SAYMA Representatives' to FGC

Report to Yearly Meeting 2012

FGC asks itself, "What is the Spirit calling us to do? What are our affiliated meetings asking from us? Who among our Religious Society will answer our call to service?

Friends General Conference is not a "denomination". It is an affiliation of Yearly Meetings, Fellowships, and independent Monthly Meetings. It seeks to be a resource and service for those Meetings, represents us to the wider world, and connects us in ways that are difficult for meetings that tend to be scattered and small. It organizes a large Gathering of mostly unprogrammed Friends every summer and encourages visits and sharing among Friends to build relationships and a rich network for us. We are really blessed to be a part of FGC and its work.

Friends General Conference has had an incredible year, and members of SAYMA have been instrumental in finding the Way open. Thanks to many of us, FGC's Stoking the Spiritual Fire Campaign has been a huge success, raising $6.5 million dollars over 5 years. As the campaign wound down FGC has been reviewing current programs and projects, inviting Friends to participate in surveys on what programs and services of FGC they value and use, prayerfully considered where God is calling FGC as a Friends organization, and envisioning bold and exciting plans to help move in those directions while being fiscally responsible with the resources entrusted to FGC by their affiliated yearly meetings and donors all while continuing to offer a wide breadth of projects and programs for Friends in the U.S. and Canada. Many of us participated in surveys, SAYMA's response rate was among the highest. With the help of our responses and the seasoning of various committees, FGC is prioritizing the support of; Deep Worship, Welcoming/Outreach and Loving Community.

The ministry of FGC continues to be at the heart of the organization. Religious Education offerings include curriculum like *Build It! A Toolkit for Building Intergenerational Spiritual Community,* and workshops on *Godly Play*. Quaker Quest continues to offer full-day workshops. The Traveling Ministry Program coordinates visits from seasoned Friends, often at the request of Monthly Meetings looking for a particular resource person. The annual White Privilege Conference is not a Quaker event, but has been well attended by Friends, FGC has been invited to be a part of future planning. Yearly Meeting Clerks have the opportunity to gather every two years at an FGC consultation to encourage each other in this role, share, learn and fellowship. We hope SAYMA's next clerk will participate as the last three have been able to.

SAYMA is well represented in the work of FGC. Stoph Hallward is the current treasurer. Kristi Estes clerks the Subcommittee for Deepening – a part of the Committee for Nurturing Ministries. She travels for the Traveling Ministries Program and leads retreats for spiritual nurture. Liz Perch is on the Nominating Committee for Central Committee. Christina Van Regenmorter is the Assistant Recording Clerk. Tom Kenworthy is involved with development work. Maia Hallward has stepped back some from her position work with Youth Ministries, but volunteered in small working groups as an alternative way to get involved in discreet projects, one was helping to facilitate a Consultation on Intervisitation this year. Gita Larson is on the committee for nurturing ministries/growing subcommittee, and is active with Quaker Quest. Quaker Quest from the beginning was a time-limited program, so we have been planning for the next phases of this ministry during the past year. At the moment, it appears we will move to a volunteer coordinated program with less staff than in the past, as the funding from grants ends. There are 40 Quaker Quest Travel Team members, with 30 currently active. Over the course of the Quaker Quest initiative in North America,

63 full day workshops have been conducted in Canada and the US; 18 half-day preparation workshops were offered, and 25 meetings have held public sessions. Over 10 events are already on the books for this fall. Quaker Quest is offering a full day workshop to each yearly meeting during the upcoming fall and winter season, at no charge. Each meeting in the yearly meeting can send two people to experience the workshop.

Looking forward, FGC is planning to launch an extensive web rebuild at the Gathering in the week of July 4th, this has been the culmination of countless hours of work from volunteers and staff. We can anticipate a new set of Faith and Play stories for Quakers to be published soon. The staff of Quaker Books of FGC are a resource about the books and publications offered, please contact them with questions if you are looking for something on a specific topic or looking for a hard to find out of print book!

In the last year, the Committee for Nurturing Ministries has held several projects and events including:

- Consultation of Young Adult Friends in January 2012 to consider what kind of projects and support FGC can give to these Friends.
- Consultation on the ministry of intervisitation to explore what yearly meetings are doing and might do to encourage Friends to do more intervisitation within their own yearly meetings and among other yearly meetings to help rekindle a sense of spiritual connection among Friends and learn from each other. (February 2012)
- Offered support for Quakers to attend the White Privilege Conference that helped provide a strong Quaker presence at the Conference. (March 2012)
- Co-sponsored with FGC's Long Range Conference Planning Committee a training session for clerks for the High School and Young Adult Friends groups at Summer Gathering. (April 2012)
- Offered a supportive presence to Young Adult Friends dealing with concerns regarding the support they receive from their yearly meeting (May, July 2011)
- Visited approximately 15 meetings, worship groups, or Quaker organizations through the Traveling Ministries Program and consulted with several others.
- Gave a travel assistance grant through the Margaret Fell Fund to a monthly meeting supporting a member in extended travel in the ministry.
- Held regional retreats for Friends engaged in ministry.
- Led several Couple Enrichment workshops.
- Sponsored a consultation for Friends of Color. (November 2011)
- Served as spiritual support to new representatives to FGC Central Committee, the body of Central Committee and the clerks at the 2011 October Central Committee.
- Offered Quaker Quest workshops and trainings and held retreats for Quaker Quest Team Leaders including:
    - Public Sessions; 3 series
    - Full Day Workshops - 13
- Provided an active presence at the FGC Summer Gathering by:
    - Supporting the People of Color Center
    - Serving as prayerful presences in the High School and Young Adult Friends' meetings for worship with a concern for business

- Offering two meetings for worship for racial healing and another where F/friends are invited to share their present joys and concerns regarding racism among us at the Gathering
- Offering an opportunity for young Friends of Color to gather, reading stories and attempting to maintain our shared awareness of issues regarding equality.
- Holding a gathering for Friends called to travel in the ministry.
- Offered a workshop on Eldering and the Bible
- Offered several interest groups on Quaker Quest, Faith and Play, Traveling Ministries, Religious Educations etc.
- Couple Enrichment workshops

This doesn't even mention all the Friends from SAYMA who participate or lead workshops at Gathering. FGC depends on our contributions of funds, and energy, and spiritual support. We are enriched by their continued mission to nurture us and the larger community of Friends.

Stoph Hallward, Kristi Estes, Gita Larson