

**Carolina Friends School Annual Report to CHFM,  
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business January 17, 2021**

The year 2020 was dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic and its far-reaching challenges never before imagined by the school community. These many issues and concerns have demanded unique solutions and are successfully being met by the staff, students and trustees.

The teaching staff has mastered new teaching methodologies with the accompanying technologies, all without losing sight of the importance of centering and developing the whole student. In addition to holding on-line classes the teaching staff regularly schedule one-on-one sessions for each student. The level of attention to the care of all students, both those in class and remotely learning has been awe inspiring, but has come at a great cost to the teachers. The Board members have been concerned and tried to show our gratitude. One effort had board members writing a thank-you note to an individual teacher. These were delivered in small treat bags, and were warmly received. It was a small but meaningful gesture for these dedicated educators.

In addition to working to keep everyone safe the Board and the staff have gone to great lengths to hold on to the existing school families through financial support. Fortunately, the financial status of the school is healthy because of wise and careful stewardship. However, the new pandemic-era demands required utilizing funds from different and unexpected sources, such as the federal Paycheck Protection Program loan, which is expected to be forgiven. The School has implemented an emergency fundraising campaign for \$2 million to meet immediate Covid-19-related needs, both for financial aid as well as for the physical plant, and additional staffing. Thirty percent of this goal has been raised by the skilled and dedicated Development staff and volunteers. The trustee Advancement Committee has also created a "Fundraising Guided by Quaker Principles" manual.

Due to the current surge of the pandemic, all students are in remote learning since the end of winter break. The school leadership must constantly assess the situation and make adjustments to best meet the needs and safety of the students, teachers and parents. When the school is holding in-person instruction, it uses what is called the 'Lasagna Approach' to safety: daily on-line screening including temperature checks; sanitizing classrooms and equipment throughout the day; and improved air filtration in heating & cooling systems. Also, a full-time nurse has been hired. Classrooms have been configured to keep social distance, and an additional multi-classroom modular unit is being installed for the upper school. A minority of students remains remote learners and the school has made accommodations for them, including hiring additional staff. Through these and others solutions the Quaker value of caring and honoring our community has been evident.

Amidst these changes ongoing social justice issues are being seen and felt, and addressed by the school staff and board. The CFS Board has initiated a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Committee. All trustees are attending the Racial Equity Institute trainings. The Peaceful Schools program remains active.

The CFS community is blessed to have Karen Cumberbatch as our school head, especially during this school year's pandemic and civil strife. Her caring and insightful communications to the community are outstanding. Below is a statement she sent to parents and teachers after the violent events in Washington DC on June sixth:

To the parents: "I am grateful that we are a community that has the vocabulary, commitment, and capacity to engage deeply with students in such extraordinary circumstances. We have scheduled an All-School Meeting for Worship for 4 pm tomorrow (Thursday) to create a space for collective reflection.

To the teachers: "It is during times such as these that we as educators are called to find the resilience and capacity to ground ourselves so that we can help support the needs of our students. I recognize it is not easy to do this when we are each still processing so much... Let's call on each other for help."

The School community has come together for the best interests of the students and the continuation of our Quaker values-based school. It was best said by a non-Quaker board member recently: "We came to this school thinking the main concern was to develop our children's minds but I have come to understand that developing and instilling the skills, sense of service, conflict resolution, caring for a world community are the most important things

we learn here. I was not taught this as a child and do not see it being taught at most schools. This is why this school is important”.

Here at CHFM, the three current appointees have been wrestling with our roles and the relationship between the Meeting and the School. We have appealed to the Ministry and Worship Committee because our group is not "under the care of" any specific Meeting Committee. To insure Quaker values and traditions are fundamental and on-going to the School, the Meeting-appointed CFS trustees are asking for help in discernment how to strengthen and practically implement these over the long-term. Hopefully we can report on this in our 2021 annual report.

Finally, we can report that the budget and actual expenses are shared with the trustees on a regular basis and the School's audit has been accepted without qualification. We have no concerns at this time concerning the financial accountability of the school, and as stated above, the School's finances are fundamentally healthy.

Pat Mann, Julia Cleaver and John Bell

Jb/1.14.21