

# Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

## WHAT IS A CLIMATE STRIKE, AND WHAT A BYM FRIEND IS DOING

*Karie Firoozmand (Annapolis)*

When I think back to myself at 15, I can hardly imagine what I would have done if I had known about climate change. I was just beginning to think about life after high school. What might I have thought—and done—if I knew it? How would I have felt if I saw our government failing to act?

I'm grateful for people like Kallan Benson, a 15-year-old Friend from Annapolis Meeting, who is part of a global youth-led movement called Fridays for Future ([www.fridaysforfuture.org](http://www.fridaysforfuture.org)). Their strategy is to strike from school every Friday to demand action from governments all around the world.

You may have heard of Kallan already: she spoke to Friends at Annual Session in August and at Interim Meeting in November. She

*Climate Strike continued on page 2*



*Kallan Benson (far right) and members of Friday for Future.*

## THE ENERGY OF ACTIVISM

*Mary Braun, Development Director*

It's evident all around us! Friends are passionate about making a difference. That difference takes so many forms in local Meetings and throughout Baltimore Yearly Meeting. In this *Interchange*, we want to share with you a sampling of activism pursued by Friends. No matter the pursuit, the inspiration and vision shine through. We hope you will be inspired by the profiles below, and perhaps share your own in an upcoming *Interchange*.

Perhaps the energy of activism is wired into the very DNA of Friends! Many of these initiatives take place in collaboration with others—either through a BYM committee or working group. Others have grown beyond the scope of the Yearly Meeting to link national and international efforts. Your Yearly Meeting helps support, foster and promote communications and collaboration for advocacy and action. Through your active participation in the Yearly Meeting and through your financial support, our collective witness gains strength.

### JIM ROSE

#### (PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING)

**Cause:** Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) is a bipartisan, all-volunteer, statewide alliance seeking legislative changes in Maryland's correctional policies to support alternatives to incarceration, address inequities, and aid citizens returning from prison to lead productive lives, thus, strengthening families and communities.



How long have you devoted yourself to this issue? I have been with MAJR for five years, serving as webmaster, newsletter editor, and meatball chef. See: [www.ma4jr.org](http://www.ma4jr.org).

*Energy of Activism continued on page 8*

## GET READY FOR SUMMER 2020

### ENROLLMENT BEGINS JANUARY 15

Camp Registration for BYM Camps: Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, and TA opens January 15th at 7pm for ALL camp families. For more information, dates, rates, or to register see our website at:

[bymcamps.org](http://bymcamps.org)



## WHAT MAKES KALLAN AND FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE SPECIAL?

*Climate Strike continued from page 1*

was featured in an article with lots of pictures in December's issue of *Friends Journal* ([www.friendsjournal.org/giving-up-childhood-to-avert-climate-catastrophe/](http://www.friendsjournal.org/giving-up-childhood-to-avert-climate-catastrophe/)). A video of her speech at the United Nations Environmental Programme has been going around among BYM Friends ([youtu.be/7RAXMPAVaKc](https://youtu.be/7RAXMPAVaKc) - start watching at 1:48).

And Kallan will be a plenary presenter at the 2020 FGC Gathering in Radford, VA.

### What is she doing that is getting so much attention? Why are Kallan and Fridays for Future so special?

For one thing, Fridays for Future is led by youth. Greta Thunberg, a teen in Sweden, started striking in 2018 and put out an invitation to youth everywhere: pressure your government. Show that this is more important than going to school. Go on strike in front of a government building where you will be seen.

For another thing, it is remarkable to have Kallan, such a powerful actor, in our midst. We are blessed. Kallan started a weekly strike in December 2018 and she is still striking. Kallan has organized and made friends in this movement. She has found others who share her concern, her threatened future, and her determination to hold governments accountable.

One thing I've heard Kallan say is that she takes enormous comfort in the network of people her age who are carrying on the Fridays



*Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friends at September 2019 deep strike.*

for Future movement. How great it is for her to feel seen, heard and understood, surrounded by youth who are taking action on climate change.

And how great it is for Kallan to have the support of her family: her parents, Carl and Kimberly, and her brother, Reece (and Osage, their dog) go on strikes with Kallan. They take pictures. They send out advance emails to recruit participants. They drive Kallan to events like a UN ceremony in New York, her address to the Maryland Democratic Party, and others.

Another thing I've heard Kallan say is that she wants as much of a support network from the Yearly Meeting as we can give her. Since last summer, we have become much more aware of Fridays for the Future and Kallan's role in it (she organizes at the international level, in addition to striking weekly). On September 20, they held a "deep strike," one for which they recruited adult allies. I attended with a sign that said, "LISTEN TO YOUTH," and I recruited others to strike that day and send me pictures. I got back pictures from the die-in at Charlottesville, VA; a school-sponsored strike in Columbia, MD; F/friends from Frederick Meeting at a strike, and I took my own photos of Baltimore F/friends at the strike in front of City Hall. I even got pictures of a strike in Marrakech, Morocco, where Friends joined a strike!

It's winter now, but Kallan continues her Friday strikes in Washington. Her parents make sure she stays fed, watered, and warm. You might want to join Kallan, as others have already done, for one or more strikes. As of this writing, Kallan isn't sure where she will strike during the winter. There are other ways to support Kallan's work too, so if striking in winter isn't your thing, that is ok. I encourage you to email me if you have questions or want to join in. (My address is [kariefir@gmail.com](mailto:kariefir@gmail.com)).

One parting tidbit: Fridays for Future is planning a three-day series of events around Earth Day 2020. I'm planning to spread lots of information among BYM F/friends in advance, so mark your calendars and spread the word. Especially to young people.



*Barb Thomas (Annapolis) at Marrakech strike*

## QUAKER HOUSE OF FAYETTEVILLE CELEBRATES

### 50 YEARS OF PEACE WORK

In late September, a group of people gathered at a luncheon in Fayetteville, North Carolina, to talk and share encouragement about the work which has been done to help soldiers and their families. Former directors and also a few of the many who have been helped by Quaker House over the years told stories and shared how much the work has meant to them. It was a powerful testimony for peace. Quaker House is one of the organizations with which Baltimore Yearly Meeting is affiliated, and which we support financially and also by naming a representative.

Located in Fayetteville, home of the largest US military base, Quaker House is uniquely suited to connect with those involved in serving in the armed forces. There is free counseling for soldiers and family members for domestic violence and sexual assault. Quaker House is active in maintaining the GI Rights Hotline, which provides invaluable information and encouragement to people considering active duty, or getting out of the military. Often, the people receiving this information have felt desperate and with nowhere else to find the information which they have needed. Quaker House staff have developed relationships with chaplains and staff at Fort Bragg, and referrals are shared back and forth.

Quaker House is also involved in educational efforts in the community and at Quaker settings about such crucial topics as Conscientious Objector status, torture by the US military, Moral Injury, and deception in recruiting. Moral Injury is the name for when someone feels so deeply remorseful for what they have done (in the name

of service to our country), that they feel they can never be forgiven. Publications about these topics are available as well. This work is important because many Quakers do not even know families with a member who is in the armed forces, and can be relatively unaware of the issues which are faced.

Our hope as Quakers may indeed be for a world without war, and without military training and the damage that it does to people. But until that time, may we give our support to Quaker House and those who provide help for service members and their families. More information, and donations, contact: [quakerhouse.org](http://quakerhouse.org).



