GDL Final Report for 2023 to Baltimore Yearly Meeting

**1. General**

The Growing Diverse Leadership Committee (GDL) meets monthly except in August. Five to 10 people join each call. We begin our meetings in worship and read portions of the *Declaration of BYM as an Anti-Racist Faith Community*. We next hear from our STRIDE Coordinator, Khalila Lomax or, more recently, her interim successor, Rachael Carter. We then discuss current issues, reports from STRIDE liaisons, liaisons to the BYM Working Group on Racism and the Reparations Action Working Group. We conclude with silent worship.

**Membership**: Nominated members are St. Clair Allmond, David Etheridge, Peirce Hammond, Chester McCoy, and Michael Wallace. Members representing other committees or *ex officio* are Stephanie “Steph” Bean (BYM Presiding Clerk), Bette Hoover (BYM Interim Meeting Clerk), Elizabeth “Betsy” Roush (Camping Program Committee), and Marcy Baker Seitel, co-Clerk of the Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG). Marcy is also a former Clerk of GDL when we were an *ad hoc* committee. Peirce Hammond serves GDL as clerk and Betsy Roush often serves as recorder. We have been joined several times this year by Sarah Gillooly, BYM General Secretary. While David Etheridge is a nominated member of GDL, he also clerks the BYM Working Group on Racism and represents that Group, including an update at each of our meetings. Marcy Seitel represents RAWG and reports to us at each of our meetings. Other Friends have been kept apprised of our activities through receipt of our agendas and minutes, take on tasks and report on those as appropriate. In January, Tronette Anochie resigned from GDL, to our dismay. She was a powerful presence and leader at our meetings, whom we miss.

**GDL’s 2023 and 2024 budgets**: GDL’s 2023 budget of $2,000 was used to support activities related to celebrating Juneteenth in 2023. We requested the same amount for the same purpose for FY 2024.On June 14, 2023, the principals of the organization reparation.Works, Lucy Duncan and Robert Peagler, broadcast, via ZOOM, a discussion of reparations in preparation for celebration and commemoration of Juneteenth across BYM’s local Meetings.

We also supported the “Aspirational Budget” submitted by the Working Group on Racism (WGR) to be shared among WGR, GDL, and the Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG) to support training and facilitation in continuing Anti-Racism work.

**2. STRIDE (Strengthening Transformative Relationships in Diverse Environments)**

**STRIDE Coordinator**

We celebrated the efforts of Khalila Lomax, STRIDE Coordinator as she moved on to the next phase of her life on March 31, 2023. Khalila was hired in 2019 as the original STRIDE Coordinator. GDL has served to support her, learn from her, and extend that learning to BYM. We expressed our appreciation of her many gifts, shared generously with STRIDE and with us, as follows:

*GDL, through our clerk, writes “We expresses our gratitude that Khalila found us. That was rightly led. BYM still made her acceptance more difficult than it needed to be or should have been.*

*“Khalila’s decision to go is also rightly led. It is, nevertheless, very hard for me. I call her my ‘twin sister.’ We share a birthday. And while I like and adore her, admire her, respect her; while I want to hear more of what she thinks and how she is led, it is time for Khalila and Geniro to move on to the next stage of their lives.*

*“Khalila made the job of leading STRIDE her own by working with those who were involved in STRIDE at and for our camps. She, with help from the GDL and Supervisory Committees, kept her footing and her job when that might easily have come undone. She, then, created the job anew. Khalila worked with the STRIDE leaders, listening to and learning from them. She used that understanding to build STRIDE with a new generation of campers and members of the larger camping community. She went to Baltimore, DC, and Philadelphia to listen, learn and then to lead by synthesizing, imagining, envisioning, and enabling others to join that process and grow into it. She taught them, she taught us all. It is now up to us to apply what we have learned from Khalila, our remarkable teacher.*

*“Khalila, you will be a blessing wherever you go!”*

In May we met with Interim STRIDE Coordinator Rachael Carter for the first time. They have been hired for the camping season this summer. The search for a full-time STRIDE Coordinator is under way. Rachael has proven a quick study, hard worker, and general delight.

**STRIDE Working Group**

A separate report on STRIDE activities has been prepared by the STRIDE Working Group. Please review it for details about this effort to extend the diversity of the body of BYM campers and services provided in portions of the cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia (where STRIDE originated), and the District of Columbia. As noted, the STRIDE Program is in transition, led by Interim STRIDE Coordinator Rachael Carter. The leadership of the STRIDE Working Group remains Eden Fuller and Laura Grothaus, co-clerks, and Rosalie Eck.

**Working with the Camping Program**

GDL has been fortunate to have the Clerk of the Camping Program Committee (CPC), Elizabeth “Betsy” Roush, join us regularly and serve as recorder from time to time. Betsy has informed us of the ongoing activities and considerations of CPC and has engaged us in conversations about assuring equity, inclusiveness, openness, and friendliness in the camps. We have also had a few occasions when one or more GDL member attended CPC meetings as well. In February, Michael Wallace became a member of CPC as our liaison.

