

Brooklyn Friends School
Report to New York Quarterly Meeting
October 2015

Brooklyn Friends School is pleased to present our annual report to the New York Quarterly Meeting. We are happy to share that the school is strong, growing according to plan, providing uncommon academic excellence, and maintaining a diverse and tremendously talented administration, faculty, staff, and student body.

Quakerism is central to the life of the school, both in terms of providing a strong spiritual center and in terms of the practical aspects of running the institution in keeping with Friends' practices. The following report details some aspects of the life and financial health of the school, and we would be pleased to provide any further information and answer further questions as the need may arise.

Quaker Life and Selected Activities at Brooklyn Friends School

The School's Quaker Life Committee met on alternate weeks beginning on September 11, 2014 and ending on June 10, 2015 clerked by Jonathan Edmonds and Marna Herrity.

Committee discussions initially centered around Arthur Larrabee's documents entitled, "The Role of the Clerk" and "The Role of Those Present." Discussing the contents led the Committee to take the lead in arranging two clerking workshops for faculty and staff led by Arthur Larrabee which are taking place in the Fall of 2015.

Committee meetings also served as a forum for members to share information about Quaker-related "events and highlights" taking place in divisions, administrative offices, and the larger community.

Major Committee activities for 2014-15 included the production of a document during the summer of 2014 explaining Quaker life at BFS to new faculty and staff members; developing a focused presentation on Meeting for Worship for the all-school Professional Development Day on February 19, 2015.

In preparation for this presentation, Committee members developed a slide show on what Meeting for Worship looks like in each division of the school that was supplemented by two video clips shown to Non-Divisional Staff entitled "Quaker Nourishment for the Soul -Have a Little Faith" and "Sandy Spring Friends School-What is Quaker Meeting for Worship?"

The All-School Quaker Life Committee received a great deal of positive feedback to its Professional Development Day presentations. Acknowledging that there was more work to be done to help the community understand the structure power and, and potential for Meeting for Worship, the Committee created a weekly Meeting for Worship on Wednesday afternoons at 5:30 open particularly to non-

divisional staff and Pre-School/Lower School teachers whose participation in non-classroom Meeting for Worship is limited.

The Committee also encouraged faculty and staff to participate in Friends Council on Education conference, workshop, and peer networking activities. During the 2014-15 academic year, 12 teachers attended “Educators New to Quakerism” at Mary McDowell Friends School and Powell House. One Family Center teacher attended Arthur Larrabee’s Clerking Workshop at Powell House. 1 Upper School teacher participated in FCE’s Upper School Religion Peer Network; and 1 Pre-School/Upper School teacher and 1 Middle School teacher participated in FCE’s Service Learning Peer Network. We are also pleased to announce that 1 Middle School teacher and 1 Upper School teacher completed the SPARC (Spirited Practice and Renewed Courage) program.

The All School Quaker Life Committee also announced and highlighted a number of other Quaker related connections at its meetings. Several of these events were coordinated by ASQLC committee members. Committee members were grateful for the many people throughout the school who enabled these opportunities to happen:

- Connecting Quaker testimonies and sustainability - Orinthia Swindell, the Director of Diversity and Institutional Equity, and Natania Kremer, the Director of Service Learning, developed a plan for the October 2014 Diversity Professional Development day including a keynote speaker, Christen Clougherty, who attended Carolina Friends School and has a PhD in Quaker Studies. Dr. Clougherty integrates service learning and diversity in her professional work
- Brad Ogilvie, from William Penn House in Washington, D.C. presented a workshop on service learning at the February 17 Professional Development day
- Quaker Youth Leadership Conference - held at Tandem Friends School was attended by four BFS faculty accompanying students (Marna Herrity, Sidney Bridges, Vanessa Ehler, and Andy Cohen)
- William Penn House Work Camps were attended by Natania Kremer and Marna Herrity
- Bridge Film Festival – Andy Cohen
- Indigenous People’s Day - Tom Rothschild
- Advocacy Day - HALT Solitary Confinement in New York - visit to Albany - Natania Kremer, Tom Rothschild, and 2 Upper School students.
- Hibakusha Stories visit and installation of Peace Pole – Tom Rothschild
- Visit to San Francisco Friends School – Tom Rothschild

