

Report of the Religious Education Committee for June 2016-June 2017

Committee members: Kim Acquaviva, Michael Beer (Youth Program Coordinator and *ex officio* committee member), Betsy Bramon, Anita Drever (Clerk), Nicole Else-Quest, Carrie Mitchell¹

The Religious Education committee tends to the spiritual lives of the children in our Meeting. We oversee programming and care for children ages six months through seventeen years. The following describes our work during the period from June 2016 through June 2017:

Makai Kellogg, School for Friends teacher and lifetime FMW member, heads our **nursery**, which provides for care for children ages 0-4 during Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business, RE meetings and special events. Makai ensures there are two staff from a rotating team of caregivers present each week in the nursery. Makai also tends to the needs of FMW's collection of toys—wiping them down, making sure their quarters are kept tidy and replacing them when they make the transition from well-worn to shabby. Makai and many of her team have been with FMW for years—older children love to stop by the nursery and give the staff hugs on their way into and out of Meeting. There are around a half-dozen children each week in the nursery during Meeting for Worship.

Michael Beer, FMW's youth coordinator, completed a second successful year overseeing our **First Day school and youth programs**. Family volunteers are awed by Michael's ability to generate new, fun, spirit-led activities for the kids. In addition, Michael has started or continued several First Day School traditions—Quoins for Coins, a milestone celebration at the end of the year, birthday treat making once a month, Quaker camp alumni presentations—that are giving our programming more and more of a regular rhythm. Michael coordinates the family volunteers ensuring two adults are present each week. We had about 30 adults lead or facilitate sessions this year.

Younger elementary attendance is vigorous—there are often over a dozen 4-6 years olds in First Day School. We also have a solid cadre of 7-11 year old First Day school attenders, a half dozen of whom are typically present on any given Sunday.

The Junior Young Friends group (AKA “Tweens and Teens”) were given the opportunity at the end of last year to design their own curriculum for this '16-'17. Some things worked out splendidly—they've had great discussions among themselves and with Meeting members and attenders and others who've volunteered to lead discussions on weighty topics. They've also gone on urban hikes, played ukulele, and done a variety of service activities. Because our Junior Young Friends group spans a broad range of ages and life stages we've tried to have two groups when possible, however limited volunteers and capricious attendance has made this difficult to do on a regular basis.

The Religious Education committee also supports monthly family potlucks during the hour before Meeting, sponsors speakers such as Mary Fillmore who talked to us about the anti-Nazi resistance in Amsterdam, provides scholarships to over a half dozen FMW kids to attend Quaker camps, and

¹ There are additional committee members on the books who haven't attended a meeting yet. We will continue to warmly and wishfully encourage them to join us.

members of RE organize retreats at Camp Catoctin and the Friends Wilderness Center for the entire Meeting. Thanks to the generosity of Friends Faith Williams and Debby Churchman, RE was able to hold a Worship Sharing for families shortly after the election. RE is deeply grateful to the Meeting for their continued support of our work.