

Development Report to Interim Meeting

We are witnessing a verdant display of resilience in the world around us. Every spring, nature teaches us the cyclical beauty of resurgent life. Now with families venturing forth in the wake of the pandemic here, we see another face of resilience. Thanks to our supportive community, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, too, is revitalizing its work. Unlike this time one year ago, our financial foundation is stronger, our ability to stay connected has grown, our sensitivity and response to social issues has deepened, and our camps are re-opening! Thank you Friends for your resilience and for your stalwart sharing.

Development activities throughout the first half of the year have included an array of customary exchanges along with some new initiatives. At the start of the year, we launched a camp appeal early to ensure the success of the new sliding scale fee payment system. Many donors stepped up generously to endorse this experiment to make the camp experience accessible to every family, no matter their financial situation. Then in the spring, special preparations for camp re-opening amid precautions to safeguard campers against the spread of COVID-19 necessitated unlooked for expenses in the forms of outdoor picnic tables, ventilations fans, health staff and PPE supplies, among other items. BYM offerings like Spiritual Formation and Youth Programs have seen modest donation levels. (You should have recently received a video message from Sunshine Klein about the year's ongoing creative youth activities!) STRIDE hosted several phonathon sessions, film and trivia nights to raise funds and has been successful with the receipt of five grants to enroll STRIDE campers this summer.

Gifts to the General Fund continue to be numerous. These contributions together with our monthly and quarterly revenue from our Sustaining Quakers help to foster stability for the YM while promoting our capacity to provide for assorted communications, programs and networking. In a letter this month to our Sustaining Quakers, the extent of change at the Yearly Meeting was shared. Some of the highlights of that letter include acknowledgements of:

- ❖ An increasingly urgent commitment to anti-racist action and education that has been championed by Growing Diverse Leadership, the Working Group on Racism and our tireless STRIDE volunteers.
- ❖ Reductions in BYM staff and administrative expenses activated even greater austerity as we welcome a new General Secretary, Sarah Gillooly, this summer, and thank Wayne Finegar for his tremendous skill and dedication as Acting General Secretary.
- ❖ The new Yearly Meeting clerk, Stephanie Bean, and interim clerk, Meg Meyer, are finishing their first year of service along with many new committee and working group members.

In preparation for 2022, a 350th BYM anniversary committee has formed that will also mark the 100th anniversary of the camp program. Already at Annual Session this year, several workshops and an interest group will usher in anniversary activities along with a special session on Thursday evening, August. 5. As we prepare to commemorate three and a half centuries of Quaker faith and practice here in the Mid-Atlantic, we will strive to learn from our past to better anticipate our future. Our story as Friends is still unfolding, thanks to each of you.