder of Province of Pennsylvania, advocate for democracy and religious freedom, successful treaties with Lenape Native Americans, planned city of Philadelphia

Friends believe spiritual, social and intellectual growth happen together. Children grow and learn in purposeful, nurtured classrooms, where kind teachers encourage by word and example, courtesy, respect and compassion, while engaged in a cooperative search for knowledge, insight and understanding. The children find much is learned from listening, thinking, questioning and deciding as they are guided and encouraged to move toward finding the Truth.

Acting With Optimism



West Chester Friends Community School Watercolor H.C Hopkinson Circa 1985

“Walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone.”

George Fox ~ 1624-1691

English Dissenter, minister , Founder of Religious Society of Friends known as Quakers or Friends

Quakers seek to nurture a 'particular sort of personhood'. Friends are optimistic about love and goodwill as tools to mend the 'affairs of humanity'. In Friends classrooms laughter, joy, caring and happiness are considered the right of all. Loving care and kind deeds for schoolmates and teachers, and for all those in our nearby and global communities are expected and modeled daily as teachers and the children learn and live together, “walking cheerfully over the earth” for good.

Working Together for Good



Knitted Baby Caps

Ongoing Gifts to Chester County Hospital

West Chester Friends Children

*“Right is right, even if everyone is against it, and wrong is wrong,
even if everyone is for it.” William Penn ~ 1644-1718*

Friends encourage social responsibility to the human family. Children are asked to be 'thought leaders' and to consider their choices carefully, to choose the right path, to serve others, to be socially and thoughtfully caring and 'use words' to move toward Peace. Friends believe that faith requires action in the world. Children share in journals and writings how they feel, and what they've done to connect with and help others in our world. The children are encouraged to be considerate of others, to be compassionate, to have empathy, and to live by the belief that we are here to serve.

Searching for Truth in the Silence



Indigenous Dolls Peace Wreath

Guatemalan Native Peoples

*“True silence is the rest of the mind, and is to the spirit
what sleep is to the body...” William Penn ~ 1644-1718*

Each week the school's religiously diverse community, with parents welcome to attend, gathers for Meeting for Worship to quietly listen deeply, and seek the truth in silent meditation. Friends believe there is 'that of God in everyone.' The children are helped to learn to listen to their 'Inner Light' and if so moved to speak from within their hearts. They grow to learn that reflection is a path to understanding and the connection between one's outer and spiritual life is a source of strength and consolation. The children come to know that Truth is found in the quietness of the gathered community.

Embracing Diversity



Fired Tiles Mural 2005

WCFS Students

Dennis Haggerty 1947-2012 Teacher Artist

“Conduct is more convincing than language” John Woolman ~ 1720-1772

Quaker minister , abolitionist, animal rights and anti-conscription advocate

Friends believe all people have value and all human life is sacred. As one walks the halls of the school this message is found in its curricular approach to lessons of diverse artistic and intellectual nuance, in the books offered, questions considered, social truth explored, the emphasis on acceptance, and our vivid relationship as a school community to the world family. Appreciation for religious differences, for democracy and the love of freedom, respect for human dignity, and working to improve the lives of the oppressed are lessons.

Our community is widely diverse; the young faces in the classrooms reflect the multicultural world of today.

Families of all faiths, races, styles and paths to their particular truth are welcomed to our 'Circle of Friends'.

* S-P-I-C-E-S *



Peace Dove, Papier-Mache Teacher Connie Nesbitt, Retired First Grade Tradition

Tucked in around the school, you might spy a list of S-P-I-C-E-S. The Quaker or Friends Testimonies Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship. Teachers and children together study these throughout the year incorporating them into lessons and action. Here are a few 'Quaker' ways your child will learn about them and their importance to life at West Chester Friends.

SIMPLICITY Meeting for Singing “Come join Us In A Circle of Friends...” The entire school community comes together in the Meetinghouse in joyous Meeting for Singing once each month. Songs are sung celebrating Quaker testimonies. “Dear Friends, Dear Friends, let me tell you how I feel... I love you so...” Please join us so you can hear your children's voices raised in happy song!

PEACE The Peace Pole and Pinwheels PEACE, Peace, Peace! The Peace Pole, an international project, is in front of the Administration Building. Students painted “Peace” on it in English, Spanish, French, and Japanese, their reminder for all to choose peaceful ways. Children go to the pole at recess to work out differences. Pinwheels made in honor of the United Nations Peace Pinwheels program honor this testimony central to Quaker belief. Join us on International Day of Peace in September.