- People's Climate March - BFS partnered with Mary McDowell Friends School and Friends Seminary – Natania Kremer
- Visit to BFS by Moses Brown School (Providence, RI) student/faculty group interested in learning about our US Afternoon of Concern – Natania Kremer

Another ASQLC focus arising from its work in 2013-14 involved exploring and naming more intensively and accurately the intersections between Quakerism and Service Learning and Diversity work at BFS in 2014-15. ASLC members acknowledged some challenges and tensions that our school community faced this year. The following questions continue to be active concerns for 2015-16:

- How can our identity as a Friends school be more clearly defined and ground us as a community when tensions arise?
- What can Quakerism and the QLC offer to these intersections and vice versa?
- How can we partner effectively?
- How can we facilitate reciprocity and support among all?
- How are we appreciating the work that has been done in the past, even as we develop new initiatives?

As the All School Quaker Life Committee ended the 2014-15 school year and looked ahead to 2015-16, the committee continued to hold our school community in the Light to speak truth to power with honesty and love with our shared goal of creating a community of growth and respect.

Another idea that emerged from within the ASQL Committee involved exploring the creation of a *hospitality* network at BFS of families, faculty, or staff who would be willing to offer housing to visitors (such as speakers, visiting faculty, or others connected to BFS Quaker projects) in lieu of staying at a hotel at the visitor's preference.

The ASQCL felt that the possibility of a hospitality network had a connection to the testimony of community in welcoming visitors to find out more personally about our school community. We also saw a connection to the testimony of simplicity in offering simpler and cheaper accommodations. Such a network could also serve as a connection to Brooklyn Monthly Meeting if Meeting members were willing to host visitors. A number of questions and concerns were noted to be further discussed before a formal proposal is pursued.

Connections to Other Quaker Committees

Two other Quaker related committees exist within the BFS/BMM community: the *Spiritual Life Committee* of the BFS Board of Trustees, and the *Care Relationship Committee* of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. In 2013-14, the clerks of these committees met once with the ASQLC clerks to discuss how the three committees could support one another, and to clarify the unique role and work of each committee within the larger Brooklyn Friends community. During 2014-15 these clerks met 2 more times to further this work of discernment.

Challenges the All-School Quaker Life Committee Faced

One challenge the ASQLC faced was the logistical challenge of maintaining a steady and consistent attendance at our meetings. Even though its meeting time was scheduled during the day, various work commitments and events have pulled on us as individual members, and thus it has been hard to keep the flow of discussions going. Another challenge the Committee faced is discerning the appropriate role of our committee when tensions or problems arise in our school community.

Leadings for next year:

These are some possibilities of leadings for the ASQLC's work in 2015-16:

- Jonathan and Marna, having completed 2 years of service on the committee as co-clerks, wish to step aside. The committee will begin the year by choosing new clerks. Jonathan and Marna suggest that we once again spend some time in the initial meeting next fall to clarify the role of the clerks and the role of the other committee members, as we did this year. They also suggest that the committee continue to have 2 co-clerks who can support each other and meet between QLC meetings to plan.
- Begin the 2015-16 year with revisiting our ASQLC's Statement of Purpose. Does it need revision? How can it shape the work of our year ahead?
- Finding further and deeper ways to educate our community on what being a Friends school can mean and look like.
- Quaker process - What does Quaker process look like at BFS? When and how is transparency in decision evident, or lacking? This could be the focus of a professional development day.
- Explore what a Quaker pedagogy means and looks like at BFS. There is interest on the Spiritual Life Committee to do more of this, and it has potential to engage faculty, families, alumni, and

students, as well as perhaps connections to other Friends schools. This could also be the focus of a professional development day.

