

## STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT

### Boulder Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (2018-2019)

This has been a very full year for Boulder Meeting. In addition to our ongoing busy schedule, we continue to work toward healing divisions in our community regarding priorities and how best to communicate and disagree with each other in honest and loving ways. We have worked to recognize and appreciate each others' hard work, while we look at issues from pragmatic, legal, spiritual, and idealistic points of view, trying to find the best ways to solve problems and reduce extra volunteer stress where possible.

As the second largest Monthly Meeting in Intermountain Yearly Meeting (IMYM), Boulder Friends share a wide variety of gifts and passions which help to move the Meeting forward. We used and developed these gifts through a large number of committees who work on everything from maintaining our building and grounds and supporting the spiritual growth of our children to working nationally on environmental issues and standing to recognize and resolve injustices inflicted on indigenous peoples and people of color. Our committees work together to support individual leadings, as well as issues that are Meeting wide concerns.

Some Committees form the foundation upon which much of our Meeting is able to move forward, while developing a community based on shared experiences of meeting the needs of others. Our Fellowship Committee, our Nominating Committee, our Finance Committee, our Building and Grounds Committee, and our Web Committee perform work that we need and depend upon:

- The **Fellowship Committee** had a busy year as we expanded our reach into the community. We have done the usual tasks, supplying coffee, teas and snacks after the 10:00 Meeting for Worship. Last year, we started providing coffee and hot water for tea for the 8:30 Meeting for Worship to encourage the attenders to hang around after and meet with those who come for the 10:00 Meeting for Worship. It has proved to be very helpful at bridging the gap between the 2 groups.

We continued the summer barbecues in June, July and August. After sharing hamburgers, hot dogs and grilled portabello mushrooms, we held a discussion about Meeting wide issues. We have continued hosting a light lunch, such as soup or chili, before the Meeting for Business once a month. We provided refreshments for several memorial services during the year. We held Christmas and Easter potlucks.

- The **Nominating Committee** began the year by updating all of the various committee and position descriptions involved in the Boulder Friends Meeting. We compiled the complete yearly slate for approval by Meeting for Business in April.
- The **Finance Committee** oversees the Meeting's finances and advises the Meeting on financial issues. The committee performed a number of tasks, including:
  - Prepared the budget for Fiscal Year 2019.
  - Sent an annual donation appeal letter to member and attenders in September.
  - Continued to convert financial processes to electronic format.
  - Established a separate checking account for donations to the Toward Right Relationship ministry and provided Committee members to participate in the TRR Working Group seeking a way forward for the relationship between the Meeting and the Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples (TRR) project.
- The **Building and Grounds Committee** completed several major projects on the property, in addition to conducting repairs, maintenance, and landscaping. Other tasks included:

- Coordinated with the neighbors to the east to bury the overhead power lines
- Conducted a series of analytical tests to determine VOC levels in the Worship Room and Radon in New Horizons and routinely aired the building to mitigate VOCs to the extent possible
- Convened with Peace & Social Justice committee to discuss improvements to the Building Use Policy
- Began an accessibility review for improved access to the Fellowship Room, including sound mitigation
- Conducted an analysis of building insurance
- Renewed our snow removal contract to assure safe and reliable service
- Conducted a planning retreat in January 2019 to address issues over the next 3 to 5 years that require our attention.
- The **Web Committee** continues to keep the Boulder Friends Meeting website <https://www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org/> up-to-date and relevant with the latest information from our Meeting, as well as keeping the website responsive, accessible, and running smoothly. During 2018, we focused efforts on adding Spiritual Journey audio tracks for a total of 18 to date on the private side of the website. We focused efforts on getting announcements sent to us and posted, so that members and attenders can look up what they missed or forgot. Our clerk's thoughtful messages were regularly added as blog posts.

Efforts to foster spiritual growth and develop spiritual community include:

The Meeting has continued to endeavor (through program hours, threshing sessions, meetings with individuals, etc.) to ensure that all members are able to fully participate. We continue to work on listening to each other and to slow down in our decision making in hopes of ensuring that everyone feels welcome to speak their minds and share their concerns as we make decisions. We continue to work with members who feel excluded due to chemical sensitivities and others who have felt we make decisions with insufficient seasoning.

