

## 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

As we write this report, we received the following email:

*To all people involved in TA: [Teen Adventure]*

*Thank you so much for organizing this wonderful program.*

*My son Jesse came back happy, inspired, filled with stories to tell.*

*He is singing, remembering, and missing kids and counselors.*

*He became noticeably stronger, has more endurance.*

*I believe trips like this make these kids to become better people.*

*Thank you!*

Messages like this are what inspire our committee and staff to do the hard work it takes to maintain our camping program and properties.

The Camping Program Committee (CPC) met nine times this year. Four of our meetings were conference calls and five meetings were in- person. Two in person meetings included the camp directors.

We are happy to report that our camps remain healthy, happy places that foster personal and spiritual growth. While there are many challenges to running an outdoor religious education program, the committee has every confidence in our staff and volunteers to provide a safe, nurturing environment for our youth. The communities we create at our four camps are made up of youth 9-17 years old, counselors and directors 18-30+ years old, and adult volunteers and work grant participants. Our work grant program is particularly unique because it allows an adult to work at one of our camps and receive credit toward their camper's fees. We also have work grant adults who contribute their "credit" to our scholarship program. It is not unusual to find retired folks working for a week just so they can be part of a vibrant Quaker community. BYM Camps are special places because we intentionally create them to be loving, diverse places. We are as diverse as the world around us: age, race, sexuality, nationality, gender identity, and cultural background, etc.

Much of the work of our committee is setting camp policy and supporting the operation of the camps. We set the budgets for the camps. We work with the Camp Property Management Committee to set priorities for the physical needs of our camps. We are also working on strengthening our camp alumni program. CPC exchanges liaisons with the Camp Property Management Committee, the Development Committee and Stewardship and Finance. The Working Group on Diversity also reports to us and joins our discussions when they can. Our clerks

represent us on the Youth Safety Policy Working Group and the BYM Finance Group.

In February, we met with the Camp Property Management Committee. An update was given on camp properties and development plans. We also discussed budget issues and heard an update on the Capital Campaign from Ann Venable, BYM Development Director. The idea of the Family Camp Weekends was developed and acted on at this meeting. This spring David Hunter planned one weekend at each camp that included programming for all ages as well as service projects to help accomplish maintenance tasks. These were highly successful and will continue in the future.

Through the year, the Camping Program Committee has worked with Baltimore Yearly Meeting Trustees to develop a workable driving policy. The Camping Program Committee clerks and Camp Program Manager also participated in the conference calls of the Baltimore Yearly Youth Safety Policy Working Group. We continue to work together to create a workable policy that maintains youth safety. The operation of the camping program is different in a number of ways from the operation of other BYM programs, which creates challenges in creating and implementing policies in these areas.

**Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator:** In consultation with the CPC, the Working Group on Diversity applied for funding from the Shoemaker Fund for "Growing Diverse Leadership in BYM." The receipt of this grant has led to the creation of The Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator, who will work with the BYM Camp Diversity Program. We hope this program will "increase diversity at camps, in local Meetings, and the Yearly Meeting," The CPC worked with the Supervisory Committee, the Development Committee, the Development director and the BYM Clerks to create a job description for this position.

**Surveys:** Each fall (post camp), the CPC committee reviews family surveys. A subcommittee calls families that have expressed concerns or recommendations on the surveys. A theme that emerged was confusion and complaints about work grants, kitchen work, etc. Another theme this past fall was that new parents are sometimes confused by the equipment list, expectations on check-in day, and registration. Each of these items were discussed and the committee organized action steps. Each year, we also review possible changes to the survey language for next year to create more clarity. The committee considers these surveys important feedback, and sees them as helpful in improving our program.

**Catoctin Quaker Camp Directorship:** This spring one of our co-Directors, Kathryn Gilbert, resigned due to an employment opportunity. There was been a search through the spring for a new co-Director without success. Kathryn was able to continue to work through the pre-camp and first session of the summer, but has now had to leave for her full-time work. We are grateful for her years of work with the BYM Camping program and wish her well. Fortunately, through the work of our Camping Program Manager, Jane Megginson, and Director Dyresha Harris, camp staff and counselors, the summer has been successful.

**Areas that the committee needs to work on:** This year our camper recruitment was close to last year's numbers but we had difficulty filling slots for different sessions at different camps. The Outreach subcommittee will focus on organizing more open houses and increase outreach to meetings. Counselor recruitment continues to be a concern because many young adults are having to find higher paid summer work or engage in summer internships for future careers. The committee will try to help directors with counselor retention and recruitment. Another area is engaging camp alumni, on which we are working with the Development Director to improve.

**The Firecircle** is (the Camping Program's annual newsletter) goes out to approximately 7,500 camp families and all BYM families. It is by far our largest outreach mailing. Look for it this fall for highlights of this summer's camping season, and encourage Friends, friends, and neighbors to check out our camping program. Our website provides a lot of pictures and information about each of our camps: [www.bymcamps.org](http://www.bymcamps.org).

Camp Program Manager: This report would not be complete without mentioning the hard work and dedication of our Camp Program Manager Jane Megginson. Jane's knowledge of best practices in contemporary camp programs, state laws in 4 states, and Quaker practice help us to run our program in a professional manner that is consistent with Quaker values. Along with Jane, the camping program is supported by the entire BYM office staff. From managing our budget to sending out publications and mass emails, to managing and raising the funds for camp properties and operation, these Friends are an integral part of our camp team. This program is successful because the entire BYM community embraces it on different levels. It takes all of us working together to make our camps wonderful growing places.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting has been running summer camps for almost a century. From the shores of the Chesapeake Bay to the Appalachian Mountains, we have

provided young people and adults, alike, the opportunity to grow physically and spiritually in the natural beauties of this earth. In the Quaker tradition, BYM camps are simple places: rustic cabins nestled in the embracing arms of the forest around them. Relying on human ingenuity and interaction for enjoyment, these camps are a respite from the world whirling around us. In the warm glow of welcoming, nurturing Friends, we find strength and support. Fostering the Light within us all, our camp communities bring strength and comfort to us all, and help prepare us to go forth in the world.

Gary Gillespie (Homewood) and Harry "Scotty" Scott (York), Co-clerks