- How can we further our work from this year on Meeting for Worship at BFS?
- How can we follow up on the Hospitality initiative that we began to explore this year?
- What other Quakerism professional development work do we want to explore for faculty & staff?
- Look for and develop ways to build intersections with the new Office of Equity, Justice, and Civic Engagement.

In general, the ASQLC had many rich and profound experiences during the 2014-15 year. The Committee appreciated the work of every committee member. The Committee Clerks were honored to be given the opportunity to help further the Quaker life of BFS.

Another unique dimension of Quaker Life and Selected Activities at Brooklyn Friends School has been our ongoing support of the NYQM's African Education Committee's program in Tanzania. During the 2014-15 academic year, such support included multi-week visits to the Kisangura schools by two BFS teachers: Marna Herrity and Kathleen Clinchy who brought with them computer hardware and software as part of BFS' ongoing donation program. Marna's and Kathleen's activities are described below in a reprint of the most recent African Education Committee report:

NEWS FROM AFRICA
Winter 2015-2016

Hujambo! Thank you to everyone who supported our work this past year. We are happy to report that Distribution Day for the 2015 academic year went well. Marna Herrity, a member of our committee, made her fourth trip to Tanzania this past summer. She was joined by fellow Brooklyn Friends School teacher, Kathleen Clinchy. At both Kisangura Primary School and Secondary School, Kathleen and Marna found new leadership, teachers who expressed eagerness to work with our committee, and students who were excited to be learning.

Gisango Mwita, the first woman to lead the secondary school, previously served as head of the Secondary School in Rigicha, a rural area that is, like Kisangura, not far from the Serengeti Park. She is from Mugumu and earned a diploma from the University of Dodoma. Juma James, now in charge at the primary school, comes to Kisangura from serving as Head of Hekwe Primary School, also located not far from the Serengeti. Three of his seven children are attending the school.

Mr. James was thankful to receive four netbooks, bringing the total BFS netbook donation to the primary school to eight. He aims to make sure these netbooks are available to all faculty and will arrange for training. Ms. Mwita, welcomed ten additional netbooks from BFS. She showed the visitors a classroom in one of the original classroom buildings that is being converted into a secure computer lab, complete with tiled flooring and powerstrips on three walls. Twelve new desktop computers, recently received via a grant from the Tanzanian government, will be housed there along with the two dozen netbooks the secondary school now possesses. We are very pleased to be partnering with both schools and the local government as they work to bring more technology to their staff and students.

Ms. Mwita requested that all the secondary school female students we sponsor be given funds that would allow them to live in the hostels (dormitories) on the campus. This would allow them more time to study, since they would not have to walk long distances back and forth to school or be called upon to do chores for their families. We readily agree that this would significantly benefit their educations. The annual hostel fee per female student is \$125.00. We are committed to raising funds to support this worthy initiative.

Ms. Mwita's request is in alignment with our committee's aim to move from a model of paying tuition and supplies for the students we sponsor, to a model where we support them academically, psychologically, and socially throughout the year. Both Mr. James and Ms. Mwita responded with interest to Marna's inquiry about establishing a guardian teacher program to assist the students whom we sponsor. Two or three teachers at each school would be chosen to work one-on-one with these orphaned children and young people, for which service they would receive a small stipend. Funding for this guardian teacher program will also have to be found by our committee.

At the primary school, Kathleen and Marna met with many of the students we sponsor. They also oversaw a drawing project that involved all students in the four upper grades: each level was given a different topic and individual pupils were asked to respond with an appropriate image: "This is what I eat for dinner;" "This is one activity I like to do when I'm not at school;" "These are the animals I see on the way to school;" "This is my family."

BFS Middle School students will complete similar sketches this fall and send them to Africa. All the students' work from both schools will be exhibited in Brooklyn this autumn.