*Monisha Rios speaking to gathered guests at the Quaker House 50th Anniversary Commemoration*

## Legacy Giving - have you planned for the years ahead?

As we close this decade and prepare for our time ahead, what financial provisions have you made for the future? To help you plan for your wellbeing, together with your philanthropic goals, Baltimore Yearly Meeting offers you an array of options. To learn more, see BYM's planned giving web pages which outline the benefits and opportunities available to you. See [www.bymrsf.planned-giving.org/](http://www.bymrsf.planned-giving.org/)

Remember, we are here to assist and offer you links to professional consultation at Friends Fiduciary and others. Contact BYM's Development Director, Mary Braun, at 301-774-7663 or at [Development@BYM-rsf.org](mailto:Development@BYM-rsf.org).



*These Teen Adventure trip leaders (right) seek opportunities, assess risks, coordinate timelines, and forge ahead! Like them, you can be a leader in planning. With foresight your legacy gift will benefit generations to come. (photo from Teen Adventure 2019)*

## “THE GATHERING” – COMING TO A TOWN NEAR US!

*Arthur Boyd (Stony Run Meeting, Baltimore)*

The FGC Gathering is a week of Quaker worship, workshops, and community for all ages, sponsored annually by Friends General Conference (FGC). This year it will be nearby, in the hills of southwestern Virginia. With a theme this year of “Way Will Open,” The Gathering will be held June 28-July 4 2020 in Radford, Virginia.

Each year Friends and friends from around North America come together to form a welcoming, intergenerational and inclusive community. FGC’s arrangements in this campus setting are attuned to differing abilities and ages.

The Gathering offers programming for different ages. Junior Gathering is open for infant through rising 9th graders, while the High School program is for teens from rising 10th grade to just finished high school. Junior Gathering and the High School program offer opportunities for young people to strengthen their spiritual found-

ation and make life-long friends. There is a vibrant Young Adult Friends community for ages 18-35.

Morning workshops and activities (a choice among about four dozen!), afternoon topic groups formed on-the-spot, music springing up on campus walkways, stimulating evening lectures and joyous concerts, late night movies and dances, group outings, and much more fill the days. Or take a break, mingle in conversation groups on campus walks – oh, yes, and even naps are encouraged!

You can attend Gathering for a half-week (3 days) or full-week (7 days). Or extend your Gathering by signing up for one of the pre-Gathering retreats! Scholarships and workgrants are available – register during early registration (between April 1-14, 2020) to have the best access to financial aid.

As the program develops in coming months, updates can be found at [fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering](http://fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering). You can sign up there to receive email updates about the 2020 Gathering. Save those dates - June 28-July 4 2020 - and plan to come to The Gathering in Radford, Virginia. Way will Open. See you there!



### 2020 FGC Gathering

A week of Quaker  
worship, workshops,  
and community for all ages.

June 28 to July 4, 2020

Radford University, Radford, Virginia



**FGC**  
FRIENDS  
GENERAL CONFERENCE

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## BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING EDUCATIONAL GRANTS AVAILABLE!

The BYM Educational Grants Committee is accepting applications for the 2020-2021 academic year. Grants may be applied to expenses associated with undergraduate attendance at accredited post-secondary educational institutions. Attendance may be either full- or part-time. Grants will be awarded on the basis of financial need and the Committee’s assessment of an applicant’s statement of purpose. Grant limits are up to \$2,000 per grantee per year, for a cumulative total of \$8,000. Applications will be accepted between January 1, 2020 and April 24, 2020. Award decisions will be made in May. For further information or if you have questions, please contact the Yearly Meeting Office at 301-774-7663 or online at [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/committees/edloan](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/edloan).

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## SUE THOMAS TURNER QUAKER EDUCATION FUND ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Time to let your favorite Friends School know that grants to help explain Quaker faith and practice to school communities are available once again this year. For over twenty years the Sue Thomas Turner Quaker Education Fund has been supporting this path to understanding and outreach. The application deadline is March 1, 2020. Go to [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/committees/sttqef/application.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/sttqef/application.html) for the application instructions and check our annual reports from previous years to get some ideas about how grants have been used in the past. Please be in touch with us if you have any questions.

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## MILES WHITE BENEFICIAL SOCIETY OFFERS EDUCATIONAL GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Are you an undergraduate student looking for financial support for your studies? Are you a part of an organization that provides learning opportunities for young people in the greater Baltimore region? If so, we invite you to consider applying for an educational grant or scholarship from the Miles White Beneficial Society of Baltimore, which has been supporting scholars and organizations since 1874. We invite you to learn more about Miles White by visiting our page on the BYM Website: [www.bym-rsf.org/who\\_we\\_are/organizations/mileswhite/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/who_we_are/organizations/mileswhite/). The deadline for scholarships and educational grants for 2020 is March 13th. For more information, please contact the clerk of the Education Subcommittee, Amy Schmaljohn, at [amy@schmaljohn.com](mailto:amy@schmaljohn.com).

ALL ARE WELCOME TO A DAY OF JOYFUL COMMUNITY SINGING AT GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2020. THE SINGING WILL BE LET BY RUTH FITZ AND STARTS AT 10:00 WITH MORNING REFRESHMENTS, WARM LUNCH, AND AFTERNOON SNACKS. AND MUSIC ALL DAY.

RUTH FITZ IS AVAILABLE TO LEAD SING-ALONGS AT YOUR MEETINGS. EMAIL [BYMFRIENDLYSINGIN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BYMFRIENDLYSINGIN@GMAIL.COM) FOR INFORMATION OR TO GET ON THE EMAIL LIST FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS.



## BYM SPIRITUAL FORMATION RETREAT IS MAY 15-17, 2020

The Spiritual Formation Working Group invites you to our Spring retreat, which will be held at the beautiful Claggett Center in Adamstown, Maryland. Come for spiritual refreshment and renewal; come for the fellowship of shared meals and conversation with Friends across our Yearly Meeting; come to learn practices that will deepen your local Meeting's experience of spiritual Friendship and community. The Claggett Center offers us comfortable accommodations, lovely mountain views, and walking trails through fields and farmland. Check the BYM website ([www.bym-rsf.org/events/spiritform/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/spiritform/)) for more information on registration, which will open in late winter.

If you can't make it to the retreat, why not bring a bit of the Spiritual Formation program to your local Meeting? We have developed a "mini retreat" that can be offered at your Meeting in a three-hour format. Through time for personal reflection, the practice of deep listening in spiritual friendship groups, and worship sharing as a gathered community, we will learn about the Spiritual Formation Program by experiencing its essential elements. You may decide to start a program before the mini-retreat and use the momentum from the retreat to more firmly establish your new local program. Or you may simply promote and convene the mini-retreat and use that experience to further discern whether your Meeting wishes to establish a local program. The leaders of the mini-retreat can also help with the logistics of starting your local Meeting program, including support for Friends who will facilitate and materials (handouts, readings, queries etc.) that have proven effective. We have offered this mini retreat at Bethesda Friends Meeting and at Little Falls Friends Meeting; we'll be heading to Annapolis Friends Meeting, Patapsco Friends Meeting, and Friends Meeting of Washington in the coming months. Thanks to these Meetings for helping us to grow this resource to BYM. We'd love to bring it to your Meeting

next! If you're interested, please reach out to the co-clerks of the Spiritual Formation Working Group Alan Evans ([alanwe46@gmail.com](mailto:alanwe46@gmail.com)) or Amy Schmaljohn ([amy@schmaljohn.com](mailto:amy@schmaljohn.com)).

## BYM ANNUAL APPORTIONMENT AND FINANCE MEETINGS

The Stewardship and Finance Committee will be holding two Apportionment and Finance meetings for local Meeting representatives in April 2020. At the meetings, we will discuss the draft 2021 Yearly Meeting budget, the proposed 2021 Monthly Meeting apportionment amounts, and the issues the committee and staff worked through to develop both. Please bring your questions—big or small, general or specific. Most importantly, please come prepared to weigh in on the draft budget, apportionment amounts, and the apportionment process and offer any suggestions for improvements. Stewardship and Finance and staff will incorporate feedback received at these meetings into a revised budget and apportionment amounts. These annual apportionment meetings are also an excellent opportunity to learn about how other Meetings handle their finances and to discuss common issues.

