

CPC Annual Report 2019-2020 For Annual Session

As we prepare our annual report in this highly unusual year, very few of the typical things are happening. We would usually be talking about how everyone is busily preparing for the start of the summer camp season, staff having been hired, trained, and excited to welcome campers, how we had participated in a series of Spring Family Camp Weekends to get properties ready, and that nature has continued to bless us with the gifts that unfold between spring and summer. Thankfully, that last is still true! Our past year has been marked most strongly by many of the things we have had to give up and how we are challenged to continue the spirit of camp when we cannot physically meet. Many of us are more appreciative than ever that nature's gifts still abound, even during this time of great societal unrest due to the global pandemic. Because of the concerns surrounding COVID-19, the committee discerned the need to suspend our program for the season, with much sadness and awareness of the challenges this will cause for our campers and their families, our staff, and the Yearly Meeting as a whole.

Another huge theme this year has been our work to become anti-racists. Last summer several of our staff and campers experienced overt racism during their time at camp. Although we endeavor to create an inclusive, loving community at all of our camps, we became aware that we are not able to shield our campers and staff from discrimination they encounter on the trails or in stores when camp is in session. We also became more aware of the racism that some in our community experience among Friends, even if through ignorance. The anti-racism statement and queries adopted by BYM became a regular part of our meetings after they were presented to us in November at Interim Meeting, but we had begun our study of these issues as a committee after Sunshine Klein suggested that we all read two books about racism in September. Our March meeting with the directors further explored the role of racism at camp with a set of queries they brought to the committee and a discussion that dug deeply into this issue. In June, the protests in our communities after the death of George Floyd brought to light more broadly the racial tension in the United States, that we as a committee and a Yearly Meeting had already been struggling to understand. Although we have started this work and are committed to continuing, there is still an enormous amount yet to be done to understand how we are a part of a racist society and what we are called to do to remake these systems individually, as a program, as part of the Society of Friends, and society at large.

Part of our typical committee work is to meet about 10 times a year as a whole committee, by phone, through zoom, or in person meetings. We also participate in subcommittee meetings as needed to work on camper recruitment, the budget and alumni events. This year we had no alumni events, but put a good deal of energy into hosting open houses and piloting a new referral software to help increase our enrollment at all four camps. We also put some energy into finding a new Director for Opequon Quaker Camp when we received the news that Sean Hickey would not be returning. That process ended up with a shuffling of current directors, with Jesse Miller taking over as the new Director of Opequon, moving from his recent years of co-directing and directing at Catoctin Quaker Camp while Dyresha Harris will now be the solo Director of Catoctin. Each fall we review feedback from campers and camp families in order to adapt our program to meet the needs of our community and to provide the flexibility families want. This year we explored the idea of gender inclusive cabins, mileage limits for older hikers, and allowing unit one campers at Catoctin to attend a two week session without the long trip. It is our goal to provide a fun experience for all campers, as they live in nature in a Quaker community that challenges them to stretch and grow.

With camp closed this summer, there are some serious financial and spiritual impacts. We had to return camper fees already collected, and both Jane and David were partially furloughed. Jane worked very hard to refund all of the camper payments and in an amazing show of support for our program, families donated \$84,419 of the fees back to camp. Many of these are first time donors, which is a remarkable feat for development in this economic environment. Our campers, staff, volunteers, and families all grieve the loss of a summer spent together in community, enjoying nature. The directors and seasonal staff at all the camps were let go, yet many still organized zoom staff meetings to allow a space for processing the loss of camp for any campers or staff who wanted to participate. TA is hosting a weekly zoom meeting for worship throughout the summer. Catoctin is being operated as a campground in July and August so that families can still experience camp in some way and we can defer some of the financial impact of not hosting our full camping program this summer. Our committee hopes to find other ways to give a sense of camp through virtual platforms throughout the summer. It has been a highly unusual year for CPC, but we expect to emerge with a renewed sense of purpose after the pandemic passes. We have high hopes for reopening camp in the summer of 2021.