

# JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING 2019

## Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

### **What to Expect: for parents/guardians and sponsors of JYMers - Q&A**

Please see the JYM webpage for more information and updates:

[www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/youth/jym/](http://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/youth/jym/)

REQUIRED FORMS: Please be sure to send in the Parental Release and Medical forms, and the Respectful Relationships consent form, in a timely manner so that we can effectively plan our program. These forms are available online via the JYM webpages.

**Minors may not participate in the program and registration is not considered complete until these forms are received.**

If you have any questions about JYM, please contact the JYM Adult Committee Co-Clerks:

Muriel Strand (Sacramento) <ecoengr@comcast.net>

and/or Sarah Armstrong Jones (Big Island) <sajonest42ne1@yahoo.com>

**There will be a *meeting for Parents/Guardians and Sponsors* with JYM on the first afternoon, time TBD (see PYM schedule) in Buckeye, the JYM room. You can ask for the location at the registration table and receive a map of Walker Creek Ranch. See you there! JYM program doesn't start until after dinner and the welcome plenary on the first day, so you are solely responsible for supervision until then.**

**For all attendees under age 18 - *an adult sponsor or a parent/guardian must be on site at all times for each person under age 18, including day attendees. A signed medical history form and parental release form, with sponsor signature if parent/guardian will not be attending, must be submitted with registration for minors to participate in the program.* Note: Minors may attend without their parent/guardian if they have a Sponsor. A Sponsor is an adult (age 18+) who has been chosen and given permission by the parent or legal guardian to act as temporary guardian for the event. When minors are not in JYM or Children's Program (such as at meal times), they must be under the supervision of their parent/guardian/sponsor.**

### **Why Come to JYM?**

Middle and high schoolers (typically ages 13-18) are invited to participate in Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM). When we gather at PYM's Annual Session, JYM participants work together to develop community, learning to use Quaker process to live together for a week. The JYM community is based on the Quaker values of love, respect, integrity, honesty, and mutual responsibility. In keeping with Friends' practices, JYM members select officers and committees as needed; hold business meetings, meetings for worship, and worship sharing; and come together through fun activities and games. Many local Meetings do not have enough younger Friends to create a sense of youth community, so adolescents might not attend their local meeting regularly or at all. At JYM a much larger group gathers to develop friendships, try out leadership roles, and witness the power of the Spirit. This is an opportunity

to practice Quaker process and claim it for themselves. By learning with their peers and struggling to reach unity, they grow as Quakers and as individuals. Sometimes Quaker youth invite their non-Quaker friends to attend as well: that's great!

### **Is my tween/teen ready for JYM?**

The program is directed toward and run by the youth participants with support from an adult committee. Ages typically range from 13-18, between [Children's Program](#) and [Young Adult Friends](#) and/or adulthood.

Readiness depends on a combination of interest, maturity, and willingness to brave a new setting and make new friends. Some Friends are ready earlier than others for the opportunity to participate in a spiritual community led by their peers using Quaker process and values. For others, the rigor of sitting in business meetings is too much, and they would prefer the structure and activities of the Middle School group in the Children's Program. If you would like to discuss your youth's readiness for JYM, please feel free to contact JYM adult committee co-clerks.

Note that there are activities at annual session that middle schoolers in CP and JYM do together to prepare for a future transition to JYM.

At Annual Session, 13-year olds have the choice of joining [Children's Program](#) or JYM. Young adults ages 18 and 19 are welcome in JYM if they are still in high school or just recently exited high school. Any requests for exceptions to this age guideline must be received by the requested program's committee clerks **at least 6 weeks prior** to the event; the ultimate decision whether to accept a younger child into JYM will be made through a discernment process by a JYM subcommittee drawn from the JYM adult and youth clerks. If you have questions, please read the transitions policy document (see below for link) and contact the clerks of these committees to determine the best program fit for a particular Friend.

### [Policy on Transitions Process between Children's Program and Junior Yearly Meeting:](#)

available via the JYM page or directly at

[www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Policy\\_Transitions\\_CP\\_JYM\\_2016\\_03\\_ApprovedByJYMandCP.pdf](http://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Policy_Transitions_CP_JYM_2016_03_ApprovedByJYMandCP.pdf)

"Age 13 will be considered a "choice year" for young Friends, with permission of their parents/guardians. This means that a Friend who will be age 13 during annual session may choose to register for either Children's Program or JYM, without having to get express permission from either program. This will need to be made clear in the registration process. (Note, however, that CP and JYM reserve the right to work together to determine if a particular Friend -- of any age -- is better served by one program or the other.)