To facilitate attendance, Stewardship and Finance will hold two meetings, one on April 18 and one on April 25. Friends will begin gathering at 9:30 am for coffee and snacks; the meetings will begin at 10:00 and are expected to conclude by noon. The location for these meetings will be announced soon. (Hosting opportunity! Would your Meeting like to host Friends from around BYM for one of these meetings? If so, please let us know.) For more information or to discuss hosting one of the meetings, please contact the Yearly Meeting office at 301-774-7663.



## WANT TO LEAD A WORKSHOP AT ANNUAL SESSION?

If you, or a committee you are part of, wants to lead a workshop, please submit this form ([www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/workshopprop.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/workshopprop.html)) not later than February 22. Workshops are held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday afternoons, and typically cover a range of topics that relate to the theme of Annual Session (*Courage, Faith, and Hope to Love Across Our Differences*), and other topics of interest to Friends. Interest group times are also available for those that want to converse with others on a topic, without the preparation needed for a full workshop. Interest group requests can be made any time before or during Annual Session.

## INJUSTICES FOR NATIVE AMERICANS DISCUSSED AT RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING



Chief Kenneth Branham (Monacan) and Susan Marcus (Alexandria), Clerk of Indian Affairs

Sue Marcus  
(Alexandria)

Monacan Indian Nation Chief Kenneth Branham and his son met with Friends and friends gathered at Richmond Friends Meeting to learn about the challenges faced by indigenous people in our region. Chief Branham shared his very personal story of racism in school and in the wider community. He reminded us that

prejudice takes many forms. He cited the example of Virginia's use of census data to obliterate Native heritage and wipe out tribal documentation. Starting in about 1924, Virginia conducted a "paper genocide" by limiting the race allowed on birth records to either black or white; thus, indigenous people, and tribes with governments older than Virginia's ceased to exist in many State records. Monacans still faced this injustice in 1971, when a Monacan mother was offered only the black or white options to record her child's birth. This has since been changed.

Yet injustices remain. Rassawek is a historic Monacan capital, known to Europeans since John Smith explored the James River and identified its location on a map he made in 1608. The Virginia State government has known about the site, which is now buried, and human remains have been found there. These factors have not stopped the James River Water Authority from proposing a water intake on the archaeological site, held sacred by the Monacans. Chief Branham introduced Marion Werkheiser, the tribal lawyer who is helping the tribe fight the Water Authority's development plans. The Army Corps of Engineers requires an archaeological evaluation of the site prior to permitting work. We learned that the recent work done at Rassawek included using bulldozers and drilling without determining whether these activities would cause damage to archaeological materials. Some of the work was not supervised by an archaeologist, which is also illegal. Work has now been halted, though the Water Authority still wants to put the intake at this site, despite the cultural archaeological disruption. Chief Branham and Ms Werkheiser urged those attending to actively support the cause of saving Rassawek from destruction and encouraged us to help build support from others.

Chief Branham explained the importance of federal recognition, noting that it brings health and academic benefits. Tribes are inherently sovereign, they know they are governments, whether recognized by others or not. Federal recognition does not mean every tribal

member gets a check, as the Chief said in response to a question. Yet it identifies the tribal government as a stakeholder, with a seat at the table when decisions are made about land, people, and resources. Tribes are not the same as the general public, for example. The Chief graciously answered questions about tribal enrollment (currently about 2,120 members), land (180 acres owned by the tribe), and the tribal museum. The Yearly Meeting's Indian Affairs Committee thanked Chief Branham for honoring the group with his presence since he has a busy schedule.

After the formal part of the event concluded, we continued with food and fellowship. Richmond Meeting's Barb Adams did most of the cooking, providing a wonderful supper of pumpkin soup, polenta & wild rice & onions (all Native or Native-based), along with wojapi (a delicious Native berry-sauce) over non-Native angel food cake.

The event was sponsored by the Indian Affairs Committee, which would like to thank Richmond Friends Meeting for use of the meetinghouse, for their successful outreach, and their enjoyable feast. In particular, we appreciate the dedication and patience of Monica Shaw, Barb Adams, and Tracy Cain.

Reference: [www.nps.gov/jame/learn/historyculture/upload/Documentary-Genocide.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/jame/learn/historyculture/upload/Documentary-Genocide.pdf)



During this season of giving, consider choosing a vendor that offers a percentage of their sales to a nonprofit beneficiary.

**AmazonSmile** is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

Sign up with AmazonSmile and designate Baltimore Yearly Meeting as your beneficiary through your Amazon account.

**iGive** is another means to donate a portion of your online purchases. Once you sign up, iGive automatically helps your favorite cause every time you shop.

Go to [www.igive.com/welcome/lp16/cr64a.cfm](http://www.igive.com/welcome/lp16/cr64a.cfm)

Please consider Baltimore Yearly Meeting among your charitable beneficiaries. EIN # 52-0856309

Thank you!

## PAY AS YOU ARE LED TO ATTEND ANNUAL SESSION? NOW BEING DISCERNED

Program Committee is continuing our exploration into Pay as Led (PAL) financing for funding Annual Session, as outlined in the Fall 2019 *Interchange*. In other Yearly Meetings, PAL has led to increased and more diverse attendance, particularly among first-timers and young adults. A sub-committee is actively digging into experiences of other Yearly Meetings, exploring the nitty-gritty of our current financing method, and scheduling meetings and consultations with committees and other groups (Junior Yearly Meeting, Young Adult Friends, etc.).

We especially look forward to visiting Meetings, as way opens, to listen and get your input and feedback on this idea. Should a change be recommended, any switch in Annual Session funding process would not occur until 2021 or 2022.

For more information, please get in touch with Barb Platt, Program Committee clerk, via email: [jrbp47quaker@gmail.com](mailto:jrbp47quaker@gmail.com)



Baltimore Yearly Meeting

2020 Annual Session

Hood College, Frederick, MD

July 27—August 2, 2020

**Families Take Note: Children Attend Free!**

### *Courage, Faith and Hope to Love Across our Differences*

"You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope. In such an event, courage is the authentic form taken by love." Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, 1965 (Image Classic, p. 206)

- **Margaret Benefiel** will lead the opening retreat and be the Tuesday evening plenary speaker. Margaret is a member of Beacon Hill Friends Meeting (New England Yearly Meeting), and the Executive Director of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. Much of her professional life has focused on helping leaders and organizations nurture their souls and express their deepest values institutionally. She is an experienced retreat leader, and has written extensively on various aspects of contemplative leadership and spirituality at work.



- Wednesday afternoon Plenary will be led by **our high school group of Young Friends**, who will lead us in intergenerational games and activities.