- **Ministry and Worship Committee** continued the monitoring and maintenance of the quality of worship and the general spiritual health of the Meeting. We evaluated the experience of Joys and Sorrows—now fully part of the worship experience, and continued to explore with the web committee and *Miscellany* ways to best share announcement information in a timely and efficient manner. We established a “Circles of Light” composed of Friends who’ve agreed to hold Friends in the Light specifically at their request. We also consulted with Religious Ed regarding concerns about the absence of children at worship. Concerns raised by individual about quality of worship experiences were shared with Oversight and Membership and led to conversations with ‘Friends at the Door’ encouraging both care (Quaker process) and flexibility (welcoming of newcomers) in allowing latecomers to feel comfortable without being disruptive. This balance of Quaker process and a welcoming Spirit for newcomers is an ongoing conversation highlighted at both the joint retreat with O&M and the Spring 2019 potluck queries focusing on ‘Quality of Worship & Vocal Ministry.’ The committee planned and coordinated a well-attended and meaningful Christmas Eve gathering.

- The **Oversight and Membership Committee** (O&M) convened 3 Clearness Committees for Membership and facilitated 1 membership transfer. We provided pastoral care to members and attenders as need arose. We held a festive welcoming party to introduce new members and transfers and assisted in organizing a renewal of marriage vows. We met individually with chemically sensitive Friends who have been unable to be in the meeting house since installation of new carpeting, attempted improvements, and published ongoing reminders of the need to avoid chemically scented products.
- **Grief and Bereavement Committee** arranged 3 memorial services during this year for Andy March, Bob Atchley, and Jane Volkhausen. We offered a series of evening classes at the meeting house for grief counseling. A member who is a hospital chaplain and lawyer held a death café for people to share their thoughts, experiences, and questions about the dying process. He also conducted a helpful program hour on how to prepare for one's dying. Committee members are working on a comprehensive handbook that will be made available to meeting members, which will include all the important papers that need to be completed, as well as providing information about hospice and other supportive services that can support the dying person and their families .
- The focus of the **Service Committee** has been on the practical needs of our Meeting community and outreach to that part the Boulder Community that is in need. The committee organized rides to Meeting and kept track of illnesses, food and other practical needs of members of our community to offer the support needed. In addition to financial support to several agencies working with the needy and the homeless, the Service Committee organizes the Meeting community in providing active support to several agencies that support the homeless and emergency outreach, including members cooking at the Boulder Homeless Shelter, collecting socks for the homeless and food donations for Emergency Family Assistance Association. We organized an annual potluck to raise money for supplies for Echo House, an emergency shelter for families with children.
- The **Library Committee** continues to provide books, pamphlets, periodicals as well as DVDs and CDs to the members and attenders of Boulder Friends Meeting. We endeavor to keep our collection accessible, current, and relevant. We have new sections this year on Race and White Privilege and on Mindful Communication. Our Meeting's spiritual journey collection, which we maintain in an audiovisual format, is also becoming available on the Meeting's website in audio format, in the password-protected area.
- The **Religious Education Committee** ensures that we have quality childcare workers in the nursery, as well as volunteer teachers and assistants in the three levels that are doing an excellent job. The numbers of youngsters who come to class continues to be inconsistent, though we have gained a few new families and the K-5 class has seen as many as nine kids. That group follows a curriculum based on Quaker testimonies, with two months reserved for exploring Bible stories and teachings. The junior young friends (JYFs) meet every week with low but consistent attendance. The senior young friends (SYFs) meet twice a month, with one time being a “walk to a coffee shop” with both teen groups in attendance.

We have also had two “intergenerational game nights,” which bring together kids and adults of all ages for a fun evening of food and games. In March, we held a St. Patrick's Day Dance. Childcare is provided for program hours, business meetings and other special events, though the number of kids using this feature is small. The summer program brings together children and adults who might not usually interact with our young Friends.