**3. Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG)**

A separate report on RAWG activities has been prepared by the Working Group under the care of its co-clerks, Phil Caroom and Marcy Seitel. Please review it for details about this effort to explore the ideas and beliefs encapsulated in the idea of “reparations” within BYM. RAWG has been working for several years to learn about the term and how the ideas and commitments involved in acting in concert with a commitment to living up to retroactive justice may come to be practice in and by BYM.

**4. Highlights and Learning from GDL Committee Meetings**

There is a tension that we have noticed between the role BYM plays as a business enterprise running camps, tending to property, raising money, celebrating 350 years of existence as a “funding opportunity” and BYM’s role as a spiritual community practicing and promoting social justice, hearing how we are led to become, increasingly, an anti-racist faith community, ministering, providing pastoral care, eldering, and drawing attention to our short-comings so we may grow as we follow our leadings. We do our best to give each pole of this tension its due priority, by using the *BYM Declaration as an Anti-Racist Faith* Community to guide us so that, for example, we attempt to be certain that those most likely to be directly affected by a decision that we are contemplating have an opportunity to influence that decision, whether directly or indirectly, and especially when they have been harmed by racist behavior. This tends to put greater weight on our spiritual role and less on our business concerns.

There are places where these two roles overlap, including BYM’s STRIDE Program, our Reparations Action Working Group, and efforts by our Camping Program Committee and the staff leadership of the camps to emphasize anti-racist efforts.

In 2022-23, we observed the tensions that suffused the fifth day of BYM’s Annual Sessions, as many Friends whom we now refer to as “Global Majority Friends” testified to the hurts, harms, disappointments, and sorrows that their participation in BYM events had caused them. We requested that the Recording Clerk make a particular effort to capture both tone and substance of the testimonies and witnessing that were offered and delivered that day. This was carried out through an attachment to the minutes. One of the outcomes of that meeting was the creation of a BYM Global Majority Caucus that has been meeting since then. That Caucus requested a Called Session of BYM. That session, titled “Rising from the Ashes,” was held December 3, 2022, at Baltimore Friends Meeting, Stony Run. The Global Majority Caucus organized the meeting. The development of the Caucus is understood by GDL as a very positive development “out of the ashes.”

**5. Summary of Items Considered in 2022-23**

During the past year, several items and issues emerged that we wish to record:

Early in the year, we were still concerned about the distress described above testified to by Global Majority Friends. We did not see the Yearly Meeting responding well either substantively or quickly. This has moderated as the year has progressed but is still a considerable concern to us.

In September, we learned of reports from STRIDE that extra tasks were asked of Latinx campers and that they had been teased and made fun of for speaking Spanish. In addition parents found communications while camp was under way were unclear about what to expect. Confederate flags were in evidence on the road to Teen Adventure and there were unfriendly signs at one of the local grocery stores. The new Teen Adventure Farm and Art Program had a serious mismatch between camper expectations and the program design. As a result, several campers went home early. We discussed ways to reach out to the Global Majority Caucus. We also supported the aspirational budget being submitted by the Working Group on Racism for an Equity Audit, workshops pertaining to anti-racism work and to therapeutic work for anti-racism trauma, as well as for a part-time assistant for STRIDE, GDL, WGR, and RAWG.

In October, we learned of plans to restructure STRIDE by adding a youth advisory board. We heard of discussions between the Global Majority Caucus (GMC) and the BYM Ministry & Pastoral Care Committee that had not gone well.

In November, we heard from the Clerk of the GMC about the plan for a Called interim Meeting to be held December 2. Trauma healing for Global Majority Friends will be available using funds to be administered by the GMC. Also, the GMC gathered personal testimonies of complicity in racism to be posted on the BYM website.

In December, we learned from Khalila about funds being raised for STRIDE in conjunction with Puentes in Philadelphia, where many of the Latinx campers who are referred to earlier receive services in their neighborhood. Puentes also gathered feedback from the parents of those campers focusing on communication problems and recommending hiring camp staffers who reflect the heritage of the campers. We heard a report on the Called Interim Meeting, “Rising from the Ashes: A BYM Programmed Meeting Toward Connection and Repair of the Harms of Racism”.We also discussed the need to recruit members, especially Young Adult Friends, to leadership positions in BYM. Tronette Anochie resigned from GDL.

In January, we learned of the Equality Workshop Khalila offered through Powell /House in New York on January 6-7. She named it Testimonies of Mercy with a triple focus on equality, equity, and intersectionality. Several of us provided both financial and personal support for the event to open access to more individuals. We also learned that the STRIDE year-end had been a success. We heard about ongoing discussions with Philly STRIDE about how best to support ESL campers and work with community partners in DC, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Discussions with CPC and GDL coordination continued. We discussed ways to make use of our $2,000 budget to promote celebrations of Juneteenth, including working with RAWG. We heard updates about the group engaged in considering Isobel Wilkerson’s book *Caste* as a “one-book” selection for BYM. Several of us are involved with this effort. We also learned about the BYM “Road Map” groups considerations. Our member David Etheridge clerks the group while Steph, Bette, and Peirce also serve on it along with former GDL member Clinton Pettus. We learned about plans to apologize for harm that occurred in a meeting with Global Majority Friends. The Global Majority Caucus is raising the question about how BYM responds to such harming.

