

PYM Youth Programs Coordinating Committee Program Evaluation Report 2019

**See also the summary of responses in appendix,
separate document linked at YPCC web page:**

www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/committee-newsletters-and-reports/youth-programs-coordinating-committee/

Summary

Responses to an online survey, sent to meetings and individuals in December 2018, provided clear support of the Youth Programs Coordinator (YPC) and offered suggestions and critiques of the efforts of the YPC and the Youth Programs Coordinating Committee (YPCC).

Respondents who have been active in regional events such as Annual Session and Quarterly Meetings were more knowledgeable regarding impacts on the youth programs and listed many positive changes observed since the program began. A desire for support of the children's program and youth programs in monthly meetings was expressed. A concern that youth programs were not developing a spiritual foundation and that we address issues of racism, classism, sexism and ageism were also expressed. Respondents were divided regarding the question of hiring an administrative support person and focusing the YPC role on youth activities. A majority of respondents support the cost of the YPC as money well spent, with some expressing concern regarding the impact of the cost on meeting budgets and limited impact seen at the monthly meeting level.

Survey description

The Youth Programs Coordinating Committee created an online survey with 15 questions designed to assess the Pacific Yearly Meeting (PYM) community's perspective of the effectiveness of the Youth Programs Coordinating Committee (YPCC) programs. The survey was emailed to all PYM monthly meetings and worship groups to complete as a group or forward to meeting participants to complete as individuals in December of 2018. It was also sent directly to many individuals via listservs for Young Adult Friends (YAF), Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) and adults who have been involved in youth services. We received 31 responses from individuals and 2 responses from meetings or groups. Though we didn't receive as many responses from this survey as we hoped, the feedback is valuable and will inform our revised goals and direction for our new Youth Programs Coordinator (YPC). Demographics of respondents can be found in the Appendix.

Impact of the YPC and YPCC on youth programs in Pacific Yearly Meeting

The responses to the survey were strongly positive (74-93% depending on the question) regarding positive impact seen in the youth programs. Increases in intergenerational activities, increases in safety and professionalism, increases in Young Adult participation on committees were all noted frequently. Many respondents appreciated the shift in our community culture to

expect intergenerational activities and youth involvement in some plenary sessions and on PYM level committees.

There was appreciation of the improved communication across different committees and programs and ease of accessing information using the YPC as a point person to contact. The YPCs big picture view of yearly meeting programs and institutional memory supported committee work with ever-changing committee members. The availability of funds to support youth activities through the Youth Programs Fund of the Bob Vogel Endowment was also regarded positively.

Challenges

The YPCC, focused primarily on teen and young adults both at regional gatherings and through funding of attendance at events, has worked toward supporting Quaker youth involvement in wider Friends circles and beyond, into international social justice movements.

There were requests for more support for youth programs at the monthly meeting level. This is a compelling and challenging desire as many monthly meetings report few young people attend regularly and meetings are geographically distant. Larger regional gatherings offer an opportunity for youth to gather in greater numbers and form a “critical mass” for faith based activities, while the monthly meetings remain the foundation of our spiritual community.

Several Friends expressed concern that our youth programs do not adequately support the spiritual development of young people. How can we expect to keep youth engaged if we do not offer meaningful experiences for them on the Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meeting level? What is a meaningful experience? People come to the Society of Friends for different reasons: spiritual hunger for some, while social activism is the driving force for others. A strong sense of community and acceptance in the larger gatherings is also a powerful attraction. How can the interconnection of these drives be developed into a powerful program for youth at all levels of our faith community?

As the younger generation grows increasingly diverse racially and in their expression of gender identity, our youth programs must also reflect these changes and find ways to nurture each attendee. The YPCC is challenged to confront our own inculturation in the systemic institutional bias in our society of race, age, sex and gender as we seek ways to build safe and welcoming programs for all. How do we continue to work together as a community while we challenge each other to live up to Friends testimonies? How do we create a welcoming space for a diverse population of adults and youth?