Likewise, at the secondary school, Marna and Kathleen met with a group of sponsored students, visited classes, and attended a spirited student-led debate. The Headmistress and Academic Master took them on a tour of the school property, including the farm, faculty housing and the well where female students are sent to collect water. They spoke with several groups of students, in addition to those we sponsor, and also met with the faculty to brainstorm ideas for developing the BFS-Kisangura sister school relationship.

Building on the research begun by BFS science teacher Kevin Cooney in the summer of 2014, serious attention was given to repairing the dysfunctional cisterns at both Kisangura schools. Two local water engineers traveled out to the schools and

provided estimates. In addition, during the summer just past, Kevin traveled to Oregon to take a course, sponsored by the Quaker organization Friendly Water For The World, on how to build bio-sand filters and obtaining information about a current Friendly Water program in Tanzania. We are hopeful that the vexing problem of providing badly needed water to the schools may soon be resolved.

As we reported last year, we are actively seeking to form a local community-based NGO, non-governmental organization, near the schools to take over the task of managing distribution of our annual gift to support our sponsored Kisangura students, as well as our other projects. On this trip, Marna and Kathleen interviewed three people, well established in the community, who might serve as directors of the NGO, as well as a half dozen people to serve on the board.

On her way to Kisangura, Marna met with Max Madoro, the Project Zawadi representative who has managed Distribution Day for us over the last few years. She reviewed his accounting for Distribution Day 2015 and discussed the transition planned for the next two years, during which responsibility for the event will be transferred to the local NGO we are in the process of setting up.

One of the major tasks for the NGO will be to administer our Further Education Fund. As readers will recall, last year Friends Seminary and an anonymous donor each contributed \$3,500 to send five Kisangura Secondary School graduates on to education or training at institutions elsewhere in Tanzania; they are, we have been assured, hard at work on their studies. These donors agreed to provide the same amount for 2015-2016 so that these young people may count on a second year at their respective schools. Although no 2014 graduates qualified for this program, there has been such enthusiasm from our sponsored students for the prospect of further education that we want to continue this project into the future.

Horizons Summer Enrichment Program

Somewhat closer to home, BFS continues its direct and mutually beneficial work with Public School students and teachers from neighboring public schools P.S. 307, P.S. 8, P.S. 67, and P.S. 287, as well as several Middle Schools, under the auspices of the Horizons at Brooklyn Friends School program.

In 2014-15 we welcomed 120 dynamic and bright Kindergarteners, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh graders to participate in an intensive 5-week academic enrichment and recreational summer program as well as in elective choices from our Afterschool program during the academic year.

While the Horizons Program is not, in and of itself, Quaker related, BFS believes that our participation in it as an one of two New York-affiliates in a national program represents a deep and ongoing fulfillment of our Quaker testimonies of community, service, and stewardship

The Summer 2014 Horizons at Brooklyn Friends program was staffed by classroom teachers from P.S. 307, each paired with a teacher from Brooklyn Friends or another independent school. Additional staff included specialty teachers and

more than 30 high school volunteers, a substantial number of whom were from Brooklyn Friends.

Over 90% of eligible, previously-enrolled Horizons students returned for the Summer 2015 program with a very high attendance rate of 96%.

The Horizons at BFS program received funding grants from a growing number of major foundations over the 2014-15 year.

