

## Youth Program Coordinator Epistle III

*Note: this version replaces a draft that was erroneously put on the PYM website in September 2011.*

June 2011

Dear Friends –

Greetings from PYM's Youth Program Coordinator. Springtime is truly a season of change. Winter has reluctantly given way to the warmth of longer days, the garden sprouts are taking on an air of adolescent maturity, and the energy of growth and transformation buzzes like electricity. The last three months have been full of rich conversations, deep fellowship and bittersweet planning for the welcoming of a new Youth Program Coordinator. I'd like to share with you some of the highlights and themes from these past three months.

- The Friendly Adult Presence (FAP) workshop was a highlight in March. Seventeen people attended, representing 5 CPQM monthly meetings. Key discussions centered on building intergenerational relationships, qualities of a Friendly Adult Presence (FAP), and envisioning ways to improve our systems for supporting FAPs. The afternoon was

### Meeting visits and events

#### March - May 2011:

- RepCom
- Palo Alto
- Napa/Sonoma
- FAP Workshop at San Francisco
- Sacramento Valley Cluster Meeting
- Claremont
- Orange Grove
- SCQM Young Friends Retreat
- Inland Valley
- SCQM Spring Quarterly
- CPQM Spring Quarterly
- Reno
- Conversations with 63 Friends

spent in role-plays of difficult situations. Participants developed some concrete ideas for the JYM committee to implement this summer. Attendees gave helpful feedback on how to improve the next workshop, which is **scheduled for July 9 at the La Jolla Meetinghouse.**

- Several meetings are considering how to collaborate with other geographically close Meetings in order to create critical masses of teens. A few South Bay meetings have taken the plunge into experimenting with this structure, with the support of some committed adults.
- Quite a few PYM Meetings are in close proximity to colleges and universities and seek greater engagement with students there. I have explored a range of approaches with several meetings, including: having a nominated position tasked with outreach and relationship-building with students, hosting Quaker Quest-style discussions on campus, tabling at student registration, and ensuring that Meeting information is listed in campus resource guides.
- Several Monthly Meetings have used some of the time in my visits with to guide them in considering ways to bolster their First Day School programs. Some promising approaches that various meetings are trying include: empowering teens and preteens to invite speakers to their class and to plan lessons for younger children; restructuring First Day School committees to lighten the burden on parents; and including youth on religious education committees.

In addition to visiting meetings and facilitating discussions about teen programming, I have also been busy supporting teen gatherings over the last few months. Teens gathered for an overnight retreat in conjunction with Santa Cruz Meeting's annual spring retreat. I enjoyed brainstorming

## Youth Program Coordinator Epistle III

*Note: this version replaces a draft that was erroneously put on the PYM website in September 2011.*

with Santa Cruz teens and adult leaders as they walked through the planning of this event. Teens at Southern California Quarterly hiked to the US-Mexico border, led by AFSC, gaining awareness of border and immigration issues. Facebook networking proved successful as College Park teens (including some who had never been to a previous gathering) turned out en masse for Spring Gathering at Quaker Center. They took great leadership, facilitating chat boxes, engaging with children's program and participating in worship sharing.

I'm looking forward to sharing one more annual gathering with you before I transition out of the position of Youth Program Coordinator. My partner and I will be moving back to Colorado to get married and live near family. During the next two months, I will continue to visit Monthly Meetings and will focus also on three key tasks: the upcoming FAP Workshop in Southern California, a service trip for teens during the weekend before Yearly Meeting and creating a resource guide to facilitate a smooth transition for my replacement.

As I think about transitioning out of this ministry, it's impossible not to reflect on the last 13 months. This is difficult work and I feel honored to have been a part of the process. Many people have opened their hearts and shared with me their dreams and visions of a dynamic teen program. I have learned so much about what it means for a community to take a huge step of faith, learning together and trusting Spirit to lead the way.

-Sarah Beutel

Pacific Yearly Meeting Youth Program Coordinator