

**FIFTEENTH STREET MONTHLY MEETING
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

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July 14, 2018

Dear Friends,

In the last quarter, Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met every First Day for two Meetings for Worship, one at 9:30AM and the other at 11AM. We continue to hold First Day School every First day at 11AM. We also have Bible Study every second First day at 11AM. We continued our new time and transition from Meeting for Worship to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business starting at 12PM holding meetings on Fifth Month 13, 2018 at 12 PM, Sixth Month 10, 2018 at 12PM and Seventh Month 8, 2018 at 12PM.

Although Since our last report, we have experienced the loss of one Friend, Bea Markowitz. She was the oldest member of 15th Street Meeting. We are planning a memorial meeting for her on September 22. Details will be announced in the coming months.

Our active Peace & Social Justice Committee continues to raise money for several witness activities including the New Sanctuary Coalition and refugees through sandwich sales. They also sponsored sending two Friends to the Quakers Seeking Right Relationships with Indigenous Peoples at Pendle Hill conference and supported AFSC by purchasing tickets to the Tokyo Symphony fundraiser concert.

In June, the meeting established an interim communications committee to look at our internal and external communications. We hope to work with the communications committee of the Quarter in our efforts.

In July we passed the following minute, that was forwarded to the Friends Seminary co-clerks, the Friends Seminary Care Relationship Committee co-clerks and the Quarter.

2018-7-10: In an effort to clarify the purpose of the meeting's minutes from April and June in relation to the Ben Frisch situation, we renew our request for replies from the Friends Seminary trustees.

The April minute is as follows:

2018-4-11: The Clerk reads aloud a five-page summary of the Friends' Seminary Care Relationship Committee's deliberations and explorations around the dismissal of Brooklyn Friend Ben Frisch as well as minutes from the Friends' Seminary board of trustees' executive committee, and the Morningside and Brooklyn Monthly Meetings.

The meeting understands the difficulty of all involved. We note that the Care Relationship Committee and the Friends' Seminary board of trustees are

comprised of many members of the Friends community and work with all members of the school community to institute Friends' values at the school.

In an effort to support the employment of our values at the school, we shall hold a meeting for worship. We invite students, parents, faculty, and quarterly-meeting members to attend the worship, and we wish to build ties between our communities. We invite those in support of Ben as well as those who feel victimized by the event to attend.

We note the difficulties that have preceded the relationship but wish to work to improve it. We ask members of the meeting to work to strengthen as well as follow the procedures to address concerns.

We also ask members of the Friends' Seminary board of trustees, especially the Friends on the board, to attend the New York Quarterly Meeting next week to best explain the Ben Frisch release from employment and tangential events around the matter to the quarterly meeting.

We ask the Friends' Seminary board of trustees to ensure that the students, faculty, and alumni petitions are heard and responded to in a timely manner, noting that many students will graduate and become alumni in two months.

We ask the Friends' Seminary board of trustees to articulate guidelines for how self-expression may be fostered without injuring others and how those statements will be governed if broken but to ensure restorative justice and reconciliation practices employed before releasing students from service and from school.

We ask all members of 15th street, the quarterly meeting, and the school community to be cautious of how we speak so as not to slander and injure others.

We ask all members of the meeting and the school to hold each other and Ben Frisch in the light.

We join with Morningside and Brooklyn to rehearse Care Relationship Committee in a confidential manner the rationale and underlying additional facts justifying the release -from-service of Ben Frisch. It is our expectation that the Friends' Seminary board of trustees exercise the appropriate oversight for major decisions in accordance with Friends' values and the Essential Principles, Practices, and Procedures.

The meeting notes that there are concerns that the Friends' Seminary board of trustees have not been able to exercise the oversight necessary for the implementation of Friends' principles and practices. We ask for the full board to be strengthened and charged with the oversight of the actions of the school administration.

We ask that the Friends who are members of the Friends' Seminary board of trustees be empowered to share with the community the actions of the board for greater transparency within the Friends' Seminary board of trustees and with 15th street and the quarterly meeting.

We encourage individual Friends to follow the Essential Principles, Practices, and Procedures to have their concerns heard.

The June minute is as follows:

2018-6-14: One Friend says that we and other groups of Friends have written to the Friends' Seminary trustees and the Care Relationship Committee about Ben

Frisch's firing and have not received a reply. She wonders if the Care Relationship Committee has been able or even allowed to consider the matter.

We ask the clerk to write to the School Trustees and the Care Relationship Committee to ask them for an update on the concerns that this meeting has written to them about Ben Frisch's firing, quoting this monthly meeting's April minute #2018-4-11. We ask the clerk, as well, to speak with the clerks of those committees. We ask for replies by the time of the next monthly meeting (8th July).

We ask the clerk to send this minute to the quarterly meeting in order to take up the matter there.

We ask Travis Combs, co-clerk of the Care Relationship Committee to attend the next monthly meeting and report on the matter.

The meeting expresses concern about the open-ended approach of consideration by the Care Relationship Committee. There is also concern that Friends who are following the Essential Principles, Practices, and Procedures of the Care Relationship Committee are not being heard.

It is the understanding of the monthly meeting that the Care Relationship Committee will facilitate communication.

The Care Relationship Committee must be able to take concerns - not just outright violations of the Essential Principles, Practices, and Procedures - to the School Trustees. If not, the process is not functioning.

We do not feel that the Care Relationship Committee has to conclude that the school violated the Essential Principles, Practices, and Procedures before forwarding concerns to the School Trustees. Not allowing concerns to go forward from the Care Relationship Committee to the School Trustees is in itself a violation of the spirit of the Essential Principles, Practices, and Procedures.

We feel that by not letting the School Trustees consider these concerns, the Care Relationship Committee is not allowing the school the opportunity to live into its Quaker values.

Nancy Hadley-Jaffe stands aside from this minute.

We ask the clerk to forward this minute to the New York Quarterly Meeting.

In Friendship,

Glenn Josey
Clerk, Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting, 2018