

Children's and Youth Religious Education Committee Annual Report February 2018-February 2019

The Children's and Youth Religious Education (CYRE) Committee is responsible for the development, oversight, and support of curricula and activities for young Friends in pre-school through high school. CYRE is also responsible for childcare in the nursery. In addition to supporting the First Day School (FDS) program and two paid staff positions (FDS Coordinator and Childcare Provider), the committee recruits teachers, selects materials, assesses progress, clarifies goals and objectives, oversees a budget, and communicates with the Ministry and Worship Committee. In summary, the CYRE Committee nurtures the spiritual development of children and teens and their families, and works to integrate families and young Friends into the life of the meeting.

John Hite and Carolyn Stuart served this past year as co-clerks. After many years of service, Sean Chen stepped down from the committee. We expressed our gratitude and welcomed Simone Kershner. Continuing members on the committee, in addition to John Hite and Carolyn Stuart, are Jasmine McKewen, Stacey Sewall, Herbert Struemper and Laura Young. Kathleen McNeil continues to offer excellent service as First Day School Coordinator, as does Stacey Sewall as Childcare Provider in the nursery. Kathleen McNeil (FDS Coordinator) serves on the committee as an ex-officio member

First Day School (FDS) program

We are happy to have maintained a stable number of families in our First Day School program, though attendance varies substantially from one Sunday to the next. Children and teens are grouped into three developmentally appropriate pods:

Younger Pod, generally children ages five to ten. The teachers are Allie Scales, Bennett Kirkpatrick, Jasmine McKewen, Carolyn Stuart and Laura Young. From three to five children are generally in attendance, though we sometimes have as many as seven or eight.

Middle Pod, generally children ages eleven to thirteen. The teachers are Kathleen McNeil and Andrea Wuerth. From three to as many as seven or eight children are in this pod. We are hopeful that Mark Hulbert will return to the pod. He has stopped teaching this year to spend more time with his family.

Upper Pod, generally those students in middle and high school. The teachers are Sean Chen, Robin Harper, John Hite, Leslie Rountree and Herbert Struemper. We are pleased to have Finn James assist in this pod. From two to five teens are in attendance on any given Sunday.

The curriculum is composed of four parts:

Bible Studies (January through Easter) which alternates between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In 2018, students studied the Old Testament, which culminated in Old Testament Field Day on April 19. CYRE expressed our appreciation to

Leslie Rountree who organized the various events (Jacob wrestling with the angel, David smiting the giant, the Israelites survival of many trials as they escaped Egypt) and the Biblical snacks.

Muticultural Unit (Sunday after Easter until end of school year), which included a field trip to Beth David Synagogue in Durham. Approximately twenty students and family members participated in the service. The Rabbi and others remained after the service for questions. Since the service occurred on Friday evening, we were pleased to have so many families attend with their children.

Quakerism (late August until Sunday before Thanksgiving). Students studied Quaker history, testimonies and practices. This year, approximately 17 children and family members attended a worship service at New Garden Friends Meeting in Greensboro, giving young Friends experience with a semi-programmed meeting. Afterward Max Carter led a tour of the historical cemetery behind the meetinghouse. Greensboro Friends graciously invited us to join them for their potluck.

Holiday Activities (Sunday after Thanksgiving through first Sunday in January). Young Friends created cards for Quakers at Carol Woods who are not regular meeting attendees, and for men at Orange Correctional Center who worship with us. They decorated the meeting Christmas tree with home-made ornaments, presented a Nativity play and a humorous skit (teens) at the Christmas party and made bird feeders. We regretted that the snowstorm prevented us from caroling at Carol Woods this year.

Bible Studies (January and February, to be continued until Easter Sunday). Young Friends are currently studying the teachings of Jesus conveyed in the New Testament.

Nursery Care

Stacey Sewall continues to offer excellent care for infants and toddlers in our nursery. We have one toddler who regularly attends, with the occasional visit of another. To meet the best practice of having two adults with children, meeting volunteers have provided assistance throughout the year. A benefit of this practice is that these volunteers have gotten to know our young Friends and their families better.

We thank the meeting volunteers who have helped Stacey in the nursery this year: Catherine Alguire, Alice Carlton, Dave Curtin, Matilda Chen, Lynn Drake, Nancy Elkins, Eloise Grathwohl, Robin Harper, Dottie Heninger, Jason James, Jennifer Leeman, Jasmine McKewen, Wendy Michener, Tom Munk, Ben Ray, Carolyn Stuart and Carolyn White.