- SATURDAY NIGHT (not Friday night) Carey Lecture will be presented by **Bridget Moix**, a member of Friends Meeting of Washington. Bridget is the U.S. Executive Director of Peace Direct. She has worked for 20 years on international peace and conflict issues, with a focus on U.S. foreign policy. She has worked extensively with Quaker groups including Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Quaker United Nations Office, American Friends Service Committee and the Casa de los Amigos in Mexico



Registration opens at the end of April

**PLAN NOW TO BE THERE!**

## ENJOY WEEKENDS OF FUN AND FELLOWSHIP WITH BYM'S YOUTH PROGRAMS

CONFERENCES FILLED WITH GAMES, WORKSHOPS, SPIRITUALITY, AND SMALL GROUP BONDING IN VARIOUS QUAKER MEETINGS IN MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA

### 2019-2020 YOUTH PROGRAM CONFERENCE DATES

#### Junior Young Friends (11-13 years old)

January 11 - 12 - Gunpowder Friends Meeting

March 7 - 8 - Adelphi Friends Meeting

May 1 - 3 - Catoctin Quaker Camp

#### Young Friends (14-18 years old)

February 14 - 16 - Adelphi Friends Meeting

April 3 - 5 - State College Friends Meeting

May 22 - 24 - Homewood Friends Meeting

JYF Conference Registration: [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/jyfs/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/jyfs/)

YF Conference Registration: [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/yfs/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/yfs/)

Contact Jossie Dowling, Youth Programs Manger for info: [Youthprograms@bym-rsf.org](mailto:Youthprograms@bym-rsf.org)

## ENERGY OF ACTIVISM ACROSS THE YEARLY MEETING

*Energy of Activism continued from page 1*

**What inspires you to pursue this?** Our criminal justice system in Maryland suffers from gross distortions that need to be addressed. The awesome power of prosecutors rather than judges; the perverse use of solitary confinement; the indelible stigma of incarceration which follows individuals for the rest of their lives; these are the more obvious aberrations in a system that calls itself just. Crime prevention should engage the complex and pervasive causes of crime, which often are rooted in social and economic injustice. The system should not be biased by race, immigration status, or economic class and should treat juveniles as children, not as adults.

**BETTE RAINBOW HOOVER**

**(SANDY SPRING FRIENDS MEETING)**

**Causes:** I am a life-long activist and champion of many causes and concerns.

**How long have you devoted yourself to this issue?** As Director of the AFSC/DC office for over a decade, I led workshops for teens in mediation and conflict resolution. I organized protests for DC Statehood and vigils on the mall for peaceful solutions to war (and against war). In the early 80's, I got involved with immigrant justice and continue to join my voice with others in favor of immigration reform. Currently, I am visiting people detained by I.C.E. in detention centers and organizing and protesting to close the facilities. I clerk the Peace Committee at Sandy Spring Meeting and have served as clerk of the BYM Refugees, Immigration, and Sanctuary Working Group.

**What inspires you to pursue this?** I am inspired to make a difference and leave the world a better place for my grandchildren.

**DAVID ETHERIDGE**

**(FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON)**

**Cause:** Encouraging Friends Meetings to lower their racial barriers.

**How long have you devoted yourself to this issue?** I have been working on this since 2002.

**What inspires you to pursue this?** A strong sense of personal leading inspires me to do this work. That leading is based on my understanding that the white supremacy culture in which we live causes us to harm people of color and white people and my desire to help us as a faith community to reduce the harm we are causing.

**GARY GILLESPIE**

**(HOMEWOOD FRIENDS MEETING)**

**Causes:** Climate Justice and Sustainability.

**How long have you devoted yourself to this issue?** I have worked for peace, justice, and sustainability issues for thirty years including 20 years working for American Friends Service Committee. For the last 10 years I have primarily worked with the faith community to advance social justice. Most recently my focus has been on climate change and en-



vironmental sustainability. I worked to pass the Maryland Clean Energy Jobs Act and supported the fracking ban in Maryland. To support the fracking ban legislation, I was arrested doing civil disobedience in Annapolis with other Quakers. Currently I am actively working with the Homewood Friends Meeting Green Organizing Action Team (GOAT) which has transformed our Meeting House with an Audubon certified native garden and is mobilizing meeting members to advocate for climate justice.

**VICTOR THURONYI**

**(ADELPHI FRIENDS MEETING)**

**Causes:** I have been working on tax reform (since 1976) in the US and around the world, and nuclear weapons policy since the late 80s. For about the last 4 years, I have been writing and organizing around



### 2019 Matching Gift Challenge

#### Elevate Your Giving

**Rise to the challenge match at Baltimore Yearly Meeting to make your gift go even further. From now through December 31st, every donation up to \$30,000 will be matched 1:1 if you act on any one opportunity below.**

**You can double your impact by-**

- Increasing the value of your annual giving (the value of the increased increment will be matched)
- Becoming a Sustaining Quaker through a recurring monthly or quarterly gift. Go to [www.bym-rsf.org/giving/gifts/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/giving/gifts/)
- Donating for the first time!

**Or you can triple the power of your contribution by -** securing a matching gift from your employer.

- Corporate matching gifts will be complemented by our challenge match funds through 12/31/2019.
- Check with your employer to see if they will match your donation. To see if your company offers a matching gift program, go to [www.bym-rsf.org/giving/gifts/matching.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/giving/gifts/matching.html)

*To make a matching gift please note "Challenge Match" on your check or click on Baltimore Yearly Meeting's secure webpage and note "matching gift" in the Message to BYM box.*

**Thank you for amplifying the power of your gift!**



the revitalization of the Quaker community, including deepening Meeting for Worship and growing Meetings. I have done door-to-door electoral work since 2002. Since 2012, I have kept up with developments in the blood cancer I have (myeloma) and provided support to other patients.

**What inspires you to pursue this?** I am motivated by a desire to make the world a better place and help others. Mostly what inspires me is seeing things that need changing or where I can make a difference, working with others, including many other issues where I have spent smaller amounts of time, such as the end of life option legislation. I tend to take a long view.

### PATRICIA R. POWERS

(SANDY SPRING FRIENDS MEETING)

**Causes:** Promoting governmental and public responsibility for promises made to tribes and injustices done to Indigenous citizens. Steering Quakers to advocacy instead of charity and suggesting useful and appropriate ways to work in an ally role.



*Joe Garcia, then President of the National Congress with Patricia Powers*

**How long have you devoted yourself to this issue?** Engaged in some activity in Iowa and Utah. Nearly full time commitment since 2003 when I directed the Native American advocacy program at Friends Committee on National Legislation.

**What inspires you to pursue this?** I have focused a social change career on vulnerable groups that are out-of-sight, out-of-mind. In addition, Native Americans are wonderful people with whom to interact and they are able to galvanize attention to their concerns. Below is a quote that tugs at my heart due to its innocent hope and belief in other human beings' willingness to respond. While it is attributed to Little Raven (Arapaho), it seems as if it could have been said by many individuals and populations about whom Friends care.

"I want to tell you this, because I believe if you know it you will correct the evil."

### CHLOE SCHWENKE, PH.D. (ADELPHI FRIENDS MEETING)

**Cause:** I am an advocate for universal human dignity, and I am active in addressing gender inequalities and the plight of LGBTQ+ persons in developing countries. As an ethicist, I focus on secular moral principles and values, instead of laws and treaties.

**How long have you devoted yourself to this issue?** I was active in this space indirectly for over 20 years (including 15 years living and working in Africa), and subsequently I have been directly working in advocacy for the last 10 years.

**What inspires you to pursue this?** I am a Quaker who takes strength, energy, direction and comfort in our testimony of "that of God in everyone", which is the religious expression of the secular assertion of universal human dignity. I am also an openly transgender woman, who feels a strong leading to push back against many incidences of discrimination and targeting that I experience both for being transgender and for being a woman.

## FAITH AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Faith and Practice Committee has continued to meet monthly via Zoom meetings and met at Fall Interim. Our discernment has been enriched by the contributions of new participants. We are currently working on Marriage and Life of the Spirit sections of Faith and Practice, and will be consulting with our clerks of the YM/IM, some committees, and eventually with monthly meetings. We hope to bring forth our initial work on the marriage section to March Interim Meeting, season with meetings before June Interim, and if led, bring it to Annual Session.

