

Dear Pacific Yearly Meeting Friends,

One month ago I officially stepped into my new role as PYM's Youth Program Coordinator (YPC). My, how things have changed in the last few years; more individual Friends seem to be stepping up to participate in our collective Youth Program experiment, and I sense a cultural shift underway toward creating the vibrant intergenerational community of Friends we envision. After having served this program in a variety of ways since 2008 –first as the temporary Youth Coordinator and then as a member of the planning and supervisory committees— I'm eager and open to see where Spirit leads us next.

During PYM's annual gathering in Claremont in July 2011, I volunteered as a Friendly Adult Presence (FAP) with the teens of Junior Yearly Meeting. It was a good way to transition into my new job as Coordinator, as it gave me the opportunity to connect with many teens, young adults, and older Friends and consider with them their visions for this program and position. Conversations ranged from how to effectively involve youth in committees, to the nature of God, to the parallels between racial justice and age justice work, to how to make it possible for more young adults to attend the annual gathering.

At the gathering, the YPC Supervisory Committee, the outgoing Coordinator (Sarah Beutel), and I delivered a joint report (<http://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/2011/yearly-meeting-docs/ypc-reports-to-pym-2011/>). As Sarah noted, "PYM created this position of Youth Program Coordinator ... because Friends of many ages felt a longing to be truly seen, held, and challenged by PYM, and believed that stronger intergenerational understanding would help."

Toward that end, I've recently had deep and wide conversations with approximately 100 of these "Friends of many ages" and 15 groups within PYM, representing 25 Meetings and Worship Groups. I've begun to work with groups such as:

- [Claremont Meeting](#) to involve more young people in a Meeting event on gender identity and equality;
- [PYM's Peace & Social Order Committee](#) to reach out to and support the peace and action interests of younger Friends, who are especially invited to join their monthly conference calls like Cara Arcuni (Palo Alto) and I did in August – contact Clerk Jeff Kroeber, *jeffkroeber [at] junodot com*;
- [Quaker Center](#) and [Sierra Friends Center / Woolman Semester](#) to better coordinate their complementary youth programs, camps, and workshops for all ages; and
- [Friends Committee on Legislation of California \(FCLCA\)](#) to engage more PYM youth in their legislative advocacy and social networking (they invite you to 'like' them on [Facebook](#), join their [Action Network](#), and share their [Action Alerts!](#));

Meanwhile, I'm supporting [College Park](#) and [Southern California](#) Quarters in planning the upcoming Fall gatherings.

Do you (or your Meeting, committee, or Quaker organization) want help involving youth? Are you a teen or Young Friend with an idea or concern that needs support? Let's talk.

Below are some upcoming intergenerational and youth-focused activities that will be of interest to Friends in PYM. I will be attending many of these events, and I hope you will join us!

- September 16-18: **Savvy Activism and Spirit-Led Witness** (a Quaker Center Workshop with Shan Cretin and Joe Morris) <http://www.quakercenter.org/programs/savvy-activism/>
- September 24: **Woolman Semester Harvest Work Day**
<http://woolman.org/events/2011/harvest-work-day>
- September 24: **45th Annual FCLCA Harvest Festival at Palo Alto Friends Meeting**
<http://www.fclca.org/harvestfest/>
- October 9: **Claremont Friends Meeting Transgender Panel and Discussion on Gender and LGBTQI Identity & Equality**, Organizer: Karen Vance, *birdbance [at] yahoo [dot] com*.
- October 14-16: **College Park Quarterly Meeting** <http://collegepark.quaker.org/>
- November 5-6: **Southern California Quarterly Meeting** <http://scqm.org/>
- December 2-4: **A Music and Dance Weekend at Quaker Center**
<http://www.quakercenter.org/programs/program-schedule/>

Young Friends and teens especially: please make sure to ask for financial assistance, including for transportation, if you need it. (I can help you figure out how to ask your Meeting and/or the particular gathering.)

Does your Meeting or organization have an event coming up? Please let me know, and feel free to post it on our [Facebook Page: "Pacific Yearly Meeting Youth Programs"](#). (Please 'like' our page, and invite other PYM Friends to join the online community, too!)

*** Speaking of online community, I will be working with Don Bean to build a Youth section on the PYM website. If you have ideas for the website or want to help, please contact me.

In Sarah Beutel's time with PYM, she helped us understand that "rather than being an event planner or a program manager, the Youth Program Coordinator needs to be a resource, an interpreter, and a catalyst." As the YPC Supervisory Committee reported, we have "achieved greater clarity that the job of the YPC is not to host activities, but to encourage and coordinate all the resources of our monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, and our Quaker organizations, to support the spiritual growth of our youth and the full integration of the PYM community as a manifestation of our Testimonies on Equality and Community."

While my position as PYM's Youth Program Coordinator is primarily focused on addressing the needs of younger Friends and on creating a more vibrant intergenerational community, one of the most exciting parts of the job for me is working in concert with Friends who are taking the challenge – and challenging one another – to live more fully our Testimonies on Community and Equality in every way. The Youth Program work is part of a larger whole, a community effort. I look forward to working with you all as we experimentally strive to stretch and live out these testimonies in our everyday lives.

Peace & Love,

~ Alyssa

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