**Parent Quaker Life Committee
April 22, 2015**

In attendance: Angie Martin, Loren Kaler, Susan Estep Fisher, Michael Brielmann, Irem Konur, Robin Wachtler, Andrea Miller, Lauren Menzin, Krystal Forde, Samantha Loetman, Golnoosh Rak. TASQUE students: Struan Coleman, Mairead Gahan, Sara Decicco, Andrew Greene, Jennifer Keogh.

**Alternatives to Violence Project - Review:**

Approximately a dozen students, staff, faculty and parents participated in the first AVP Workshop at Friends. Attending TASQUE member Jennifer Keogh spoke about her experience. “It opened my eyes to how we really can incorporate peace into our daily lives.” The workshop spanned two days and 18 hours and was facilitated by Quaker-in-Residence John Scardina and Margaret Lechner, retired Earlham College professor. The workshop taught participants how to manage strong feelings, such as anger and fear; communicate well in difficult situations; and build good relationships with other people.

**Glen Cove Men’s Shelter**

Six PQLC families cooked and prepared dishes for the Glen Cove Men’s Shelter for approximately 30 men. There was a hole in the schedule and PQLC was able to step in and help. According to TASQUE co-clerk Struan Coleman, WATCH runs the sign-up list. There is interest in signing up the PQLC for two slots next year, one in the fall and one in the winter. For the families that volunteered, the experience was invaluable. “It’s nice to give back in a concrete way. These are people in our community in need,” said one. “It was a bonding experience for us,” said another parent.

**Quakerism at the Auction**

The PQLC wove a Quaker presence through the recent Auction with place cards imprinted with Quaker quotes and the “In Six Words” project that originated with the divisional Quaker workshops this fall. During workshops, parents were asked to sum in six words why they send their child(ren) to a Quaker school. Some of these quotes are now displayed in the Frost Hall lobby. It was suggested that the quotes should also be added to the website.

**Guest speakers: TASQUE student members and advisor Angie Martin**

Co-clerk Struan Coleman explained that this year for TASQUE was very different from other years. “We were approached by the Head of School and Maintenance at the start of the year that the entire high school could not meet in the Meeting House. We had to figure out ways to have meaningful MFW, but limit the full-group meetings. Last year, we explored alternatives like Meeting for Singing,” said Struan.

TASQUE came up with a lot of options, from Meeting for Singing, Meeting for Mindfulness, Meeting for Labyrinth, Meeting at Peace (crane making), Nature Walk and paired Meetings with 9th and 10th and 11th and 12th grades.

While it started out as a way to split people up, it evolved into a way to keep MFW interesting for students. At the end of the year, 60 students were attending Meeting for Singing. Underclassmen got involved too as 9th and 10th graders started clerking MFW and making announcements at morning meeting.

The students shared the impact that TASQUE has had on them. “It’s definitely been a commitment. We meet twice a week, but TASQUE has had a really big impact on my time here at Friends. It’s really inspired me to become so much more interested in the Quaker life of the school and I’ve really wanted to enrich it,” said Struan.

Andrew Greene joined TASQUE in 4th grade (FA in Play Group). He explained that in LS TASQUE, the students did a lot of small things, but make a big impact.

One area TASQUE delved into this year and last was in religious diversity. “It’s something we’ve tried to make a tradition,” explained Struan. “Kids can hear a different perspective about a faculty member, student or parent who practices a faith that many at the school may not know about. We ask that person to come to MFW and there’s lots of time for them to talk about how their faith impacts them.” This year, 3rd grade teacher Niki Desai spoke at US MFW about practicing the Indian religion of Jainism.

At the beginning of the year, all US students attend the Clubs Convention. Most clubs are 4-year commitments.

Angie, who is in her 3rd year of being advisor to TASQUE, commented that this year and last, the group was clerked by Quakers and that added a different perspective and weight.

In Lower School, TASQUE members write quotes for the winter concert, they explore the Quaker testimonies and focus intentionally on building relationships. Both Angie and LS Science teacher Meghan Stott have been trained in the Quaker storytelling practice called “Faith and Play.” They use this technique to teach younger students about the testimonies, MFS and famous Quakers. Meghan is eager to incorporate this into LS TASQUE meetings.

Struan commented about how he wished he’d joined TASQUE earlier. “I joined TASQUE in 9th grade. At first I thought, ‘What had I gotten myself into?’ I wish I had been more devoted when I was younger, because the beauty of TASQUE is not just about the club, but about everything it gives to you. I’ve gotten to know people I never would have known.”

**Community Groups activity**

Director of Quaker Education Angie Martin shared the final Community Groups activity. This year, Community Groups has met six times – the first time this has happened. The final activity will revolve around a PQLC-inspired idea about FA Points of Reflection. Student groups will be given a map of campus (drawn by Angie’s husband Pete) and asked to affix star stickers to the places where they felt the most joy, most peace, most connection, most awareness of your inner light. Then the group talked about their selections.

Attending parents commented that their kids love when they do something with the older kids. “They don’t share often, but they always volunteer information when they have done activities with the older kids.”

It was asked how the parent body could support all of this work. Angie commented that there are certain things we are going to do every year, i.e. care packages, senior postcards; but there is room to grow to be more intentional and have some of the training focus on leadership skills. “Finding the places where people are already gathered and keeping the conversation going,” offered Angie. “Sometimes we feel like we have to do more, more, more. We need to look for ways to ground ourselves.”

**Quakers in our Community Series**

Angie spoke about holding Quakerism workshops for the parent community again next year. It was suggested that instead of dividing the workshops by division, the speakers could offer topic-themed workshops. Ideas that were submitted included bullying, body image/self-respect/self-positivity, how to talk to your kids about faith, and appropriate gift giving.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Miller
Recording Clerk