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**2022 Annual Report to Worshiping Communities**

2021 and 2022 have seen several significant changes for Quaker House. The summer of 2021 included the gradual relaxing of the worst days of the COVID-19 pandemic as vaccines became available for the first time. Quaker House’s free counseling service for active and retired military personnel and their families continued with telehealth sessions throughout the lock-down and subsequent pandemic. In-person sessions were able to re-start at Quaker House in April 2022. We continue our dedication to saying “Yes to the soldiers, No to the War” by supporting those harmed by their service. This includes treatment for moral injury, post-traumatic stress, substance abuse, domestic violence, and other injuries. Relaxation of pandemic distancing rules in the spring of 2022 has also allowed Quaker House to begin more direct participation in community events. In May 2022 Quaker House teamed with Fayetteville based Community Patriot Arts Community to present an introduction to moral injury to some of the nurses of Womack Army Medical Center.

Quaker House’s support for the GI Rights Network continued throughout the last year. Calls to the GI Rights Hotline averaged 233 per month across all of 2021 and 238 in the first quarter of 2022. There has been a rise across the first three months of 2022 that may be related to both the war in Ukraine and the start of involuntary discharges from the military for vaccine refusals. So far the discharges have been general discharges. These allow the individuals to obtain the services of the Veterans Administration but not the GI Bill benefits. Media reports suggest that they are likely to be allowed to re-join the military with proof of having been vaccinated. Quaker House and the members of the network are going to continue to monitor these discharges and the political discussions related to them.

In the fall of 2021, Executive Director Kindra Bradley announced her resignation. The Quaker House board began a search for Kindra’s successor. Kinda’s service to Quaker House came with many unanticipated challenges as she helped lead us through the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. She found ways for Quaker House to continue to provide support to our constituents, moved board meetings and conferences online, and masterminded a virtual 5K fundraiser event. Her dedication and energy are deeply appreciated.

On March 1, 2022, Wayne Finegar began his service as the new Executive Director. Wayne is a long-time member of Sandy Spring Friends Meeting in Sandy Spring, Maryland. He spent the last 12 years serving Baltimore Yearly Meeting in multiple roles, most recently as the Acting General Secretary from July 2020 through August 2021.

Since beginning his service, Wayne has regularly worshiped with Fayetteville Friends Meeting, traveled to visit and worship with Wilmington (NC) Friends Meeting, and participated in Southeastern Yearly Meeting’s annual gathering. Coming planned travels include presentations to local worshiping communities in Vermont and New York; in-person participation in the annual gatherings of Piedmont Friends Fellowship, Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting, Palmetto Friends Gathering, North Carolina Yearly Meeting – Conservative, and North Carolina Fellowship of Friends. He also will be part of the online sessions of Friends General Conference and Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

On February 24, 2022, Russia began the invasion of Ukraine. Quaker House sponsored protests against the conflict in downtown Fayetteville in March that included members of the local Ukrainian and Russian diaspora in the city. Additionally, several Friends contacted Quaker House directly or began discussions online about their relationship with the traditional Peace Testimony in light of the war. In response to these messages, Quaker House hosted two online worship sharing sessions that had over 70 participants in each. Many powerful messages were shared as Friends sought to discern their feelings of sympathy and outrage with their personal stances on pacifism and non-violence. Quaker House has announced a follow-on discussion in early June 2022 with the title *Putting Action to Witness* and additional events may be announced as Friends are led.

The unique challenges faced by everyone in the past years have changed many of our expectations of what is “normal.” Quaker House is looking for ways to build on the opportunities for broad participation in on-line and hybrid events, while also paying attention to the rise of new injuries and challenges for those serving in the military as well as those in the entire community of Friends.