We plan to offer workshops and/or interest groups at Annual Session. If you have ideas and/or concerns, please let the committee know! You can reach us via [fandp@bym-rsf.org](mailto:fandp@bym-rsf.org). You can reach out to Helen Tasker (co-clerk) at [hforsythetasker@gmail.com](mailto:hforsythetasker@gmail.com) and Davis Balderston (co-clerk) at [rdavisb33@gmail.com](mailto:rdavisb33@gmail.com).

### DAYNA BAILY

(PENN HILL PREPARATIVE MEETING)

**Cause:** Reducing animals' suffering, with an emphasis on the serious damage inflicted on animals, human health, and the environment due to humans' misguided allegiance to the Standard American Diet.

**How long have you devoted yourself to this issue?** My family and I have been

eating a plant-based (vegan) diet for reasons of moral conscience for about eight years now. (Oh how I wish I had questioned my cultural conditioning earlier.) I have been an active member of BYM's Right Relationship with Animals Working Group for five years.

**What inspires you to pursue this?** I have been inspired by the realization, through a combination of lived experience and credible research, that the unfathomably large scale of animal suffering caused by humans in the service of the Standard American Diet is an unnecessary extravagance that is fundamentally harmful to human health. This painful awakening—that so many living, breathing, feeling creatures are suffering terribly and dying for nothing—drove me out of the comfort of my own home kitchen, where I had been protesting in private, and offending no one, for years.

*\*Special thanks go to each of our contributors for sharing their passion and their story.*



*Chloe Schwenke (center) at LGBTQ+ event*

## SANDY SPRING EMBRACES THE MINISTRY OF FRIENDS

*Susan Brown (Sandy Spring) and Patti Nesbitt (Sandy Spring)*

In early 2018, Sandy Spring Friends Meeting began the process to embrace the ministry of a Friend. The guidelines for this process are part of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting *Manual of Procedure*.

When Friend Windy Cooler began her research for her masters of divinity studies at Earlham School of Religion in 2017, she went to BYM's Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee for support of her leading regarding pastoral care and Quaker family life. A clearness committee under their care was created and provided her with a travel minute to travel among Friends. Eventually, the committee recommended that her support be based in her Meeting.

Sandy Spring's Ministry and Counsel Committee took up the task of listening carefully as to how to support her. Fortunately, some Friends were familiar with the Yearly Meeting's history surrounding the sometimes challenging topic of embracing gifts of ministry. They also had learned about travel minutes and had threshed through common mis-perceptions about naming and supporting ministry. Ministry and Counsel discerned the clearness to embrace Windy's ministry and brought it to the whole Meeting for approval in early spring 2019. She now has a vibrant anchor committee<sup>1</sup> made up of Friends who were chosen to ground her and hold her accountable, as well as support and challenge her. This committee reports to Ministry and Counsel. There is an ongoing dialog about what it means to have her ministry under our care and how we can best support her vital work.

Windy's ministry has grown under our care. She has been named the 2020 Cadbury Scholar at Pendle Hill and will be in full time residence there for 15 weeks. She will use this time to write a book of testimony based on her interviews and ministry with Friends across eight different Yearly Meetings in the Religious Society of Friends. This includes the original travel in the ministry supported by BYM that was part of her labors at ESR. Her research and ministry testify that while Friends love one another like a family, we also have many of the problems that families have. The time to be tender and the conscious development of pastoral care skills are major themes in her ministry. Windy often says that while her ministry is in support of families, including the family of Quakers, it is also a ministry about ministry.

<sup>1</sup> "Anchor committee" is the term used by FGC. It is preferred by Windy because of the grounding it connotes. "Support committee" is used by BYM in our guidelines. The School of the Spirit uses the term "Spiritual Care Committee." They all do about the same thing, with different emphasis, and frequently accompany Friends for many years overseeing their ministry.



*Erik Hanson and Windy Cooler at Annual Session 2019  
(photo by Skip Duncan)*

Windy feels that Sandy Spring embracing this ministry has challenged her to do more with the calling. It instills moral courage to address some of the challenges she has uncovered. By having the Meeting labor together, she reports the ministry is "more secure—I am co-parenting this ministry with the Meeting. The work was just mine two years ago, just a push inside of me, but now that call and our shared responsibility belongs to the Meeting."

Sam Garman, clerk of Sandy Spring, indicated that her work "gives the Meeting a focus," and acknowledges her leading is "seasoned thoroughly." It has made Friends realize there are issues that need to be addressed in Quaker families. He also stated that "when this concern is raised, it can be trusted because Windy's concern has become the Meeting's concern. By embracing her ministry, her leading has become our leading."

Sandy Spring has created an opportunity to send Windy off with our blessing on January 12 at the rise of 11:00 Meeting. Please feel welcomed to support Windy spiritually as an agent of this ministry that our community is called to.

### JOIN THE KIDS OF JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING TO HELP AT ANNUAL SESSION!

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is lucky to have seen an increase in the number of children (ages 0-14) attending our summer programs at Annual Session. Junior Yearly Meeting creates programming for these kids and we need your help. More kids means we need more adult volunteers. Are you willing to help out for a shift or two (a shift is 2.5-3 hours) this August at Annual Session? If yes, please contact Carol Seddon ([carolsed217@gmail.com](mailto:carolsed217@gmail.com)) or Alex Bean ([beansprout.a@gmail.com](mailto:beansprout.a@gmail.com)) We can offer a discount on your registration and lots of Smiles! There is a simple process to clear volunteers, so contact us for more info. Thanks!



*Junior Yearly Meeting exiting Business Meeting at Annual Session 2019  
(photo by Skip Duncan)*

## NOTES ON TRAVEL MINUTES

*Patti Nesbitt (Intervisitation Working Group Clerk)*

The Intervisitation Working Group often helps Friends who need a travel minute. We welcome such inquiries and encourage all to seek a minute when they feel a leading to travel in the ministry. However, Intervisitation is not “travel minute central” and Friends are not required to come through the Working Group to get one. Like most spiritual leadings, clearness and support best comes from the home Meeting where the Friend is known. We recognize some Meetings are not familiar with travel minutes and want to share our experiences and collective discernment about the whys and hows of creating travel minutes.

We note that George Fox was the first traveling minister and Quakerism could not have grown had it not been for ministers who traveled from one community to another preaching and spreading the good news. Fox wanted travelers to carry a letter of introduction or a minute that recorded the leading to travel. It was their experience, and ours after 15 years of traveling among Friends, that a Friend’s leading to a ministry of travel is grounded in the worshipping community. We affirm that *the ministry does not belong to the Friend personally, it belongs to the whole Monthly Meeting, or yearly meeting, in which it originated.* Marty Grundy writes that *“the gift of ministry is **not** personal property. It comes with long strings attached that bind the recipient to God and God’s ongoing instructions.”* Travel minutes record the endorsement and ownership from the Meeting, and bind the Meeting to the ministry. They are historical records of travel in the ministry, instruments of accountability, and expressions of deep callings to build the Religious Society of Friends. For the traveling Friend, they nurture ministry, anchor and secure the leading, and signify the Meeting’s love that propels the ministry out to the broader community.

The process to secure a travel minute involves 4 steps:

1. The individual feels a leading to go to a specific event or travel with a defined purpose comes to the Meeting with the concern. A clearness committee is arranged to test the leading.
  2. The Friend’s gifts of ministry and intention to travel are stated in a proposed travel minute drafted by the clearness committee.
  3. This proposed travel minute is reviewed prayerfully by Ministry and Pastoral Care at the Meeting, and if they unite with the leading, the minute is brought to the whole Meeting for endorsement.
  4. The Meeting helps the Friend with an elder or companion to travel with and occasionally provides money to offset costs of travel.
- When a Friend is traveling between Meetings in the same Yearly Meeting, the home Meeting’s minute is appropriate. When travel is between Yearly Meetings, an additional endorsement of the minute by the Yearly Meeting is appropriate.