In February, we congratulated our members Steph Bean, Chester McCoy, and Michael Wallace for their selection as delegates to the Friends United Meeting Triennial in Kenya this summer. Khalila reported that STRIDE was continuing to develop its Youth Advisory Committee membership through advice from Sunshine Klein, BYM Youth Program Director. A STRIDE fund-raising Phonation is planned later this month. Khalila announced that she will step down as STRIDE Coordinator on March 31, 2023. She expressed gratitude to GDL for our assistance and support in helping her to grow as a leader. Khalila and Sarah Gillooly shared a report they prepared for Supervisory Committee on work they had done. We considered their report. It will be used to revise portions of the BYM Staff Handbook, for which Supervisory Committee is responsible. We also discussed our connection with the BYM Camping Program Committee (CPC) with Betsy Roush, its clerk, regarding camps being and becoming safe, welcoming, and nurturing to the Global Majority. Michael Wallace agreed to serve as GDL’s liaison with CPC. The question of the identity of BYM was raised in regard to the balance between our camping program and the other BYM programs. This is being considered as an aspect of BYM’s Strategic Plan implementation. We also discussed feedback to the BYM Committee to revise *Faith and Practice* as they have requested. We agreed to meet with Friends from Goose Creek Meeting in response to a request from them. We discussed ways to celebrate Juneteenth again and agreed to work with Lucy Duncan and Rob Peagler of reparations.Works to provide a presentation during the week of Juneteenth.

In March, we learned that Lucy Duncan and Rob Peagler accepted our offer and would broadcast their Juneteenth presentation on Wednesday, June 14. We composed a statement of appreciation for Khalila Lomax, which our clerk read at the BYM Interim Meeting held March 25. We learned of CPC’s efforts to replace Opequon Quaker Camp. One Driving consideration is to find a safer location for campers, especial Global Majority campers.

In April we learned from BYM General Secretary Sarah Gillooly that the position of Interim STRIDE Director had been offered to Rachael Carter (they, them), a Global Majority Friend from Philadelphia with experience at Quaker Voluntary Service. We approved sending the recommendation to Supervisory Committee. We learned from David Etheridge about STRIDE’s progress in registering a few returning campers and preparing for Gear Day. Marcy Seitel, RAWG co-clerk reported that they were turning from an emphasis on mutual aid to beginning fund-raising to address the harms of racism being identified by Global Majority Friends.

In May, we met with our new Interim STRIDE Coordinator, Rachael Carter. Rachael met with Peirce Hammond and David Etheridge and was to meet with STRIDE co-clerks Eden Fuller and Laura Grothaus soon. Rachael asked us what the most important need there was for STRIDE to grow into. We emphasized preparing STRIDE families for the camping experience so there were no major surprises. We also emphasized the need to rebuild STRIDE membership and recommended that Rachael consult with Dyresha Harris. We approved RAWG’s request for a $3,000 budget for 2024 for paying speakers and learned of their plans to start a fund for Retrospective Justice. We also received a request from one of the clerks of BYM’s Ministry & Pastoral Care Committee, asking us to “share some thoughts and observations with us.  We are interested in how you think the Yearly Meeting is doing spiritually, how your committee is doing and, specifically, any anti-racist work you are doing.“ We responded by sharing our draft annual report with that clerk, noting that it had yet to be approved. The clerk expressed appreciation for the report.

In June, we also learned from Rachael Carter (they, them), Interim BYM STRIDE Coordinator, that there was a great deal happening in preparation for the 2023 BYM camping season. Rachael mentioned meeting new people including STRIDE members, BYM employees and members, and some campers and their parents. Rachael expects 20 or more campers from the DC Philly, and Baltimore areas. Some know each other, some do not. They are waiting to hear from most of the parents with the necessary forms. Meanwhile, STRIDE is developing a pre-post survey for campers and their families. This is new and they are considering telephone calls with the families as a follow-up. Meanwhile they are getting gift cards for the families and preparing gear. An orientation with a practice hike is planned. Michael Wallace reported that the arrangements with reparationWorks (Lucy Duncan and Rob Peagler) were in good shape to go on June 14. Peirce had prepared a draft of GDL’s Annual Report to BYM. He had sent it to the Committee for initial review and asked for comments.

In July, we considered a report from Interim STRIDE Coordinator, Rachael Carter, which requested broadening support for STRIDE by expanding its pool of volunteers and providing part-time onsite support during the camping season. GDL agreed to have a debriefing session with Rachael after the camping season to determine what improvements can be made for next season. This was Peirce Hammond’s last meeting on GDL. The Committee discussed possible options for selecting a new clerk. No decision was made on the matter, but the group agreed to hold a face-to-face meeting in early September to meet new GDL members and decide on a clerk. Steph Bean volunteered to coordinate this effort once the slate of candidates from the nominating committee was confirmed. Peirce Hammond expressed his gratitude to the group for its work and achievements for this year which was reciprocated by all.

Peirce Hammond, Clerk, for the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, July17, 2023