Our YPC was unable to accomplish the youth focused work without strengthening the communication infrastructure of the entire yearly meeting. This meant that she worked extensively with the Communications Committee to make our website easier to navigate and to keep it up to date. She also helped to create listservs for various committees and groups to streamline communication and increase the availability of information for youth in a format they

would access, and with various other administrative tasks. These tasks were seen as an essential prerequisite to the youth based work. Because our YPC's responsibilities have been composed so highly of administrative work, the possibility of hiring an administrative person for the whole of PYM was raised, so that the YPC may focus more narrowly on work involving youth. Responses to this proposal were divided, with 42% favoring two positions, 38% believing the YPC should do this administrative work, and the remainder left undecided. The primary reason respondents were opposed to two positions is the cost.

The value of the YPC position was overwhelmingly supported, with 71% of respondents stating the money is well spent and we need to pay a living wage. The YPCC has not taken a position on the issue of adding a second employee to do administrative work, but encourages the yearly meeting to continue exploring ways to meet both needs, including two part time positions, or some other configuration.

An additional challenge the committee faces is serving as Human Resources and Supervisor to our sole employee. The knowledge and skills needed to develop and implement policies which are both fair to the employee and take adequate care to the financial implications for the Yearly meeting, such as managing the budget, including paid time off and employee taxes, is specialized and time consuming. Since its inception, this committee has depended heavily on the knowledge, skills and research of the YPC to address such personnel issues. We are currently working to increase our skill and knowledge as a committee, but recognize that this will be an ongoing challenge for Nominating. One idea is to have a Personnel committee that addresses employment issues not only for the YPC, but also the Children's Program Coordinator and other people who are paid to work in the Children's Program and Junior Yearly Meeting, with the intention to develop best practices that are consistent across PYM. This would be especially important if a second position is developed.

It is evident that our communications as a committee to the yearly meeting community can continue to be improved, especially in terms of advertising events and opportunities.

From this the YPCC takes the following:

- YPCC and Communications Committee need to continue to publicize how to access information on the PYM website and social media
- YPCC needs to periodically check to see whether information is being received and/or accessed by Friends throughout PYM
- YPCC needs to consider additional methods of communicating information

Many issues that the YPCC has endeavored to resolve remain relevant. The children's and teen programs have for a long time been relatively invisible and separate from the adults and under-resourced. There is a strong need for sufficient communication between and among groups. The Children's Programs (YM, QM, local) must be recognised and supported, and so too must the parents of the children in these programs be supported and included.

In particular, the YPC has noted that while the Adult Allies workshop is one important way for adults with a variety of interests, skills, and fear/enthusiasm levels to explore participating in a vibrant intergenerational Friends community, the Friendly Responsible Adult Presence (FRAP) and teacher orientations held on the first afternoon of Annual Session have a stronger direct impact on program quality. We recommend continuing both.

The YPCC plans to meet in August with the new YPC to review the Goals and Objectives and set a focus and direction for the work of the new YPC, taking the survey results into consideration. She will begin visiting meetings and listening further to the needs of the meetings in the coming year.

For the full list of responses (redacted for anonymity), see the appendix.

APPENDIX:

1. **2019 YPCC Program Evaluation Survey Responses** (*also posted as a link from the main YPCC page*):
www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/2019/documents/ypcc-evaluation-report-to-as-2019/
2. **2019 YPC Job Description** (*linked from main Job Descriptions page*):
www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/job-descriptions/
3. **YPCC Goals & Objectives document** (2014, to be updated soon, *also posted as a link from the main YPCC page*):
www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/ypcc_GoalsObjectives_2014_06_AnnualReport.pdf
4. **Committee Webpage and Links to Youth Section of the PYM Website:**
www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/committee-newsletters-and-reports/youth-programs-coordinating-committee/
5. **YP Fund Information** (aka Youth Programs Fund of the Bob Vogel Endowment):
www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/youth/resources-funding/