- Our **Higher Education Scholarship Committee** solicited requests for scholarships through the Meeting and received four applications in the fall and five applications in the spring. The committee reviewed applications, corresponded with students and the students reported on their school experiences and work throughout the year. The committee approved all applicants and awarded each a \$650 scholarship per semester for a total of \$5,850 in scholarship disbursements for the year.
- The **Program Committee** of the Boulder Friends Meeting organizes weekly program hours on the first, third, and fourth Sundays of each month, from September through May of each year; we also schedule spiritual journeys on most first Sundays. Priorities include requests from BFM's committees, or issues raised by members and attenders of the Meeting. In addition, we attempt to balance four primary focus areas for our work: building community; Quaker history and practice; spirituality, testimonies, and activism; and spiritual journeys.

Our work this past year also included scheduling additional workshops with Vanessa Julye of FGC, including a Friday night talk on healing wounds from racism within our Faith communities (at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Boulder), and a Saturday workshop on Creating Our Inclusive and Welcoming Beloved Quaker Community at our Meetinghouse.

- The **Indigenous Peoples Concerns (IPC) Committee** examined apology statements for historical and ongoing harms to Native peoples by Governor Hickenlooper, President Obama, Pope Francis, and Canadian churches. We reviewed our criteria for supporting Indigenous groups and affirmed our support for six Native American-run organizations with whom we have personal connections: the Southern Arapaho Language Program, Right Relationship Boulder, the Loneman School's Lakota Language Program, the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition; the Indigenous Peacemaking Initiative, and the Tiospaye Sakowin healing camps for youth on Pine Ridge.

The "Towards Right Relationship with Native Peoples" ministry continues to extend its outreach locally and across the United States under the faithful leadership of IPC member Paula Palmer and with the strong support of the committee. Members of IPC are actively involved in Right Relationship Boulder and were instrumental in planning and hosting the very successful "Welcome Arapaho People Home" events on October 7, 2018 at Boulder High School. This educational, spiritual and friendship-building event was attended by approximately 100 Arapaho people and 600 members of the Boulder community, including many members of Boulder Friends Meeting. Additional elements of our educational outreach included: two Program Hours at Boulder Friends Meeting—Steve Wheelock (Lenni-Lenape and Board member of the Denver Indian Health Service) and Ava Hamilton (Southern Arapaho and member of Right Relationship Boulder); the sharing of examples of IPC's activism towards social/racial justice at the 2018 IMYM annual meeting; redesign of IPC's website; and participation in the Pendle Hill conference, "Truth and Healing: Quakers Seeking Right Relationships with Indigenous Peoples."

- **Peace and Social Justice Committee** continued its program from last year, with focus groups aligned with members' leadings. The focus areas included Environmental Justice and Stewardship, Immigration and Racial Justice advocacy, and Physical and Mental Health advocacy. We decided to work collectively on issues of Peace Building and Prevention of Violence.

The focus groups were a way to engage and support Friends and the wider community in our efforts to build a more sane, safe, peaceful and just world, locally as well as nationally and internationally. They also functioned as a way to help discern which organizations Boulder Friends would support financially.

We sponsored and organized a workshop on Racism with FGC consultant Vanessa Julye, which was well attended by Friends from Boulder, Mt. View and Ft. Collins.

We advocated:

- For immigrant rights, including for those at risk of deportation, and those in Sanctuary;
- For elimination of toxins in public spaces, including pesticides and other harmful chemicals;
- To eliminate nuclear weapons and waste;
- For education about climate change, both globally and locally;
- For education of each other and the Meeting about issues of Brain Health, including support and advocacy for the rights of the mentally ill; and,
- For improved health care and prevention of gun violence.

All in all, we've continued to foster Quaker principles and improve our relations with various community and religious groups, attempting to live up to our founding goals of spiritual development and religious education in Quaker ways.

Submitted by Stan Grotegut, Clerk

Compiled by Barbara Stephens, Associate Clerk