Staffing Transitions

Over the course of the 2014-15 year, several challenging personnel changes took place at BFS:

- The Director of Diversity, Dr. Eddie Moore, Jr. voluntarily separated from the School in September, 2014. His role was temporarily filled by the Associate Director, Orinthia Swindell, who was herself appointed Director of Diversity and Institutional Equity in March, 2015. Russel Marsh, an experienced and celebrated BFS faculty member, was appointed Associate Director.
- Another important element of this transition was the formation, in April 2015, of a new BFS academic department, the Department of Equity, Justice, and Civic Engagement. This school-wide department seeks to work with faculty and staff on a collaborative basis to ensure that opportunities for inclusive, multi-cultural perspectives, Quaker-testimony-related discussions of equality, social justice, and community, and other similar “teachable moments” are incorporated in curricular planning, course development, and classroom implementation whenever possible. Membership in the department includes the Director and Associate Director of Diversity, the Director of Service Learning, and the Coordinator of Upper School CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) Projects.
- The Head of Middle School, Barry Davis, announced in January, 2015 his intention to assume a similar position at another school the next academic year. A Middle School Head Search Committee reached unity on the selection of his successor, Dr. Glen Pinder, in March, 2015.
- The Head of Upper School, Dr. Bob Bowman, announced in February, 2015 his intention to assume a similar position at another school the next academic year. An Upper School Head Search Committee reached unity, in March, 2015, on the selection of Sidney Bridges as Head of Upper School for 2015-16.

- The Dean of Faculty-Assistant Head of School, Whitney Thompson, stepped down in December 2014 from the position of Assistant Head of School while retaining her position as Dean of Faculty. No replacement as Assistant Head has been sought or named.

Expansion

It is a truly remarkable achievement that the 40,000 square foot Lawrence Street Upper School project was fully completed and occupied in September, 2015 despite the fact that site demolition only began 13 months earlier in August, 2014.

In addition, using a different contractor and architect, BFS completed its penultimate summer project at 375 Pearl Street at a cost of \$1,304,000. The project involved major renovations on the 5th floor and minor improvements on the 3rd and 6th floors as well as long-delayed infrastructure improvement primarily involving the air conditioning system. Since 2010, summer construction projects have transformed the interior and teaching environments of 375 Pearl Street at a total cost of \$7,434,000.

The total Lawrence Street project budget of \$21,259,740 should, in the final accounting, prove a bit overstated after unused contingencies and other expense reductions are factored in.

The school's enrollment expansion plan initiated in 2007 continues to meet its goals ahead of schedule. Total enrollment for 2007-2008 stood at 654 for Preschool (including Family Center) through 12th grade, and current enrollment for 2015-16 stands at 895 students, up from 850 enrolled in 2014-15.

Financial Condition

Brooklyn Friends School completed the 2014-15 year with positive net operating income of approximately \$532,000. Preliminary audit figures indicate that net assets as of June 30, 2015 will stand at approximately \$18.5 million.

Total contributions to the Brooklyn Friends School, restricted and unrestricted, totaled \$2.7 million in 2014-15 comparison with \$2.1 million in 2013-14. The Brooklyn Friends Fund for unrestricted annual giving surpassed its goal with total contributions of just over \$1 million. Current parent participation in Brooklyn Friends Fund donations stood at 84% for 2014-15 surpassing last year's result of 82%.

Demographics 2014-15:

Total Enrollment: **850** (FC=53, PS=96, LS=314, MS=195, US=192)

Total Faculty: **156** full time employees

Faculty/student ratio: **1:5.4**

Total Faculty/Staff: **233** full time employees

All staff/student ratio: **1:3.6**

Faculty of Color as % of Total Faculty: **39%**

Students of Color as % of Total Student Body: **39%**

Quaker Students: **30 (3.5%** of total enrollment)

Socio-Economic Diversity: 2014-15

Need-based financial aid as % of gross tuition: **18.3%**

Percent of students receiving financial aid: **31.9%**

Tuition: 2015-16

Tuition in the Family Center is \$14,050 to \$33,100

Tuition for the Pre-School is \$18,000 to \$29,950

Tuition for Kindergarten through Third Grade is \$35,050

Tuition for Fourth Grade through 12th Grade is \$37,300

Respectfully Submitted,

Lara Holliday and Bradford Mulder, Co-Chairs of the Board of Trustees,
Dr. Larry Weiss, Head of School