Travel minutes are presented to the communities visited as an introduction and to give the community a place to write a comment about the visit. The minutes themselves end up resembling passports that are stamped by all the places one visited, and document what the Friend did and if the visit was in good order. They often present pleasant comments and send their greetings back to the home Meeting.

When the travel is completed, the original minute should go to the Meeting where it originated. A copy should be given to the Yearly Meeting and the Friend should retain a copy. Friends are also expected to give an oral report back to the Meeting when they return.

Friends are encouraged to have support committees to help maintain accountability and transparency. Such support can offer profound oversight and spiritual counsel as Friends journey together following the call.

<small>Established 1792</small> <b>BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS, STONY RUN</b> 5116 NORTH CHARLES STREET BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21210-2021		<small>Phone</small> (443) 793-2590 <small>Fax</small> (443) 793-2589
<small>E-mail</small> <a href="mailto:office@stonyrunfriends.org">office@stonyrunfriends.org</a>		
<b>Travel Minute</b>		
July 22, 2018		
<small>Margaret (Meg) Boyd Meyer and Arthur Meyer Boyd, members of Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run, are following their leading to travel to and reside at Ramallah Friends School, Ramallah, Palestine, for six months, beginning in September 2018.</small>		
<small>Stony Run Meeting enthusiastically unites with this leading. Meg’s and Arthur’s talents and dedication to serving others are well known to us. We trust that Ramallah Friends School and residents will benefit, as we have, from sharing the insights and quiet faith of Meg and Arthur, long-time members of the meeting.</small>		
<small>The entire community will be blessed by their presence. We commend them to your care and hospitality. Our love and support go with them.</small>		
<small>Approved and minuted at our Meeting for Ministry with a Concern for Business held July 22, 2018.</small>		
 Blaine Keener Clerk, Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run		
<i>Baltimore Yearly Meeting unites with this minute and send Meg and Arthur to you with our love and warmest greetings.</i> Ken Stabinski Presiding clerk 8th mo., 1, 2018		

## FRIENDLY ADULT PRESENCES (FAP) NEEDED

The best way to support the Junior Young Friends and the Young Friends of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is to serve as a Friendly Adult Presence, (also known as a “FAP”). These adult chaperones are dedicated volunteers that help foster a loving community for our young people through healthy relationship-building and supportive mentoring. Training is required for all FAPs, but is FREE. Please e-mail Jossie Dowling for more information. [youthprograms@bym-rsf.org](mailto:youthprograms@bym-rsf.org).

## YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS CONFERENCE!

BYM Young Adult Friends’ annual winter conference will be held at the House of Couch (7508 Sweetbriar Dr. College Park Md 20740) on January 3-5th. Friends between the ages of 18 and 35 are invited to join us for a weekend of fellowship and discussion. There is no attendance fee, but please RSVP to Tom Webb ([tom@startwebb.com](mailto:tom@startwebb.com)) if you are planning to join us.



## WHAT IS THE SPIRIT OF THE FIRE CIRCLE?

Isabel "Izzy" Gottlieb-Nemo

I have so many thoughts about camp, so when given the opportunity to write about my experience at Opequon Quaker Camp (OQC), I was a little bit overwhelmed. So, in true Quakerly fashion, I decided to give myself a query:

What is the Spirit of the Fire Circle?

Let me explain. At camp, we have this thing that we call "The Spirit of the Fire Circle," which can be simply described as the values of Quakerism as in the term SPICES, simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship. Although The Spirit of the Fire Circle can come off as cheesy, it is what makes camp my favorite place. It's an accepting, respectful, and empathetic essence which allowed me to feel like I could be myself without the fear of being judged. Having a nurturing place like camp during the fragile time of middle school has been formative in who I am today.

Sometimes adolescents are considered shallow and superficial, but at camp, what I said and how I felt was valid despite my age. People at camp understand that, given the right environment, teenagers can form strong bonds of friendship, can contribute to profound conversations, and realize their potential to be well rounded people. Counselors encourage kids to explore their passions and interests without judgment. For example, throughout my whole life I thought that I was a bad artist, but at OQC I was emboldened to join art workshops and activities. I joined printmaking, tarot card decorating, and cabin painting workshops. I discovered that I really loved art, and now I'm painting a mural on my closet door.

Positivity spreads from the counselor to campers and as a result everyone becomes super close with the other kids at camp, especially in their unit. Every year, my cabin would spend our rest hour laying in our bunks and having talks about feminism, our favorite trashy romance novels, or just life. On top of that, we had Camping Intensives (CIs), where we would pack up all our stuff into our packs, and take a couple of days on a hiking and canoeing trip into the woods. This time in the woods with just each other and our counselor brought

the group even closer together. Every single time my parents came to pick me up and bring me home from camp, I would cry like a baby because I didn't want to leave my friends and the sanctuary that I considered camp to be.

I remember my last fire circle as a camper at OQC, and wishing that I could find the Spirit of the Fire Circle in my everyday life. Now that I've been out of camp for two summers, I've realized that the Spirit of the Fire Circle is not just at camp. It's inside everyone who spent time there, it's the way that we choose to treat and look at ourselves, others, and the world we live in. Camp is a magical place, but it is possible to take that magical spirit of the fire circle with us, and spread it wherever we go.

## Spring Family Camp Weekends 2020

Join us for a weekend of fun, friends and fellowship!

Family Camp Weekends at Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camp Properties offer us all a chance to enjoy our beautiful camp properties at a special time of year. Individuals and families are invited to spend the day or the weekend at camp. Each weekend will have a program coordinator who will plan camp-type activities for Saturday and Sunday mornings, as well as Saturday afternoon and evening. These may include things like playing in the creek, crafts projects or hiking around one of the most precious places on earth. There will also be plenty of work projects to do! Work projects offer people with all kinds of skills the opportunity to enjoy some meaningful and satisfying work! We will enjoy meals together, have time to explore and even spend some time around a camp fire in the evening. Come and enjoy a camp experience, give the gift of your time, participate with children in activities and find yourself rejuvenated.



### Spring 2020 Family Camp Weekends

Shiloh Quaker Camp	April 24 – 26, 2020
Catoctin Quaker Camp	May 15 – 17, 2020
Opequon Quaker Camp	May 29 - 31, 2020

## WORKING GROUP ON RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH ANIMALS

**MEAT: A THREAT TO OUR PLANET? SPECIAL MOVIE SHOWING SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1 PM – HERNDON FRIENDS MEETING**

This excellent one-hour BBC documentary is unavailable in the United States. By special permission, our Working Group is able to hold a one-time showing. Don't miss it! RSVP to [lmargaret.e.fisher@gmail.com](mailto:lmargaret.e.fisher@gmail.com).

For those who can't make it, please allow us to recommend the movie *Cowspiracy*, which you can download. It is an engaging and thought-provoking movie that has become only timelier since its 2014 release. It has also been rightly criticized for a few statistical inaccuracies and for its less than charitable portrayal of environmental organizations. Nevertheless, it is well worth watching for its clear

presentation of the environmental devastation caused by fishing and animal agriculture. Twenty people attended our November showing at Adelphi Friends Meeting.

For those who prefer books to movies, don't forget our Two Book Project: *Eating Animals* by Jonathan Safran Foer, and *A Plea for the Animals* by Matthieu Ricard.

