

2018 CAMPING PROGRAM COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

As we write this report counselors and staff are preparing our camps for another summer of fun, community building, and spiritual growth. The energy level of the young adults who will be leading our children is high and spirited. The difficult winter work of our directors to hire qualified staff who have the necessary skills and who will commit to working in a team environment is over. Now is the time when they bring their team together for training and opening camps, and begin to create the magic that is Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camps.

The BYM Camping Program Committee has been working hard, as well. We meet 10 times a year to evaluate our program, set goals, make policy decisions, and discuss trends in the camping industry which may affect our camps. Primary themes of our work this year have included camper recruitment, expanding alumni engagement, discernment on policy updates related to safety, inclusion, and social media, and long-range planning, among other things.

The CPC Alumni subcommittee organized a very successful 60th anniversary reunion at Catoctin Quaker Camp last September in conjunction with an ad hoc group of camp alumni. We had great attendance with representation from all decades of camp. We hope to repeat this great success this coming September 28th through 30th with a reunion for Opequon Quaker Camp alumni -- both alumni from the pre-Shiloh era and current era of Opequon.

CPC is keenly aware of our responsibility to help with BYM Development activities. Most of our committee meetings include a check-in with Ann Venable, our Development Director. We have pitched in with Development efforts where possible by making calls and striving to find ways to promote BYM and our development efforts, including asking for and receiving donations from alumni at the CQC reunion.

A very successful aspect of our work is our joint venture with the Camp Property Management Committee: Family Camp Weekends. These weekends serve as an opportunity to do service projects at the camps and/or participate in camp activities. It is also a chance for families who are new to camp to visit and see what the property and our programming is like. Although weather often impacts attendance, spirits are always high, the food always good, and the Friendship strong.

Last year we brought to Annual Session our concern about the future site of Opequon Quaker Camp. The question became even more concrete this spring when the group assembled for Family Camp was stranded at camp for an extra night because flood waters blocked the road in and out of Opequon. We continue to seek a way forward on this issue.

This spring Interim Meeting approved revisions to the BYM Youth Safety Policy. CPC participated in those discussions to bring our policy in line with best practices.

The discussion about how to continue the work of the BYM Outreach Inclusion Coordinator has been a challenge for all of us who have participated. This work, funded by a Shoemaker Foundation Grant, has included the establishment of our STRIDE program in Baltimore, Washington, DC, and Charlottesville. (A group has existed in Philadelphia for a number of years.) These groups of young adults establish relationships with local community groups and send campers to our camps. The STRIDE program has had a successful year, and their report will detail those efforts. However, the ad hoc group discussing the future of this program is working for clarity on what the relationship of the STRIDE program should be to the CPC. Should this program come under the oversight of CPC, it will be a major programmatic addition to the work of our committee. We hope to have a resolution by annual session in August.

Our camping program remains strong and vibrant, though our enrollment ebbs and flows. What does not ebb and flow is the powerful spirit of God that guides the work of our camps. Many of our campers and staff identify their camp as their "spiritual home." Baltimore Yearly Meeting's commitment to this program speaks loudly of our commitment to "Let Our Lives Speak" by ministering to the participants of all ages of BYM Camps.