Our Community Query: What does Quakerism in a Quaker School look like?
- Peace Week 5th-12th grade Student Leader Training Workshop

Among Friends


What is a Quaker Education?

Multi-faceted learning takes students in new directions.

Also Inside

Get CONNECTED

... To FA!
Find out what’s going on next month – where and when.
Page 9
Friends Academy held its inaugural FAmy Night in the Dolan Center last Thursday night. An all community evening celebration as part of Peace Week, this event developed out of this central query, “How can we inspire, honor, and appreciate through a student-driven celebration of our intentionally and beautifully diverse Friends Academy community?” Camille Edwards, Dean of Equity and Inclusion began with an idea and designed a collaborative process with the Quaker Practice and Community Engagement Team, Student Committee Leaders, and the Friends Academy Arts Department. Dance, music, a community art installation, an international potluck, and greetings in many languages provided entertainment for the evening. With these dynamic and talented FA educators and students taking the lead, the event was sure to be a success.

The unexpected, however, was the powerful feeling of being transported back to “the neighborhood.” I often lament the disappearance of the neighborhood, both in concept and in actuality. Creating the time and opening a space outside where there are things to do, people to meet, while sparking one big multi-age playdate for the children. This evening captured the spirit of a true neighborhood gathering. The energy was high, the tone convivial and warm. We were all there for the same reason, to celebrate, to appreciate and to honor our fellow FA families, and of course, the
binding force that brings us together, our children.

At one point I looked down from the art gallery and I imagined this Friends Academy neighborhood as a... town square, piazza, platz, or meydan. A most diverse group of “neighbors” met new friends, told stories and enjoyed plates piled high with delicious international fare lovingly prepared from authentic family recipes. At points throughout the evening a Flamenco dancer, professional African drummer, and student singers entertained the crowd. All the while the younger children were bobbing and weaving between clusters of teens and adults.

Assembled here were families from a dynamic array of unique cultures, races, ethnicities, and traditions, gathering together in unity. It is universal, essential, and for Friends Academy core to our mission.

On this night, we came together. We brought back the neighborhood, one that is diverse, dynamic, and filled with energy and hope.

At one point I looked down from the art gallery and I imagined this Friends Academy neighborhood as a... town square, piazza, platz or meydan.

Over 150 Friends Academy families, colleagues and student filled the Dolan Center as we celebrated our inaugural FAmily Night on Thursday, January 24th.
As a new member to Friends Academy, I am often asked the reason I chose to join our community. On one level my answer is simple – the Mission. On another level, it’s far more complex and not as easily articulated. For me, Quaker Education at Friends Academy is truly the reason I chose to leave the familiar and enter into the unknown, as an educator seeking a truly holistic school, and as a mom wanting the best educational experience for my 6th grade daughters.

About the time I was charged with thinking

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deeply about the Friends Academy academic identity, I was pleasantly surprised by two energetic 6th grade girls excited to tell me about...math. They had just been introduced to the Fibonacci Sequence, which is basically where a number is found by adding up the numbers before it. They shared with great enthusiasm what they had discovered about patterns from a 12th century thinker, but also expressed with great joy where the Fibonacci sequence is found in nature. Not only were my children making connections to mathematics, but also to history, biology, and the greater mystery of the universe around them. As I listened to each of them rave about their learning with great wonder for the world, I couldn’t help but question, “Can a math class be spiritual?”

Many schools talk about “holistic development,” but not many schools deliver on that promise. Students, and humans for that matter, care about what is real, what really matters. Sometimes, school can feel disconnected and disingenuous. Sometimes students are unable to recognize relevance in the subject matter. What I deeply appreciate about Quaker Education at Friends Academy is our constant quest to ensure learning...
is meaningful to our students, just as it is meaningful to us as the adults that serve them. At Friends Academy, we seek to do school better. And better means more authentic.

Authentic learning has been a term used in educational circles since the 1990s and has existed in education since the beginning of time. After all, what better way to learn and master a skill than to serve as an apprentice first? With the industrialized version of education that began in the 19th century, we lost our ability to work beyond the classroom. And with that change, authentic learning took a backseat too.

At Friends Academy, we have the capacity through Quaker Education to truly attend to our students – to provide the real world experiences, the connections to professionals doing genuine work in their fields, and the type of leadership opportunities that call upon both our students’ capacity for problem solving and their moral and ethical compasses to be the role models this world so desperately needs.