"Normally, children 12 and under will participate in the Children's Program, and children 14 and over will participate in JYM, \*unless\* they have been through the following negotiation process. Deadlines for requests for exceptions will be 6 weeks prior to the event (and the earlier they are requested the better). If a request coming in after the deadline cannot be easily resolved by the above process, the default answer will be that the child will be placed via the basic age guideline...." -- 2016 'Transitions Policy'

### **How are the youth supervised?**

JYM is essentially a self-governing community, guided by Friends' Testimony of Community and agreements created using Friendly business practice during the week. Adults provide support, guidance, and safety as needed. In addition to adult committee members, we have day- and night-shift teams of Friendly Responsible Adult Presences (FRAPs) who support youth in their program and provide guidance when needed. Each youth participant will be assigned to a small Support Group facilitated by an adult, which will meet daily. Support Groups foster adults and youth getting to know each other better and promote a feeling of belonging in the community for all. Your JYMer's Support Group adult will be your main contact person should you have questions or concerns.

The youth and adult leadership team has a meeting each morning at breakfast to check in about how things are going. This also facilitates transition from night-duty FRAPs to daytime-duty FRAPs.

### **What are the Community Agreements?**

*"Friends' testimonies on integrity, unity, equality, simplicity and peace come together in our testimony on community which calls us to sustain caring relationships for all... We come to know one another as we seek our collective, Spirit-led Truth – our shared sense of the common good within which we discover who we are and where we each fit in the larger scheme of things."* PYM Faith and Practice 2001, pp. 44-45

We will begin the first evening (after the Opening Plenary) reflecting on Friends' Testimony on Community and the values that are the foundation of our time together. As the week progresses we may change those specific agreements based on the discernment of the community. Changes will be posted for parents/guardians/sponsors. The PYM-wide expectation that we all remain free from drugs and alcohol is self-enforced in JYM along with other PYM Community Expectations and host site rules. In addition, the JYM youth agree to abstain from sexual relations. Violations of these expectations will lead to a discernment process with wider PYM Ministry and Oversight Committee and/or JYM Ministry and Oversight, and a participant may be asked to leave JYM and/or PYM, in which case their parent/guardian/sponsor becomes entirely responsible for their care.

Gatherings like JYM/PYM offer opportunities for personal growth and reflection, developing meaningful friendships, and experiencing the strength of community life. In order to make this possible, we must work together to create a safe and healthy space for all.

Part of the JYM experience early on (and throughout) will be for the participants to work together to create, agree upon, and uphold group guidelines. In addition, there are some pre-set expectations, that are a starting point for the JYM Community Expectations. Please see the JYM Welcome Letter for details.

## **What about sleeping accommodations?**

JYM participants may register to sleep in the mixed-gender JYM dorms (new in 2017, this arrangement has worked well) or to share a room or camp with their parent/guardian/sponsor. It is common and normal for some JYMers not to stay in the JYM dorms for a variety of reasons; younger participants attending JYM for the first time sometimes prefer this. This is also a good alternative for youth of any age who prefer a quieter sleep environment or who would like to go to sleep earlier. JYM will adhere to the site's quiet times and make agreements about lights out time as part of community agreements, which we anticipate will be around midnight. The parent/guardian/sponsor is responsible for supervising their minor JYM participant who is camping or sleeping in any area other than the JYM area during the night.

Please note the "what to bring" list in the JYM Welcome Letter on the website.

For more background on the mixed-gender sleeping arrangements, please see the JYM Report to Representative Committee, March 2017:

[pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/JYM-report-to-RepCom-2017.pdf](http://pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/JYM-report-to-RepCom-2017.pdf)

*"JYM has come to unity to have gender-neutral sleeping arrangements at Annual Session this year [2017]. We made this decision so that we would be more inclusive of trans-identified JYMers and to build the community up free from gender segregation. Teens will sleep in separate beds: no cuddle-puddle sleeping. There will be a private changing area.*

*"We understand that some teens or parents might not feel comfortable with this, so in that case teens are welcome to sleep in the same room or tent as their parents or sponsors, and we encourage them to do so with no stigma. (It is normal in JYM for some teens to sleep with parents/sponsors and some to sleep in the JYM dorm, for any reasons they may have.) We ask the registrars to indicate on the registration form that JYM will be in a gender-neutral sleeping space so parents and teens can choose which sleeping option to register for."*

## **What is the schedule like?**

The Parents/Guardians and Sponsors' Orientation meeting will be held on the first afternoon. During the opening plenary (after dinner), JYM will make an announcement when it's time for us to leave together to begin the program. JYM officially begins after the beginning of the opening plenary session; there will be no supervision by the JYM program until after dinner and the start of the opening plenary until JYM is invited to leave the opening plenary to go to the JYM room. JYM has daily youth-run business meetings regarding the day's program and plans, along with any other business of JYM. Other activities will include interest groups, worship sharing, games, and a service project. We will join the wider PYM community for various intergenerational activities, including meals, games, certain plenaries, and activities with middle-schoolers, and the Meeting for Memorials. The JYM schedule will be posted, however changes may occur as the JYM community makes decisions in business meeting. We will make every effort to announce and post changes as they occur and/or in the Daily Miracle.

