

Carolina Friends School Trustee Annual report to the January 20, 2019 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Carolina Friends School's stated mission is:

Carolina Friends School is a vibrant and inclusive learning community empowering students to think critically, creatively, and independently. We foster active exploration and quiet reflection, individual endeavor and collaborative engagement. Inspired by Quaker values — pursuit of truth, respect for all, peaceful resolution of conflict, simplicity, the call to service — we teach our children that it is possible to change the world.

Quaker values of equality and justice permeate every aspect of the life of the school. Board members from both the Chapel Hill and Durham Meetings constitute about a third of the trustees of the school, and also serve on the Quaker School Life committee and other committees, to attend to the presence of Quaker values throughout the school community. Additionally, the school participates in a review process with the Friends Council on Education, that includes extensive documentation and site visits, to determine the adherence to their "Principles of Good Practice: Affirming the Quaker Identity." The 17-page document representing that review is available if you are interested.

The school community turns to the power of Quakerism as they respond to the difficult events happening around us. In the aftermath of the Parkland tragedy, CFS students joined with other young people across the country to engage in dialogues, protests, and other forms of activism to raise awareness and encourage activism on the issues of school safety, gun violence, and gun control. Fueled by passion, anger, and a desire to thwart the climate of fear that threatens many schools, students have taken the lead on addressing these concerns within the CFS community. Specifically, Lower School students reflected on the rights of children in classroom-based meetings for worship.

Friends can learn more about how the school nurtures Quaker values with their students by watching the documentary **Truth in Transit** about Carolina Friends School's 2015 End-of-Year trip through Appalachia's coal country. The film depicts a group of students as they seek to understand climate change as it relates to mountaintop removal, environmental justice, and Quaker education. This feature-length film provides an intimate and cinematically stunning portrait of the students as they explore coal mines, participate in bluegrass jams, and get trained to do non-violent direct action. The film offers a testament to the transformative powers of experiential education and explores ways that Quaker values, and Quaker schools, can help us confront the climate crisis.

CFS serves 510 students, with 24% of the student body representing racial/ethnic diversity. After much research, feedback, and reflection, the school undertook last year to introduce a radical new adjusted tuition model, that calls on families to pay a tuition based on their ability to pay. This represents a major opportunity for CFS to be a model for what is possible in private school education, reflecting socioeconomic and ethnic diversity (just as the founding of the school, an effort begun, in part, by members of our CHFM, was a model for what racially integrated education could be some 56 years ago). In the first year of this program, the school went from 26% of the families receiving financial aid, to 33% in the adjusted tuition program, with over one million dollars made available for tuition adjustments last year. It is anticipated that these numbers will continue to rise, and will further assist in creating a community of learners that reflect the socioeconomic and ethnically diverse face of the surrounding community.

In a further effort to promote equity and diversity at CFS, Naa Adom has joined the staff as Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In her first year Naa is investigating whether CFS is a multicultural school. She is looking at the "Big 8" of Cultural Identity - race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, gender, sexuality, ability, and religion. She is posing a series of queries to the community such as: do students see themselves in the breadth and depth of the curriculum and in all areas of the school? Are we examining our own biases continually? Is power distributed equally at CFS? Inclusion - do our classes and activities consider the needs of all members? How do we thoughtfully engage in difficult conversations?

CFS is also a place that has a powerful role in creating future advocates, who are likely to be in positions of influence and/ or power, for Quaker values in all arenas of our culture. This is a hugely important undertaking! The nurturance of service, through informed action, is built into every unit of the school. CFS is an intentional place to grow future leaders who will prioritize equality and justice, and speak truth to power. Some examples of many such efforts include CFS' leadership role in the Peaceful Schools Coalition, that brings a peace curriculum to schools, the offering of funded slots to students from the predominately African American Nativity School to attend CFS, and the Quaker Bolivian Fund which offers a teaching experience to a Bolivian teacher for the second year this year.

Additionally, for the first time, on February 1-3, the 2018 Quaker Youth Leadership Conference (QYLC) was held at CFS. The event, now in its 19th year, is a gathering of students and teachers from Quaker secondary schools across the country. It serves to strengthen the Quaker values in young leaders and encourage them to work collaboratively and with intent to solve the world's social, political, and environmental issues. The theme of this year's conference, selected by student planners from CFS, and our co-sponsor, New Garden Friends School, was "Branch Out! Growing Communities Through Service and Storytelling."

While the school is in good financial health, Carolina Friends School has two areas of concern to the Board of Trustees that are important to consider. The first, in developing the needed facilities to serve students, the school has, for the first time in its 56-year history, taken on debt related to the construction of the facilities and physical plant, specifically the new Performing Arts Center which was completed this fall. Additionally, the Board of Trustees will begin, this year, to do an analysis of staff salaries. We are aware that there are some very serious deficits in the salaries of our professional faculty, and will be searching for the financial means with which to rectify this situation. Many staff forego higher salaries in public and private settings to serve at CFS, because they believe in the work of the school. It is our hope that CFS can properly compensate those who serve the school, with salaries that are more nearly in alignment with their peers at other public and private schools.

Submitted by the CHFM Trustees to CFS

Patrick Mann
Faye Stanley
Buffie Webber
Julia Cleaver