**Parent Quaker Life Committee  
January 7, 2015**

In attendance: Irem Konur, Susan Estep-Fisher, Heather Davis, Tyra Banks, Loren Kaler, Derek Tolbert, Debbie Shalam, Lauren Menzin, Andrea Miller, John Scardina, Michelle Ling-Cherenfant and Korry Groves.

**Updates**

Co-Clerk Lauren Menzin and Recording Clerk Andrea Miller presented to the Parent Council Executive Board, shared all of the activities and initiatives that the PQLC has been involved with this year and ultimately obtained annual funding from Parent Council for $1,000.

**Guest speakers:**

**Ryan Aponte – Mindfulness presentation**

Upper School history teacher Ryan Aponte and a practicing Buddhist led parents in a session on mindfulness, including two mini meditations. Ryan has been giving 40-minute sessions to Upper School students as part of the alternative Meeting for Worship offerings on Thursdays. Ryan spoke to the fact that meditation is not necessarily silencing the mind, but creating a peaceful space with all of your thoughts.

**Joy Lai – Peace Week activities**

Visual Arts department head Joy Lai shared that a Tibetan monk, the Venerable Tenzin Yignyen is here all this week creating a Tibetan Sand Mandala in the Atrium of the Dolan Center. Made out of fragile colored sand, part of the process of building it blesses the space around it. Lama Tenzin will be working Monday through Thursday, 9 am. To 4 p.m. on the construction. Friday morning, there will be a dismantling of the Mandale, where he and the marine biology class will release the sands into running water. The dismantling symbolizes the transient nature of material life.

All parents are welcome at any time to come observe and ask questions. Lama Tenzin has already visited with the Lower School during gathering and several teachers have brought their classes over to meet and view his work. The Arts department is also filming the building of the Mandala and will project a time lapse in the Gallery during Peace Week, which is next week. Parents are also encouraged to come and have lunch with Lama Tenzin during his daily breaks, which are from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. On Wednesday, a special Lunch and Learn in the Art Studio from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. will give students a chance to meet with Lama Tenzin.

In conjunction with the Mandala, the Visual Arts faculty is also putting together a week-long show of art that deals with peace. During Peace Week, the Gallery will become a quiet, meditative place that reflects peace. There will be printouts of Mandalas so that kids can color them. The designs are meant to be a meditative tool.

Joy asked parents to send her any other ideas, suggestions regarding art at Friends. Send thoughts to [joy\_lai@fa.org](mailto:joy_lai@fa.org).

**John Scardina – Alternatives to Violence Project**

Starting the Friday of Peace Week, the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is coming to Friends. It is now in 60 countries around the world. The Project, an intensive 18-hour training session, teaches participants how to recognize the violence in all of our lives and how to change that violence. The first annual AVP at Friends will start on Friday, January 23 at 1 p.m. through dinner and then continue Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. The program is open to all juniors and seniors, as well as any adult member of the FA community. Quaker-in-residence John Scardina will be co-facilitating the program. Joy Lai also trained in AVP with Upper School students during last year’s El Salvador service trip and shared her experiences. The program’s team-building activities create a sense of empathy and role-playing allows students to feel and think what other’s were feeling and understand how quickly events can escalate. The program addresses verbal and non-verbal violence and aggression.

**Wrap-up**

The book *Black Fire* was suggested as a future read for the PQLC. The book details the life and writings of African-American Quakers as they delve into issues in spirituality and human rights. The book is divided into segments, which detail a variety of seminal and early African-American Quaker leaders.

**All parents are welcome to attend** the next special Peace Week Parent Meeting for Worship on Thursday, Jan. 22 at 2 p.m in the Meeting House.

**Next meeting of PQLC**

The PQLC will meet next on Wednesday, Feb. 4th at 1:45 p.m. in the Matinecock Hospitality Room. **We invite all parents to come and attend.** You do not need to have attended a prior meeting. We are hoping to have a presentation from the student TASQUE (Teachers and Students for Quaker Understanding and Education).

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Miller  
Recording Clerk