

2011 Report: Advancement & Outreach
To be Presented to Meeting for Business 4 December 2011

Advancement & Outreach welcomes newcomers and visitors, promotes Meeting activities and builds community internally and externally.

Committee members in 2011 included: David Whitford, clerk, Ulrike Lichti, co-clerk; Ruth Nielsen-Jones, recording clerk; Bernie Benson, web editor; and Ann Anderson, Jane Chalmers, Kay Johnson, Donna Smith, Jillaine Smith, Cindy Terrell, and Brendan Weiss. Jane Coe participates, ex-officio, as newsletter and directory editor; and Marie France serves ex-officio as calendar editor, Rick Morgan, ex-officio – Recorder.

Being a Welcoming Community

Helping everyone feel welcome and a part of our meeting community has been and continues to be both a major focus as well and a major challenge. We invite the entire meeting to help us with a renewed effort to build community, especially by joining us in greeting newcomers during coffee hour following Meeting for Worship, and inviting them to potluck.

Much of our welcoming work is behind the scenes; we prepare newcomer packets and name tags; we send welcome notes; we promote Meeting events and activities. In 2011:

- We sent 57 welcome notes (history: 59 in 2009; 54 in 2008; 36 in 2007; 52 in 2006; 40 in 2005)
- 16 newcomers have taken next steps in terms of participation (history: 28 in 2009; 13 in 2008; 13 in 2007; 17 in 2006; 20 in 2005).

Efforts to encourage newcomers include:

- We held two "Getting-to-know-you" sessions following meeting for Worship to help those new or newish to the Meeting make their integration into the Meeting community smoother and more comfortable. We will continue to schedule them throughout the upcoming year.
- Frank Greve and Jane Chalmers hosted a successful "zip code party" through which several members and attenders made new connections with each other and the Meeting. We hope to replicate the idea in 2011 and 2012.
- Jane Coe and Ruth and Peter Nielsen-Jones have continued to host Experiment with Light sessions at their homes. Experiment with Light is going strong. The All Ages event in early October was well-attended and worshipful. We anticipate doing another one when Religious Education asks us (perhaps in February). ARE has us on a quarterly schedule, for the fifth Sunday of the month, which has about 10 regulars and some new people, in general. The two gatherings per month in two homes is usually slightly smaller, but does have a loyal following as well. On November 30, for the first time, we will be doing a session under the sponsorship of the Lower School Parents' Quaker Life Committee. It will be here in the meeting room at 7:00 p.m. and others are most welcome to join us. In addition, we held a session concurrent with Meeting for Worship as a way to help newcomers learn more about silent meeting. We will schedule another such session in January.

A&O also updates the Meeting directory, making sure we have touched base with each person in the directory. We were pleased that about 60% of households checked their names off on the draft directory displayed at Meeting during October. Telephone and e-mail follow-up with the remaining 40% is almost complete. The directory will go to the printer in January, when the new clerks of committees have been selected.

There have been 17 Services Exchanges so far this year, with some helpful linking of requests and responses. They have been a helpful vehicle for connecting requesters to providers. We

would do more if more requests were sent in, as a way of being mutually supportive of one another; e.g. book recommendations, suggestions for jointly attending some events, and recommendations of services.

In partnership with the school, we are helping to keep the signage at the meeting house up to date.

We remain appreciative of the many ways others in Meeting welcome newcomers and build community; in particular, we note with admiration Susan Kaul's, Gail Thomas' and Bill Dietrich's leadership in organizing the 24-person Spiritual Formation group – another excellent way to build community.

Building Community - Externally

A&O also seeks to build relationships with communities close to our meeting:

- We place ads in Quaker Life, Washington Post, Friends Journal and the Yellow Pages; we continue to cooperate with William Penn House.
- This year we gave seven \$100 Lee Stern Peace Awards, three in Montgomery County public high schools (Walter Johnson, Bethesda-Chevy Chase, and Walt Whitman) and four in Washington DC: two to Wilson, and one each to Cardozo and Friendship Collegiate in DC. We thank the presenters of awards, Donna Smith, Jillaine Smith, Tom Walker, David Whitford, Liz Hofmeister and Jane Coe. We would very much like the Meeting's support in increasing these very small awards.
- We changed the way we handle the Meeting's voicemail. The message now provides the BFM weblink, warns that messages left on the tape are not monitored, but in case of emergency we invite callers to call Jane Coe. This is because most messages were ads or hang ups - our message contains what most people want to know and our web site is attracting more newcomers.

Building Community - Ramallah Friends School

We continue to support Ramallah Friends School, a Quaker school on the West Bank. The source of funds are sales during the Spring Fling weekend combined with the amount collected through the Social Concerns donations during May. In 2011 we raised \$8,624 (see table below), which is significantly less than the current yearly goal of \$10,000.

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
3360	8920	4031	5525	5388	5105	6653	8319	8961	6188	8624

The 2010 levels of annual tuition ranged from \$1900 for 1st grade to \$3030 for the upper high school grades which served as a guide to our goal setting.

Publications, Documentation & the BFM Web site

Jane Coe edits the meeting's membership directory, monthly newsletter, weekly bulletin and the email services exchange. This year we sent the monthly newsletter to 360 households by mail, and 39 as pdf files by e-mail. The e-mail option is new this year, and is available to anyone who lets Jane Coe know of this preference.

Marie France is backup to Jane in newsletter editing and posts the monthly calendar. Marie and Jillaine provide proofreading.

Bernie Benson is Web editor. We continue to see a steady increase in usage of the BFM web site: just over 49,390 page views (up from 45,400 last year) and just above 26,000 user sessions (an increase of 1,000 over last year). This year we continued First Day School on-line registration and the childcare signup calendar. The Library Committee completed their excellent work in putting the book catalogue online. We supported their efforts and worked with them to update the library section of the site. Early feedback is positive; we plan to improve these features and expand committee use next year. (brought up to date by Bernie Benson for this year.)

A&O welcomes comments and suggestions. We meet on the third Sunday of the month at 9:30 a.m. in the teacher's lounge.