

Children's Program Committee Report to PYM Annual Session 2018

SUMMARY

The Children's Program seeks the help of volunteers to ensure the enjoyment and safety of the children attending the Annual Session. A clipboard will be available in the plenary tent during registration for volunteers to sign up for supervising and providing amusement for the children in collaboration with teachers and coordinators

Report:

The Children's Program Committee began to meet as a whole in January, 2018. Members were moved to create a solid and reliable committee. Rather than relying almost solely on hired staff as has occurred in the past, we wanted to provide information and assistance based on having fully educated ourselves. We also aimed at providing resources on how the program works to everyone potentially involved in it. Finally, we wanted to work harmoniously amongst ourselves, in order to give the best possible model of how Quakers interact tenderly with one another to our students and our yearly meeting. We encountered challenges in each of these areas.

The Children's Program consists of many moving parts, requiring both an overview and attention to detail on the part of committee members. We did not want to leave all tasks to our outgoing and incoming co-coordinators, appointed as part of an endeavor to retain skills and knowledge holistically. Friends who had served before needed to recall that new people were in our group, people who, like the experienced members once had, might find it difficult to ask questions because they did not know where to start. For example, we wanted to plan curriculum for teachers and to distinguish broad guidelines from daily classroom planning through a subcommittee. This goal proved to be difficult to reach when some members were not able to participate in scheduled planning sessions. In the future, if the committee continues to pursue a firmer grip on educational activities for the students, continuing members may want to look at starting much earlier with more articulated goals. We also plan to maintain a library of curriculum materials online. We can continue to add items to those that members and coordinators have gathered this year.

As our communications would center on conference calls and emailing, we used systems already in place and did our best to give everyone a chance to participate. Our new co-clerk had very little experience with Google Docs, in which our records are kept. Other members patiently helped her to follow through with using this program effectively. Although glitches occurred on a regular basis, she gained in confidence because she learned that her teammates would be there to help. Honesty and admitting mistakes helped the group bond as Friends, as well as forwarding our common mission. We did meet frequently by phone, especially as we went into the process of teacher selection. Emails flew back and forth among individuals and the entire committee.

As of today, the committee still has information to impart to teachers, parents and students. We will shortly be sending letters and making phone calls to get everyone informed. We have appointed a full staff based on a thorough application submitted by each candidate and reviewed by as many members as possible. As the session rapidly approaches, we want each instructor to feel supported by the CPC. We continue to talk about logistics in hopes of not missing important factors in delivering education in keeping with 2018's theme, faithfulness and radical vulnerability.

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Perhaps the area of greatest "health" in this committee has been our treatment of one another. We did experience marked differences of opinion, differences that threatened to weaken our endeavors. At one point helpers emerged from the PYM youth program to help us heal from potential strife or even collapse. Calls and emails in a Non-Violent Communication style, a mode which we hope to bring into the classes, helped bring the quarreling parties toward peace and a greater appreciation of our teammates' perspectives.

We have changed the coordinator's job description in light of all the work done in the last three years by the PYM Youth Programs Coordinator. She has provided much logistical support and institutional knowledge that saves Children's Program Committee time and effort, and sometimes saves us from assumptions or obsolete information. She maintains our web page (<https://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/youth/children/>), disseminates the Teacher application materials, helps update the contact list of potential Teachers, runs the criminal background checks, helps keep CPC in communication with other parts of the Yearly Meeting, and contributes information for the orientation meeting for Teachers and for parents/sponsors. With her contribution a lot of our coordinator's job has been reduced and assisted. We have also had the committee participate a lot more in the creation of the program for PYM overseeing and partnering with the coordinators.

We can hardly envision creating a worthy program without the stalwart assistance of our M&O Liaison Sally Kingsland, especially stepping in when we needed a calm view from outside our differences referred to above.

We have had a full committee this year, and will need at least two new members for next year. please contact the Nominating Committee if you are led to join us.

Carol Cruikshank (San Francisco)

Marcus Melander (Santa Cruz)

Mary Lee (Visalia)

Vivian Carlson (Honolulu)

Nate Secrest, CP Co-coordinator (Redwood Forest / Lake County WG)

Lee Sisson, CP Co-coordinator (Palo Alto)

Alyssa Nelson, Youth Programs Coordinator ex officio (Davis)

Sally Kingsland, M&O Liaison (Palo Alto)

Chamba Cooke (Grass Valley), co-clerk

Peggy Craik (Orange Grove) co-clerk