I am excited and heartened by the collective way our teachers and students continue to work to deepen and expand Quaker Education at Friends Academy. Sometimes, this means a rigorous math class that is also spiritual. Sometimes, it means a service trip into New York City, such as our sophomore YSOP (Youth Services Opportunities Project) that teaches perspective – and challenges our students to more deeply seek to

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understand. Sometimes it’s a 3rd grade class investigating a tank filled with organisms like shrimp, crabs and plant-life provided by The Waterfront Center here on our Long Island Sound. Sometimes, it’s a multi-year partnership with a farm down the street where students will learn the ins and outs of planting, planning, harvesting, accounting, marketing, and finance.

In fifth grade, students have embarked on an interdisciplinary unit centered around this essential question, “How can our ideas lead to change?” Students first grappled with this question while studying how the Industrial Revolution allowed changes to occur on a larger scale and affect society in their Social Studies class, specifically in regards to conditions that led to child labor legislation.

In a complimentary Language Arts unit, these same students are researching about and writing how change can be born from the power of persuasion. Some students are writing persuasive letters to various members of our community about issues

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Earlier in the year, fifth grade students circulated a community-wide survey asking for student and adult input about the use of plastic on campus. Like installing solar panels on campus or reducing the amount of plastic in the lunch room. The entire fifth grade will be reading “Standing in the Light: The Captive Diary of Catharine Carey Logan,” which details the life of a Pennsylvania Quaker girl from 1763. In Science, students are applying Design thinking, a process that starts with empathy and runs through ideation, prototypes and testing, to create final ideas and products that can lead to change. Finally, then through work in their Math classes, students are determining the costs of creating their invention or idea.

Ultimately, we see how this initial question has taken students on a path to collaboratively solve authentic problems within our community and world as they employ research and innovation to tackle issues related to societal challenges such as homelessness, equity and inclusion and the health of our oceans.

At Friends Academy, Quaker Education opens up a pathway to fully attend to the whole child, so that she and he are empowered to use their gifts of intellect, empathy, resilience and kindness to lead in service of others.

For me, that’s what really matters.
As we head into the second half of 2018-19, we are excited about the numerous community-building activities in store for students and families. Check in with all of February’s events, coffees and activities below in our Parent Council “Get Connected” Guide.

**Parent Council – “Get Connected”**  
**February 2019**

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| **Friday, Feb. 1** | • Dress Down Day  
  Middle School  
  Collaborative Space  
  Beaver Dam Winter Sports Club  
  99 Kaintuck Lane, Locust Valley  
  • 8th Grade/Frost Valley Parent Connections (MS, 8:15 am)  
  • ALL-SCHOOL Skating Night at Beaver Dam Winter Sports Club (7:00 – 9:30 pm) |
| **Monday, Feb. 4** | • Quaker Practice & Wellness  
  Parent Guided Meditation (JH, 8:15 am) |
| **Wednesday, Feb. 6** | • Lower School Parent Council Meeting (JH, 8:15 am)  
  • 6th Grade Science Share (Commons, 7 pm) |
| **Thurs. Feb. 7**  | • Quaker Singers – open to FA community (Chorus Room, 7:30 am) |
| **Thurs. Feb. 7 – Sat. Feb. 9** | • The Upper School production of “Working: The Musical” (Theater, 7:30 pm) |
**Friday, Feb. 8**  
Jackson House, 212 Duck Pond Road  
- 7th Grade Parent Connections (JH, 8:15 am)

**Monday, Feb. 11**  
Jackson House, 212 Duck Pond Road  
- Middle School Parent Council Meeting (JH, 8:15 am)  
- Lunar New Year celebration: All students should wear RED in dress down.

**Tuesday, Feb. 12**  
1st grade Classroom  
- 1st Grade Learning Celebration (Classroom, 8:30 am)

**Wednesday, Feb. 13**  
Dolan Center Atrium  
- Parent Council “Galentine’s Day Coffee” (Dolan Center Atrium, 8:15 am; please bring a donation for The Safe Center, a Long Island Shelter for battered and abused women – toiletries, baby care, small gift cards, Nassau Co. Transportation Metro Cards)

**Thurs. Feb. 14**  
Chorus Room, Dolan Center  
- Quaker Singers – open to FA community (Chorus Room, 7:30 am)
## Get CONNECTED

### Friday, Feb. 15
- **Quaker Practice & Wellness (QPW) Parent Meeting** (QPCE Conference Room, 8:15 am)
- **5th Grade Learning Celebration** (Classroom, 8:30 am)

5th Grade Classroom

### February 18-25
- **YOU MADE IT! FEBRUARY BREAK!**

### Monday, Feb. 25 (No School)
- **Parent Council Faculty & Staff Appreciation Luncheon** (Drop off nut-free baked goods by 11 am in the Commons)

### Wednesday, Feb. 27
- **Upper School Parent Council Meeting** (JH, 8:15 am)

### Thurs. Feb. 28
- **Quaker Singers – open to FA community** (Chorus Room, 7:30 am)