## **What is “Respectful Relationships”?**

JYM and the Respectful Relationships Subcommittee of PYM’s Ministry & Oversight Committee will host activities for JYM focused on respectful relationships, power and privilege, and sexuality education, exploring how Quaker testimonies and Quaker ideals can be lived in romantic relationships. Topics include boundary setting, self-respect, dealing with expectations from a partner, how to feel safe in a relationship, acceptance of one’s own sexual orientation and gender identity, and how to communicate with parents/guardians. It will also include a presentation on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and birth control methods.

While optional, Respectful Relationships has gotten some of the highest ratings from JYM participants on their evaluations, and we hope parents/guardians will support their participation. We will continue to include materials from the *Our Whole Lives, Sexuality and Our Faith (OWL)* curriculum that was created by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ. The planning committee believes that OWL’s assumptions and values of “self worth, sexual health, responsibility, and justice and inclusivity” align well with PYM Friends’ beliefs. Sexuality is defined in OWL as “a good part of the human experience” and “much more than sexual behavior.”

JYM, like Our Whole Lives (OWL), affirms that parents/guardians are the primary sexuality educators of their children. Therefore, your signature is requested on a consent form and in the registration materials to opt in or out of this session, and you are welcome to contact the JYM adult clerks with any questions.

Goals of OWL and JYM Respectful Relationships:

- To provide accurate information that young people need about sexuality. We believe that accurate information is essential, especially for young adults, and that holding back knowledge will hinder healthy sexual development.
- To provide a forum in which all questions are legitimate and appropriate.
- To provide learning about sexuality issues that goes beyond just factual information and that will be useful throughout participants' lives.
- To help participants to develop the skills necessary to make good decisions that will allow for a healthy, satisfying life.

Please note that JYM’s Respectful Relationships is not a full OWL program, nor will it adhere only to OWL materials. If you are interested in the more in-depth OWL version, we encourage you to see if OWL is offered in your community, perhaps in a local UU or UCC church. More information about OWL can be found at:

- [ucc.org/justice/sexuality-education/our-whole-lives.html](http://ucc.org/justice/sexuality-education/our-whole-lives.html)
- [uua.org/re/owl/](http://uua.org/re/owl/)

## **How can parents/guardians and sponsors support the youth and the JYM Program?**

1. Expect your youth to check in with you daily during Annual Session. Meals are often a good time for check-ins (and remember, minors are to be under the care of

parents/guardians/sponsors during meals).

2. Set appropriate limits to meet your particular young Friend's needs. Younger JYMers often sleep in their parent/guardian/sponsor's care the first year in JYM.
3. Give your JYMer space to learn and grow.
4. Be available to help if needed.
5. Speak to your JYMer's Support Group adult, a FRAP, or a JYM adult committee member if you have a concern.
6. Ask your JYMer about their experience afterward.
7. Provide feedback to the JYM committee. Be sure to fill out the PYM evaluation form, too.
8. Help younger Friends get together during the rest of the year.

We are excited by the great program developed by JYM for this year and look forward to seeing you and your JYMer at PYM Annual Session!

In the Light,

The JYM Adult Committee

Muriel Strand, Co-Clerk (Sacramento)  
Sarah Armstrong Jones, Co-Clerk (Big Island)  
Dan Strickland (Orange Grove)  
Suzanne Doss (Orange Grove)  
Don McCormick (Grass Valley)  
Austin Stanion (Orange Grove)  
David Lederman (Orange County)

JYM Youth Leadership

Charlie Shaw, Co-Clerk (Santa Monica)  
Elinor Steffy, Co-Clerk (Sacramento)  
Gabi Alvarado, Co-Clerk (Sacramento)  
Callum Standish, Co-Clerk (Berkeley)  
Santiago Myers, Clerk of M&O (San Francisco)  
Aaron Cantu, M&O (Santa Cruz)  
Eben Green, M&O (Santa Cruz)  
Robin Johnson, M&O (Santa Cruz)

PYM M&O Liaison: Kylin Navarro Burger (Palo Alto) and Thistle West (Santa Cruz)