Collaboration with other Meeting Committees

Kathleen McNeil joined members of Ministry and Worship and the Archives committee on the Task Force on Familial Membership. The Task Force presented a proposal to the March 2018 meeting for worship with attention to business which approved the establishment of a new membership category, the Affiliated Member. From the minute,

“An Affiliated Member is an interim status for young adults who may or may not be familial members, and choose not to seek adult membership but would like to keep CHFM in their lives as their spiritual home and loving community while they seek further discernment after their high school years.”

CYRE made the decision to include a more intentional discussion of membership, the process of discerning whether one is led to seek membership and the meaning of membership, in its curriculum for the teen group. This year, a member of Ministry and Worship, Lynn Drake, joined the middle and high school teachers for a full discussion of these topics.

Jasmine McKewen has joined a Task Force to consider how we welcome families with new babies into the meeting. This Task Force, which includes members of Care and Counsel, Ministry and Worship, Hospitality and CYRE, is also discussing means of celebrating major milestones in the lives of young Friends, including graduations from high school and college, and other milestones.

Robin Harper from the Animal Welfare Committee presented a lesson on our connections with animals on April 22. Robin engaged children in activities and discussion that led all to consider how our lives are enriched by animals, and the responsibility we have to treat them with respect.

CYRE accepted the invitation of the Adult Religious Education Committee to present two forums: on June 3 to celebrate the high school graduation of Finn James, and another on November 25 that focused on gratitude. At the November 25th forum, teens informed forum participants of organizations sponsored in the Alternative Gift Mart. Participants in the forum on gratitude were Kamiya Hedges, Finn James, Calvin King, Rufus King, Sutton King, Will King and Lily Wuerth,

Building Family Connections

CYRE hosted its annual “Meet the Teacher” picnic on September 9. It was a well-attended and informative event.

Two family potlucks were held since the last annual report: On May 19 in the home of Donna Bell and Jason James; and on October 6 in the home of Andrea Wuerth and Herbert Struemper. Both events were well attended, with plenty of good food, games and lively conversation.

Teen Activities

In addition to three lock-ins providing opportunities for community building, the teens have provided service to the meeting. The alternative gift mart this year focused on eight organizations, including Alamance-Orange Prison Ministry, Inter-Faith Council, Friends committee on National Legislation, American Friends Service Committee, Quaker House, Equal Justice Initiative, Refugee Support Center, Thoo Mweh Khee School and NC Wildlife Federation. A total contribution of \$4000 was raised. The teens also collected money for parking spots in the meetinghouse lot during home football

games, earning a total of \$3,950, which was contributed to the meeting. In addition, John set up tables and chairs for potlucks on First Days. The teens closed meeting for worship on a Sunday during months that include five Sundays.

The following Friends assisted with fee collection during home football games:

September 22	October 13	November 3	November 17	November 24
John Hite	John Hite	John Hite	John Hite	John Hite
Bob Durovich	Leslie Rountree	Bob Durovich	Bob Durovich	Bob Durovich
Finn James	Henry Schneider	Will King	Henry Schneider	Henry Schneider
	Lily Wuerth		Lily Wuerth	Will King

Emma Hulbert, Grace Schneider and Finn James read letters to the meeting for worship with attention to business to support their desire to be considered conscientious objectors should the draft be reinstated.

Summer Activities

During the summer, Friends who are not FDS teachers are invited to lead classes for children of all ages. The purpose is twofold: it gives our regular FDS teachers a much-needed break, and it provides meeting members with an opportunity to share their passions and interests and to have fun with our wonderful children. We are grateful to all Friends who participated: Catherine Alguire, Julia Cleaver, Lynn Drake, Julie Feickert, Lori Kamala, Jennifer Leeman, Kathleen McNeil, Wendy Michener, Richard Miller, Tom Munk, Allie Scales, Pam Schwingl, Carolyn Stuart and Carolyn White. Activities included a discussion of meditation, games, and several craft activities (knitting, needlepoint, and wood working). The nursery has a colorful toy chest as a result of the wood working activity.

Looking Forward

We are delighted to have a stable group of children, family and teachers in our meeting. We look forward to building closer relationships among our meeting families and to more fully integrating families and children into the lives of the meeting as a whole.

Respectfully submitted by the CYRE committee: John Hite (co-clerk), Simone Kershner, Jasmine McKewen, Kathleen McNeil (FDS Coordinator, ex-officio), Stacey Sewall, Herbert Struemper, Carolyn Stuart (co-clerk) and Laura Young