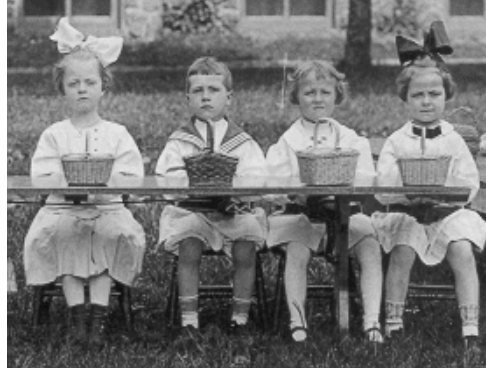
INTEGRITY The Handshake A handshake ends Meeting 'at the rise of Meeting' to end the service in Quaker tradition. The school carries that tradition to the end of each school day. Each child says good-bye and shakes the teacher's hand as they go home. Traditionally our Head of School or Associate Head shares a handshake with each child as they leave each day.

COMMUNITY Meeting for Worship This time to reflect in community is the core of the school's spiritual life. West Chester Friends School is in a caring relationship with West Chester Friends Meeting here on campus. The school gathers for Meeting for Worship just before 9:00 each Thursday. Friends 'listen' in Silence in their own 'spiritual journey'. Classes take turns sitting on the Facing Bench which 'faces' the pews. Our younger children hold meeting in their classrooms, joining 'regular' Meeting when able to sustain silent worship. Our historic 1813 meetinghouse is a calm, peaceful shelter from life's general mode. Symbols such as flags, crosses or verbal symbols such as oaths or pledges are seen as placing institutions before God, and are not present in Friends' meetinghouses or schools. We welcome parents and friends to Meeting. Just come to the Meetinghouse and join your child. Dress as you feel comfortable and drop away the cares of the week while we join together and 'settle into Silence'.

EQUALITY 'Teacher' You'll hear young voices call out: “Hi Teacher Brian!.. Hi Teacher John!” Calling grownups “Teacher” is a Friends tradition for naming people for what they do, honoring and respecting the equality of all people. A capital 'T.' in front of a person's first name, means 'Teacher'. Each person has a valued role in the school life of the children. “There is that of God in everyone.”

STEWARDSHIP Meeting for Worship Buddies Older students 'Buddy' with the younger children. The children attend Meeting together; afterward they read, play or work together on service projects. The older children become role models and kind caregivers of the younger children. 'Meeting buddies' often become lifelong friends and treasure this relationship.

* S-P-I-C-E-S *



Friends Community School Kindergarten Class Circa 1920

A Simple School History

Quaker Block West Chester Friends School is on Quaker Block. Here one finds the school campus and buildings, the Meetinghouse and The Hickman residence for older friends.

Meeting House History The Social Room is part of the original Meetinghouse built in 1813. Take a moment to see the gorgeous 'last of the old growth pine' floor boards and wonderful Quaker prints, paintings and artifacts. The brick part of the Meeting House was built in 1868. Men and women worshiped in separate halves of the building, with a wall separating them. The wall can still be seen – cables lower and raise a wall concealed in the basement and attic.

Historic Artifacts The earliest school, built in 1860 and its original classroom the Eiseman Room named for a former Head, is part of the stone Classroom Building. The stone wall in the school yard was the back of a low shed where Meeting members and students kept horses tethered: a horseshoe artifact is displayed in the Administration building. The school caretaker lived in the brick cottage and kept the basement furnace going to heat the Cottage and the Meetinghouse. A gravestone or two is tucked in the ferns next to the cottage, left behind when a nearby setting was moved. Children of long ago left their mark on the wall at the back of the Meetinghouse kitchen, carving their initials and messages into the stone. The school's art collection and archives feature fine alumni and other artists' works including Phillip Jamison and Anne Wyeth McCoy, original slates with Class Lists, report cards including that of composer Samuel Barber, and intriguing vintage photographs.

An Invitation to Meeting and Meeting for Singing



*“Come join us in a Circle of Friends.
There's always room for one more.
A Circle that never ends,
All you is open up the door.”*

Our door is always open. Please join us. The school community comes together in the Meetinghouse for traditional silent Meeting each week, and once each month for Meeting for Singing when songs are sung celebrating Quaker testimonies.

“Dear Friends, Dear Friends, Let me tell you how I feel.. I love you so...”

And sung at the close of meeting by those gathered:

*“As we leave this Friendly place Love gives light to every face.
May the kindness which we learn Light our hearts 'til we return. “*



Thank you for asking about the
West Chester Friends School experience
for children Age Three to Fifth Grade.
We hope to welcome you to our campus
to learn more about how we are

“Growing the Light In Every Child”
who is a part of our community.

610-696-2937 admissions@wcfriends.org