Members of the Working Group on Right Relationship with Animals continue to travel to local meetings to lead discussions about the effect on animals of our food choices. Let us know if your meeting would like a discussion or a demonstration of climate-friendly diets. You can learn more about our work on our page of the [BYM website](#).

## ALEXANDRIA FRIENDS MEETING

Alexandria Friends find a shared energy through activism pursued by our members and attenders. We are involved in activism at the national, state, and local levels.

For the past three years, an Alexandria FCNL Advocacy Team has been part of the Friends Committee on National Legislation program through which Meetings and individuals lobby on a critical issue at the national level. Also, for several years, we have supported the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy in its lobbying and social justice efforts throughout Virginia. Currently, our member Davis Balderston serves on its Board of Directors as Secretary.

In our community, we focus on organizations that help those who do not have homes. Each week, everyone brings a canned or boxed food donation to be taken to the nearby food pantry of United Community, active in our immediate area. For the past three years, we have met an annual goal of donating a ton of food. This past fall, our Homecoming Day raised money for New Hope Housing, an organization that manages shelters and provides education programs for the homeless. And, as we have done for the past 14 years, members and attenders will provide meals and staffing several nights this winter for an overnight hypothermia shelter at a neighboring church.

In 2019, Alexandria Friends enjoyed the growth of two Meeting activities aside from our activism. This fall, our Spiritual Formation program drew a number of new members, so that we now have six different groups. Each group chooses its own format for meeting and sharing spiritual growth. An activity we call “Who We Are” offers members and attenders a variety of ways to share accounts of their lives, spiritual growth, and experiences with diversity. It is a lot of fun to find out about each other, and this deepens our sense of community.

## ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

Annapolis Friends Meeting had a busy fall. Some of us were very active in Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT), an IAF group that provides an opportunity for us to join with other faith-based communities to affect social change in our county. ACT has worked to accelerate testing for lead in school drinking water and supported Woodside Garden residents as they successfully demanded action on issues related to facility maintenance and environmental health. The ACT Annual Meeting was a spiritually rich gathering of people of different faiths and racial identities committed to justice for everyone.

Annapolis Friends also sponsored a table at the annual Kunta Kinte Festival. This was an opportunity to share our commitment to equality and stewardship as well as participate in other outreach like registering new voters and sharing green initiatives. Attendees were happy to make



*Campers on the trail (2019 camp photo by Jennifer Domenick)*

use of the electric vehicle charging station we set up. In December, our bi-annual Quaker Market was a wonderful success, providing an opportunity for community-building and outreach while raising funds for, and bringing visibility to, non-profit causes. Proceeds from the most recent Quaker Market will go to Fridays for Future, the youth-led mobilization for effective response to the global climate crisis. We are very proud of Kallen Benson’s leadership in this organization and are pleased to support her work.

Finding the balance of being both a spiritual wellspring and galvanizer for change can be a challenge. Throughout the fall, we held monthly gatherings for Worship, Reflection, and Deep Listening—to the spirit and to each other’s heart—around some of the moral issues that are affecting our country and the world. These gatherings provide a helpful forum for people to express their concerns about our country and our world and discern how to stay centered in our faith in these challenging times while maintaining the sacred space of our worship time. We also held a two-part workshop, Embracing Our Strengths & Investing our Gifts, that used storytelling, journaling, art, and small group interactions to help us examine our gifts and how we bring them into our Meeting community and beyond. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to connect with others in our Meeting in a deep and positive way, and we look forward to creating more opportunities for this type of connection.

## BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING, STONY RUN

Although the Meeting’s Working Group on Racism was laid down earlier this year, members have sustained other efforts to confront racism inside and outside of our Meeting. The local affiliate group of Coming to the Table meets monthly. An anti-racist reading group has been active since March. Members have been gathering this fall to determine how we can become an effective change group.

## CLAIMING CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE

The Yearly Meeting’s *Manual of Procedure* reminds us that “Friends are encouraged to record their personal statements of pacifism by sending signed and dated statements to their Monthly Meetings and to the Yearly Meeting. The names of all persons filing such statements are to be listed in the Yearbook published following receipt of the documents.” See [www.bym-rsf.org/publications/mop/function.html#peace](http://www.bym-rsf.org/publications/mop/function.html#peace).

BYM networks with the Quaker House (near Ft. Bragg, NC), which that provides support for service members who belatedly crisis of conscience regarding military involvement. But BYM does not yet

have any central resources or guidelines to assist Meetings whose youth may face compulsory military service if U.S. law should reinstate the draft.

Some Meetings offer written materials or clearness committees for young male Friends as they approach the age for Selective Service registration. Note also that Congress is facing proposals that could extend a possible future military draft to young women as well. If your Meeting has reference materials or guidelines to assist young people facing these issues, please send them to our Peace and Social Concerns Committee at [peace@bym-rsf.org](mailto:peace@bym-rsf.org).

## BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

A great deal has been going on at Bethesda Friends Meeting, including several areas of social activism. Over the past several years, a self-constituting committee—the Environmental Sustainability Group—has organically arisen within BFM and has become very active, sharing information, going to climate rallies, organizing informational sessions, and making a great deal of information available to the members and attenders of BFM, as well as the general public. On June 10, the Environmental Sustainability Group sponsored a workshop called “Reversing Global Warming: Introduction to Drawdown” at the Bethesda Library. The information presented was based on the book *Drawdown* by Paul Hawken. The presenters were from the Pachamama Alliance and the workshop was a mix of slides, videos and discussion. On September 20, a number of Bethesda Friends participated in the Climate Rally on the Mall in Washington and were heartened by the turn-out and the great number of young people participating. On October 10, several BFM members/attenders were present for a presentation called “Climate Activism: The Green New Deal and Carbon Pricing” during which we heard from Jessica Langerman, founder of Climate Xchange, and Congressman Jamie Raskin, as well as other climate activists. Our Meeting has been active in addressing homelessness in our county. Our member, Melissa Meredith, has regularly organized service days at A Wider Circle, which serves people moving from homelessness to being housed, by providing furniture, kitchenware, clothing, and other necessities to help them get started. Our most recent service day was on September 21. In addition, the children of Bethesda Friends Meeting, under the leadership of our member Esther Delaplaine, hold a walkathon for the homeless every November, during which the children raise money for the Interfaith Works Housing Program. This year the event occurred (despite rain!) on October 27. Another group which has spontaneously arisen within the BFM community is the Change Group, dedicated to helping us combat any unconscious barriers to our meeting being truly diverse. On January 12, they will hold a session on having transformative conversations about race.

## CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

Charlottesville Friends put their faith into action in many ways both individually and corporately. In the last several years, there has been an emphasis on immigration, racism, and homelessness.

The seeds of our immigration work were planted in the 90’s when we sponsored a family of six from Bosnia. In 2017 we declared our Meeting a sanctuary space. Although we have not accepted anyone into sanctuary as of this time, we are involved in a number of activities with refugees including: volunteering at and collecting supplies for the International Rescue Committee; supporting Maria, a Guatemalan woman who is in sanctuary at a local Methodist Church and needs

people with her 24/7 and weekly groceries; packing snack bags and collecting clothes and other necessities to share with refugees at the bus station, as they travel through Charlottesville with no food, money, or other basic things; working on transporting people to court dates in Northern Virginia; and, helping to screen detainees at Farmville Detention Center, as well as visiting and writing them.

In the spring of 2017, we started to work with and participate in activities sponsored by the Charlottesville Clergy Collective. The focus was to create a peaceful environment before the influx of confederate supporters and alt-right activists. We held Quaker worship in one of the downtown parks on August 12, and we continue to do so on the anniversary weekend. This year a number of us participated in a series of community dinners sponsored by the Clergy Collective to increase dialog between a broad spectrum of people within the Charlottesville area. A group of Charlottesville Friends meet together to study and support each other as we delve into issues of racism. We are currently reading *White Fragility* by Robin Di Angelo. We encourage each other in worshipping with other congregations in the Clergy Collective, and several of us have attended the White Privilege Conference.

