William Penn House
Report to Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting
June, 2011

William Penn House is a hospitality center on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, rooted and grounded in Quaker faith and practice.

Mission Statement:

William Penn House is a Quaker center on Capitol Hill that engages people from all walks of life with issues of peace, reconciliation, social and economic justice, and environmental awareness, through inward reflection, hands-on experience, education, and community building. We support and celebrate those who "speak truth to power" and seeks to make visible the Quaker values of peace, community, simplicity, equality and truth.

Program Components:

- Sponsoring programs focused on peace and peace education, Quaker spirituality, social and economic justice, race relations, environmental concerns, community needs, homelessness, and the HIV-AIDS crisis.
- Offering one-day, weekend or week-long service-learning programs for youth and young adults through Washington Quaker Workcamps, where direct service to the poor, disenfranchised, and marginalized is combined with education, opportunities for individual and group reflection, and advocacy.
- Connecting groups that come to Washington to learn about government and government policy with local institutions and resource people.
- Promoting dialogue, reconciliation and community building around painful and divisive issues and concerns.
- Serving as a resource center and meeting place for Quakers, both locally and nationally.
- Providing hospitality and overnight accommodations for travelers from around the world in a simple, affordable community-based setting.

Income is generated from lodging, providing simple accommodations for those seeking a better world; from Workcamp and program participants; and from travelers who visit Washington to see the museums, monuments, memorials and the corridors of power. About 18% of income is from donors (including SAYMA) who value having a Quaker presence on Capitol Hill.

WPH seeks to be the embodiment of the Quaker principals of Simplicity, Equality, Community, Integrity and Harmony or Peace. The goal is not to proselytize but to bring people together, to share common goals and aspirations to find that oneness that we all share. Core values include the belief that there is Divinity in each of us and that how we live our lives is as important as what we believe.

Radical Hospitality, in the words of St. Benedict, is "to invite all people into your house as if they were Christ." The purpose of William Penn House is to practice Radical Hospitality. To do this allows others to speak their truth. It is not about denouncing someone else's truth or arguing with them, but appreciating them. There are other arenas for persuasion, debate and advocacy. The William Penn House is a special place, a dynamic response to the question of what does God require of us in response to the stranger, the other, the traveler.

At William Penn House leadership is shared based on ability not age. By being open to the gifts of others all are enriched and challenged to be more than the sum of our parts. Young people are given roles in leadership and in the challenges inherent in a vital faith. Younger Friends are asked to serve and given meaningful work and respect their decisions and approaches. The average age of staff is less than 34 years old and 6 of the16 board members are 30 years old or younger.

Washington Quaker Workcamps has over 20 years of service in Washington DC, and has expanded to providing service in West Virginia, New Orleans and, starting this year, Pine Ridge, SD. WPH has a special passion and commitment to youth and young adults. Quaker Workcamps are important as an expression of pacifism - a deep commitment to providing service through compassion, love and bearing witness. Workcamps are not limited to issues traditionally identified with Friends, since all issues are viewed as interconnected and having common root causes. WPH programs nurture the participants to look deeply and reflectively at the issues, and to explore individual and group actions to break the cycles.

William Penn House, in partnership with Western Quaker Workcamps, has embarked on a new program that builds on past programs, building community partners and envisioning the future. From July 26 to August 8 2010, a group of 12 people spent time on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. This Reservation is home to the Oglala Lakota Nation. The participants developed a strong sense of community, through shared meals, sweat with and stories. It is this community bond that strengthens participants to face bigger challenges while eroding the barriers of separation and difference.

William Penn House has found that bearing witness and building relationships can be a force for community transformation. It is a process that is perhaps one of the greatest gifts that Quakerism can bring to the world – as expressed in the words of George Fox ("There is that of God in All") and William Penn ("Let us try then what love can do").

In this fiscal year (which ended June 30, 2010), William Penn House staff:

- Led 29 Workcamps with 468 participants.
- Hosted 13 Quaker Potlucks and Dialogues
- Led programs on international politics, developing personal relationships and AIDS/HIV issues.
- Hosted 7621 guests nights and breakfasts.
- Hosted 50 groups (37 groups also used the conference room, plus a weekly yoga class)
- Visited 7 yearly meetings and many monthly meetings
- Served on the Board of Pendle Hill, the Central Committee of Friends General Conference, Committees of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, the Friends Meeting of Washington, and the planning committee for the conference for Young Adult Friends.

Executive Director's report for calendar year 2010

In December 2010, I completed 10 years here in Washington at William Penn House. It has been an amazing decade and I have been enriched through the experience. This past year has been busy, eventful and continues with our seeking to live our lives with purpose using the Quaker testimonies as our guide.

We continue our commitment to nurturing the gifts and leadings of our staff. We are pleased that during 2010, the Hospitality Coordinator, Faith Kelley, and the Workcamps

Coordinator, Greg Woods were both in their mid 20s. Both brought unique gifts and insights to their jobs as well as solid work ethics. We also recruited 5 young adults to serve on our Board of Directors. These young people are not ensnared with how things were but are motivated by how things can be.

Through our internship program, we seek to provide genuine opportunities for growth and seasoning of these gifted young people. But with people at the start of their careers and through the very nature of internships, we experienced turnovers of staff. In 2010, Wambani Lusenaka of Kenya and Amanda Haase of Chicago completed their internships and returned or continued their graduate studies. Greg Woods also left for some reflection on his next challenge. After living for several months on his family's Missouri farm, Greg will be on the staff of Pendle Hill for the summer then will attend Princeton Theological School. Harry Caterson of Bucks County, PA, joined us as an intern.

Recognizing that the economy was uncertain, we reduced our staff to control our overhead. A couple of years ago we changed from a staff janitor to a cleaning service. Recently we switched our payroll to a payroll service. We delayed replacing departing staff.

We started the year with blizzard like conditions here and elsewhere. This led to many cancellations in February. With the soft economy our numbers of guests was slightly less than last year. We still had 7280 guests, including 61 groups. 358 young people participated in 18 Workcamps. Those Workcamps included two weeks in South Dakota with the Lakota Indians, a week in New Orleans and a week in a rural community in West Virginia. We continued our hosting of over 30 Wilmington College students participating in the FCNL Lobby Days. Our guests ranged from a troop of Brownies to senior citizens. We offer a unique and inexpensive place for individuals and groups to stay while visiting Washington.

We continue to develop the concept of Radical Hospitality where we offer a warm and open place for dialogue and conversation. Through open listening to others, we are affirmed in our belief that there is that of God in all and we can then set aside our tendency to believe that we are following the only spiritual path. Brad Ogilvie continues to provide a needed voice and leadership on all AIDS/HIV issues.

As summer approaches, we will be visiting different yearly meetings. We look forward to the opportunity to share with you.

Byron Sandford
Executive Director

Respectfully submitted,
Charles Wilton
SAYMA Representative to William Penn House