

Acting General Secretary's Report Sixth Month 2021 Interim Meeting

The months since we virtually gathered in March have been busy for all of the Yearly Meeting staff, but also exciting. There has been hard work by all of the staff and many of our volunteers in those months. We are about to all begin reaping the rewards of their efforts!

BYM Camps: **Khalila Lomax, Brian Massey, and David Hunter** have done amazing work all year in preparing for the 2021 BYM Camp season. This winter, when the Yearly Meeting committed to opening the camps this summer we were still in the worst of the pandemic. The vaccines were still in trials and case numbers were rising. We all chose to have true faith that we would find a way to have safe and successful camps despite all of the unknowns we faced. Then we added a commitment to the new pricing structure that lets us live into our commitment of equality and diversity in our programs. Khalila, Brian, and David have had to navigate the ever-changing landscape of COVID-19 precautions while trying to identify what needed to be done to restart our camps after last year's closure. For Khalila and Brian this is also their first camp season. All three of them have benefited from the work of the STRIDE community, the Camping Program Committee, the Camp Property Management Committee, and many others. With everyone's efforts our faith has been rewarded. We now can feel confident that the camp season will be everything that we hoped for, including being safe for everyone there. Nearly every session at all of three residential camps is full and many have waiting lists!

Youth Programs: **Sunshine Klein** is presenting her annual report for the first time today. I hope everyone will recognize the amazing work that she has done this year. Because of the staffing reductions forced on us last summer, Sunshine didn't start her job until September, two months after Josie Dowling left as the Youth Programs Manager. Which meant that Sunshine has just days to start to learn her job before the first virtual conference of the year was going to happen. Despite all of the challenges that Sunshine and all of our middle-school and high-school students have faced, the program has been a success this year. They found a way to build community with each other without being in the same room (or even the same coast). And this fall, after Sunshine works at Shiloh Quaker Camp this summer, she has agreed to add the work of the Administration Manager to her plate. This will give the staff and our volunteers desperately additional support in the office.

Development: According to the agenda, **Mary Braun** just told you about how the development program is doing this year. To have raised 40% of our 2021 goal in the first 5 months of the year is spectacular! The support that our community has given to the Yearly Meeting in 2020 and already in 2021 is amazing. Mary, the Development Committee, and all of the people from STRIDE, Camping Program, and other committees who have worked to build that support are doing important work. Continuing that support into the future will give our community the opportunity to take on new projects and opportunities. In addition to all of her "normal" work, Mary has also been leading the volunteers who are planning our celebrations of the Yearly Meeting's 350th year and with the camp's 100th year. There will be a special kick-off event to these anniversary celebrations during Annual Session 2021 and I am looking forward to all of the special events that are being planned.

Administration: **Harriet Dugan** continues to do the work of multiple people. Like Brian and Khalila, she is entering the camp season for the first time and has worked to get all of the various accounts, debit cards, credit cards, and materials together so that our camp staff can run our programs. At the same time, she has continued to navigate the audit process and the development of the 2022 budget.

General Secretary Transition: At the Fifth Month 2021 Called Interim Meeting, Sarah Gillooly was approved as the next permanent General Secretary of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. The two of us have been working to start the process of transitioning to their leadership of the Yearly Meeting staff and we are all looking forward to when they begin on July 19. I have agreed to continue as the Acting General Secretary until that date and will stay in the office for a few weeks beyond to help Sarah take up their service. I am certain that many of you will see them participating in Annual Session 2021's virtual sessions.

A Personal Note: All of you who know me well know that I am uncomfortable being the focus of attention. I have always viewed my service to the Yearly Meeting as exactly that, service to the community. I have worked for nearly 12 years to find ways to support everyone in our community, to make the Yearly Meeting stronger, and to bring it to every Friend in all of our worshipping communities. Even in the last year when I have been honored to have the title of Acting General Secretary my highest priority has been to do what needed to be done to help lead our community through the challenges we have faced. I say this because it is important to give you a context to how much I have appreciated the calls, cards, emails, and personal visits I have received in recent weeks. I have heard from many Friends that they have valued the work that I have done and that they feel that the Yearly Meeting has benefited from my work. Those words and thoughts do and will always mean a great deal to me and I cannot thank the Yearly Meeting enough for everything that I have gained from having the opportunity to serve you.