

Friendly Eights Committee Annual Report: July 2010 - June 2011 presented to Meeting for Business on 5 June 2011

Members: Alex Bell (clerk), France Pruitt, Gretchen Schafft, Dan Smith

2010-2011 Review

During the 2010 - 2011 season, the Friendly Eights Committee continued to offer informal opportunities for small groups of Bethesda Friends Meeting members and attenders to enjoy dinner and fellowship. As in the past, two separate programs were offered: one for adults and one for families with children.

The adult program continues to be successful. The committee actively solicited signups during coffee hour and potluck in September and January. This was a positive experience for the committee and seemed to have increased awareness of the program. Adults signed up in September and were randomly assigned to groups. This year there were a total of seventeen potluck dinners for adults. During the months of October, November and January there were two dinners with nine to ten participants each. Additional people signed up in January, so that February had three dinners, while March and April had four, with seven to nine participants at each dinner. Altogether, 46 individuals attended at least one dinner.

The program for families with children had one dinner each in October, November and April with two or three families participating at each event. There was a dinner for four families Saturday June 4. The Committee is experimenting with extending the dinners into the warmer months when families can meet outside in backyards. There was discussion about not using Evites, but it still seems the most efficient way to contact everyone. There was more activity among the families with children this year than last, and the Committee is encouraged by this positive trend. Although people's busy schedules often seem to prevent more participation, many folk take the time to send regrets and make positive comments about the program and invitation.

The Friendly Eights Committee will be providing hospitality in June.

Comings and Goings

Dian John, Stephanie Smith, and Anne Trontell rotated off the committee in December, and Elizabeth Conklin, Gretchen Schafft and Dan Smith joined us. Dan Semendinger stepped down as clerk and Alexandra Bell took over those duties. Later in the winter, both Dan Semendinger and Elizabeth found they were no longer able to participate, and stepped down from the committee. We could use two new members!

2011-2012 Year

Adult Friendly Eights will meet Sundays at 6:30 on October 16, November 13, January 22, February 19, March 18, and April 22.

Families with Children will meet Saturdays at 5:30 on October 15, November 12, January 21, February 18, March 17, and April 21.

Friendly Eights Spiritual Impact

The Friendly Eights program provides a venue where members and attenders can get to know each other in an informal and friendly environment. Both new and long time participants find it to be a great way to meet and get to know each other. Conversation, laughter, news, opinions and concerns are all expressed. Sometimes hosts lead part of the conversation towards topics such as "why were you attracted to Quakerism?" Comments and suggestions for ways to better serve the community are welcome.

Many thanks to my fellow committee members for all their hard work. And also many thanks to all the participants in the program who make it such a pleasant experience.