We have been active in PACEM (People and Congregations Engaged in Ministry) since its inception in 2003. This program provides a hot dinner and a safe place to sleep for homeless men and women during the colder months of the year. Initially we partnered with other churches. After we built our community room we started to house the women’s shelter for two weeks each winter. This takes over most of the Meeting House and provides an opportunity for the Meeting’s youth and adults to join together to make our space comfortable and welcoming for our guests and to prepare and serve food to them.

## HERNDON FRIENDS MEETING

In April, Herndon Friends united around a Minute of Investment in Ecological Stewardship: *At this critical time, when human action endangers Earth’s ecosystems, Herndon Friends Meeting is committed to reducing waste and our carbon footprint. We will invest our money and our time in indoor and outdoor improvements to our property that bear witness to our testimony of stewardship.*

We also united around this corollary Minute on Use of Disposable Items: *As part of our testimony of stewardship, Herndon Friends’ practice is to use re-usable items and avoid the use of disposable items, such as napkins, cups, plates, tableware, and single-service beverage containers whenever possible.*

City Nature Challenge—In celebration of Earth Day, we participated in City Nature Challenge, in which metropolitan areas compete to get the most people to upload photos of wild living things (plants, animals, fungi, etc) to a growing global database that is documenting life on earth. The results of these and other observations on Herndon Friends Meeting property can be seen at [www.inaturalist.org/projects/herndon-friends-meeting](http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/herndon-friends-meeting). So far, we have identified 95 species of animals making their home in our yard.

## HOPEWELL CENTRE MONTHLY MEETING

We have been asked to share with you the work our Meeting is doing in the today’s world, work that reflects BYM’s theme of “energy through activism.” Here goes.

Over this past year, our Peace & Social Concerns Committee has been energized, pointing the way toward our greater awareness and knowledge of current local and global issues...as well as



*Pre-session Retreat at Annual Session 2019 (photo by Skip Duncan)*

## PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING

Patapsco Meeting is a member organization of four local community advocacy groups.

**The Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice** enables organizations supporting immigrants to coordinate activities with each other. Our representative reports back to us on advocacy opportunities, which we can do more effectively as a coalition. For example, we oppose racial profiling and seek to prevent disclosure to ICE of personal information in public records. The meeting also assists a Syrian immigrant family in such practical ways as taking their children to swimming lessons and supporting summer camp.

Many members of the meeting are active in the **Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform** ([ma4jr.org](http://ma4jr.org)), a coalition that seeks changes in state law in promotion of fairness, support for returning citizens, and improvements within the prison system (for example, in the areas of health care and employment). Our advocacy is a natural outgrowth of our meeting's long-time prison ministry and our current support for prisoners and returning citizens who participated in that ministry.

The Meeting is a founding member of **PATH (People Acting Together in Howard)**, an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation. PATH is multi-racial, interfaith, non-partisan and rooted in local congregations. Currently, priorities of the group are affordable housing and strong schools. Organizational representatives advocated for these priorities to governmental entities at a September 29 Accountability Assembly for Howard County, Maryland.

For the second year, PFM is participating in a series of **Courageous Conversations** about race and religious bias sponsored by Howard County faith communities. The purpose of these conversations is to hear each other's perspectives on how we are living together in our experiences of race, faith, and ethnic diversity. It is not to debate or convince, but to make space for learning about each other, including in areas where we might hold different views.

## PATUXENT FRIENDS MEETING

2020 is the 40th anniversary of when a few Friends came together to establish a worship group that eventually became Patuxent Friends Monthly Meeting. Quakers had been in Southern Maryland as early as 1655. There are accounts of George Fox visiting a Meeting called "Patuxent" in 1672.

We have had several families "retire away" from us, moving to other parts of the country for retirement and to be closer to families. Recognizing this, we are developing a program to grow our attendance. We will be using our 40th anniversary as one way to communicate our presence in the community. Come celebrate with us!

Though a small Meeting, we are still able to pay our insurance, tax, utility bills, BYM apportionment, maintenance costs for our buildings, grounds, and cemetery. We frequently open our small Meeting House for various community functions and programs. Patuxent Friends has provided scholarship money for a member to participate in a course on Companioning the Dying. We are supporting a homeless shelter, Project Echo, mediation centers in two counties, and Loaves and Fishes, a food pantry that also provides meals for those in need. Patuxent Friends is pleased to support teacher salaries and student scholarships in Senegal through OPEN International.



*Spring Family Camp Weekend at Shiloh Quaker Camp  
(photo by David Hunter)*

introducing us to timely, practical actions we can take to bring about peace, economic, racial, social and environmental justice. We thank them.

Hopewell Centre has strongly reacted to BYM'S Anti-Racism Declaration with a great desire to bring about change. We began with an ongoing, meeting-wide book study of *White Fragility*, followed by interactive discussions on how to personally handle racial issues. In one RE hour, we bravely tackled "White Privilege." Over the summer, we conducted a Meeting assessment on White Supremacy culture, and continue to work on enhancing our understanding of that pernicious aspect of our culture. Recently, local activist and historian, Larry Yates, came to our Meeting with an eye-opening presentation on the history of racism in Winchester.

Other change-making actions we've taken include: hosting public FRED Forums to open up a dialogue between people of differing views in our local community; exploring with VAN (Valley Assistance Network) new ways to help our homeless, including one-on-one counseling; and at the state level, lobbying for expanded Medicaid, gun control, immigration laws, and other pressing legislation at the VICPP's (Virginia Interfaith Centre for Public Policy) Day for All People in Richmond.

Thankfully, there are other faith-based groups we turn to for mutual support and help in these challenging times. The Valley Interfaith Council is one such resource, where we meet monthly to break bread with Jewish, Muslim, Baha'i, Hindu and Christian leaders from our community. We Quakers have joined with VIC for Healing Vigils after mass-shootings; for Fair Lending Friday preach-ins; and many, many talks on important issues from immigration to racial unity.

Of course, Hopewell Centre continues to join with and support Highland Food Pantry and WATTS (Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter) to bring year-round shelter and food to those in need.

Last but not least, it is in the area of global warming and climate change where we hear the loudest cry for action—from our nation's and the world's youth. To support them we took part in the Crowd-Strike March in DC this September. And it is with our children in mind that we look forward to working with FACS (Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions). The voice of sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg stays with us: "We are watching you....The eyes of all future generations are upon you."

Amen.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting  
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Have you moved, or has any of your contact information changed? Please send any updates to [admin@bym-rsf.org](mailto:admin@bym-rsf.org)

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## BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING UPCOMING EVENTS

[SEE THE YEARLY MEETING WEBSITE FOR DETAILS AND OTHER EVENTS \(BYM-RSF.ORG\)](http://www.bym-rsf.org)

### JANUARY

- 1 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed
- 1 – Sing in the New Year at Gunpowder Friends Meeting
- 3 – 5 – Young Adult Friends Conference at the House of Legends
- 11 – 12 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Gunpowder Friends Meeting
- 20 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed

### FEBRUARY

- 7 – 9 – Women’s Retreat at Pearlstone Retreat Center
- 14 – 16 – Young Friends Conference at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting
- 17 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed
- 29 – Religious Education Retreat

### MARCH

- 7 – 8 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Adelphi Friends Meeting
- 21 – Third Month Interim Meeting at Hopewell Centre Monthly Meeting

### STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

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