

Goose Creek Friends Religious Education Committee | Annual Report 10-01-2023

The Religious Education committee is excited to report a year full of growth and inspiration.

Do you know how many little ones and First-Day-Schoolers were at Meeting September 17? Twenty-one! Twenty-one incredible human beings ages infant to 16. The next week? One.

Working with youth on a regular basis allow us to witness, up-close, the growth and transformation of a corporate body; it's life itself and it is a blessing, fully equipped with all the ups and downs life has to offer.

This report features only a few highlights of our work. To provide all the details would keep us here for a *long* time so we encourage Friends to ask us questions, find out more about what we do, and even better, get involved.

Last year at this time, we reported on the energy and excitement that our community read of Mary Snyder's book, *Opening Doors to Quaker Religious Education* inspired; the text continued to guide us as we rebuilt a vibrant three-group youth program for Meeting's children: Teen (grades 6-12), Elementary (grades preK-5), and Oakdale Nursery.

We recognize that the stewardship of a healthy First Day School program involves consistency, reliability and assurance to young families that they can participate in Meeting for Worship knowing that their children are in good care. Even if some weeks we have few or no children, the program is set up and ready to welcome all who may attend; we are happy to be able to provide this and build trust.

Sean Lloyd created a well-researched and expertly organized online library of curriculum as well as the an introduction to Quakerism series called "The Quaker Elevator" speech where students spent 8 months discussing Quaker beliefs, testimonies, history, and worship. At its conclusion, students completed their own personal response to the question "What is a Quaker?" Sean initiated and leads the now much-beloved Game Day every second First Day. Sean also has been active in building out the lesson schedule for the year.

Meghan Goldman created and led an engaging series of intergenerational Quaker Practice discussion groups for the teens and Friends that focused on Meeting's committees and community building. Remember her awesome Memory Map project? Meghan's Mud Club every third First Day is going strong, welcoming families in the community as well as Friends.

Erin Traub is a reliable, lovely, and skilled nursery attendant and we appreciate her greatly. She provides patient, experienced care for Meeting's infants and toddlers and offers valuable insight on a wide range of issues and helps with the ongoing renovation and upkeep of Oakdale; she's created a wonderful space for the littles.

Addicted to SPICES, Maria leads the Elementary group with SPICES-themed lessons, stories, and crafts so there is something for everyone. Okay, repeat: S, Simplicity! P, Peace! I, Integrity! C, Community! E, Equality! S, Stewardship!

Jackie Kosbob always delights Meeting by getting the students together, like magic, to offer holiday performances and activities for the kids. She is an awesome storyteller and one of the best teachers around — for any age group from infants on up. Her discussion groups with the teens are awesome.

Behind the scenes our small but mighty committee has worked hard to solve difficult challenges, research resources for curriculum and advice on faith, community and practice, develop new initiatives such as the Parent's Day Out, the snack and inclusivity boxes. Committee members clean, organize and maintain the supplies cabinet and offer support and provide ongoing guidance for the many weekly tasks the Religious Education committee is responsible for - yes, even the putting up of the Christmas Tree.

Currently we are convening a working group to review and update the Meeting's Youth Safety Policy, offer new and renew background checks for Friends, and post volunteer opportunities on our regularly updated website pages and in our weekly email.

Since there are many things to do, we encourage Friends to join the Religious Education Committee and continue to serve as Friendly Adult Volunteers (FAVs). It is a great way to get know those who enter that mysterious place behind the doors under the clock at 10:00 AM each week. Many, many thanks to all Friends who serve as FAVs, we need and value you greatly.

In conclusion, we'll note some transitions: at Book Sunday this past June we celebrated the graduation of Zoe Joseph and Zion Kern from High School and the many students in our youth program. We are excited that we may see Zoe from time to time subbing for Erin when needed; and, Maria and Cameron will cycle off as co-clerks of the committee and welcome new leadership.

It has been a wonderful year! Please consider volunteering with or joining the Religious Education committee this year; it is joyful work. We are grateful for all the families and Friends who make the Goose Creek Friends community.

Respectfully submitted by members of the Religious Education Committee: Joey Coburn, Collins Conover, Meghan Goldman, Cameron Hughes, Sean Lloyd, Maria Nicklin, Henry Carlson, Ruth Nelson-Abbott, and Erin Traub