

Pacific Yearly Meeting Children's Program Committee Report to Annual Session 2020

SUMMARY

The positive news: The Children's Program Committee (CPC) met during 2019 and earlier 2020 and was fully preparing to have an in-person children's program at Annual Session. The CPC received support from some very special, experienced Friends and would not have been able to accomplish as much without such support. Thank you to all!

The mixed news: Then, as we all know, in-person Annual Session needed to be changed to virtual format. This led to the choice of a limited virtual Annual Session Children's Program, with the primary goal of helping our children feel the joy of being in a wider community of Quaker young people.

The decision to have a very limited virtual Children's Program (one-to-two hours total) was based on a few items, including (a) not wanting to conflict with any adult sessions (for households with one Zoom-capable device, etc.); and (b) the recognition, confirmed as time went on, that children were Zoom fatigued and some associated Zoom with school lessons, so more than about an hour plus was not wise.

The plan for a short virtual Children's Program has included all children together for lively songs, stillness, etc., and then breakout rooms by age groups. A related plan, not being run but encouraged by the Children's Program, has been intergenerational fun such as games night.

More positive news: The extensive preparation for an in-person Annual Session Children's Program puts the CPC in a pretty good position for 2021 annual session.

REPORT

Preparation for the 2020 Children's Program has included many items:

In part, groundwork has involved soliciting input from 2019 parents and teachers, discerning among each other in a few committee meetings, and identifying themes with a number of resources to support such themes. We call this our themes/curricula document. This document has been made available to Monthly Meetings for first-day use if desired.

Preparation also has comprised initially drafting or significantly updating a number of documents, such as timed CPC task lists, job descriptions, teacher applications, and parent/guardian written items. As far as it knows, the CPC has drafted or edited all "bedrock" Children's Program documents (about 12). This list of documents will be linked on the PacYM Children's Program web page where everyone is welcome to view them and give the CPC continued input.

In addition, Annual Session Children's Program tasks concerned combing through the PacYM Children's Program web page and requesting a number of changes to increase user friendliness: e.g., eliminating redundancies, archiving old items, and rearranging topics. We appreciate people's receptiveness to this web site input and expect to do further review of the children's program-related web pages.

And teacher/coordinator recruitment, which was starting in earnest in early March just as Annual Session changed, also has been a major undertaking -- a task complicated by uncertain children numbers for annual session.

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Challenges

Besides the types of items listed above constituting a great deal of work, one of the CPC's biggest challenges has been lack of easily accessible historical memory/depth. Again, thank you to those with some of this memory who've helped! We are concerned this is a problem not only for CPC but also other PacYM work and worry that it leads to reinventing wheels, not fully tapping potential (since time is limited), etc. This is one reason the CPC is posting all the several documents it drafted for 2020 on the PacYM web site, so they will not be lost in a functional sense. We know this issue of historical knowledge has been recognized across PacYM and encourage continued focus on it.

Another challenge has been lack of easy data bases (for prior teachers and families especially). We are pleased PacYM is tackling this data base issue. Thank you.

And thank you again to everyone for your caring about our Quaker children.

CPC members as of June 2020: Vivian Carlson, Honolulu; Amy Donovan Blondell, Monterey; Rhea Farley, Strawberry Creek; and Suellen Lowry, Humboldt (clerk)