**2017 Annual Report**

The Advancement and Outreach Committee charted a new direction this year by re-focusing its efforts on increasing the awareness of the Religious Society of Friends in our geographic area and learning more how we can help Local Meetings (LM) grow.

We conducted a survey and followed-up will all responding LMs to better understand their current outreach efforts from their visitor follow-up practices to their presence on the internet. The survey identified several opportunities to improve the effectiveness of outreach efforts. This information will be used to develop webinars that will be made available to all LMs to help them learn from each other and share what we have learned from our research on effective outreach. The committee also considered how the BYM website could be more welcoming to seekers and how BYM can help smaller LMs, establish a welcoming web presence.

Our committee’s research into how meetings grow has confirmed a strong relationship between local social activism and meeting growth. This is especially important now when there is a resurgence of interest in social issues. LMs that are active in local social issues help increase the awareness of the Religious Society of Friends and its testimonies. In this way, a LM’s social witness becomes an outreach opportunity as the LM and the Religious Society of Friends become better known in the local community.

Again this year, the committee coordinated the participation of 8 LMs in Gay Pride events in DC. The Quaker presence at the event was well received and our give away of rainbow-themed temporary tattoos with the words “Cherish that of God in Everyone” drew many visitors to our booth.

Next year, the committee will work with BYM staff to create opportunities to promote greater awareness of the Religious Society of Friends in our area and establish ongoing relationships between members of the committee and select LMs to:

* share best outreach practices;
* promote technical competency;
* make outreach topic-specific webinars available to LMs; and
* identify ways to improve the effectiveness of the LM’s outreach.

The committee remains concerned about outreach to populations that are under-represented in the Religious Society of Friends. In the coming year we will work more closely with the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee to identify ways to help LMs to be more intentional and effective in their outreach to these under-represented populations.