

Annual Report on Quaker House to CHFM (February, 2022)

Mission Statement: Quaker House is a manifestation of the Religious Society of Friends Peace Testimony. Based in Fayetteville, NC, the home of Fort Bragg and some 55,000 soldiers, Quaker House provides counseling and support to service members and families, who are questioning their role in the military; educates them, their families and the larger public about military issues; and advocates for a more peaceful world.

Background: Chapel Hill Friends Meeting is a founding member of Quaker House since 1969 when Dean Holland, a Vietnam era soldier, who wanted to be a conscientious objector, came to our meeting requesting help for himself but also for others like himself in the Fort Bragg area. CHFM offered financial support to establish a physical space where soldiers come for information, support and community. When the first house burned mysteriously in the middle of the night, CHFM arranged for a second home on Hillside Avenue, which is where QH has since resided.

COVID-19: The COVID pandemic has directly impacted the life and program of Quaker House operations. The **Domestic Violence and Victims' Support Program** continues at full capacity but with sessions done using teletherapy or in person outdoors with weather permitting. (The program would like to offer counseling to veterans of Afghanistan in the wake of mental trauma during the current withdrawal situation but monies for this must first be raised.) The travel for education and outreach has been cancelled for all functions with most meetings for administrative and staff, board of directors and committee meetings, educational forums, development visits to monthly meetings, Friends General Conference workshop, Congressional monitoring and more. Zoom has become the primary communication tool. Regretfully in early November director Kindra Bradley announced her sudden resignation in order to move closer to family where she could help with small grandchildren, who were housebound on account of the pandemic. In spite of these challenges, Quaker House programs and administrative operations have continued to function even in difficult times.

Board of Directors: The board consists of 22 members representing monthly meetings in NC, VA, and SC. KY, along with representative from Baltimore Yearly Meeting. A number of longtime members are stepping down after lengthy service and new leadership is being groomed. A strategic planning process is underway. With Kindra's resignation, several of these long-term members have rejoined the board and the search committee for a new director. In that regard, Pam Schwingl serves on the director search and personnel committees. Betsy Brinson has rejoined the board of directors and is also on the transition team and the search committee.

Financial Development: The first ever virtual 5k run raised about \$3800. Birthday fundraisers on Face Book by several board members also generated funds. Since these fundraisers seem to attract gifts from younger donors, who use social media more, we will explore their value more. The Outreach Committee has assisted in expanding social media and electronic communications with Face Book, Twitter, and Instagram. The fall newsletter was delayed with Kindra's departure but the board of directors took over the writing and production. While it arrived in meeting and individual donor

mailboxes later than customary, it does remind readers that it is time to donate for the year so it is an important fundraising tool. A second Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan was received and forgiven.

GI Rights Hotline: In 2021 Steve and Lenore handled a total of 2,796 calls from American soldiers stationed around the world. This is about 200 calls less than in previous years. Calls, however, are taking longer to complete.

The COVID 19 pandemic forced the military to issue emergency orders and to change a number of practices. The military is still trying to figure out how to conduct business while accommodating safety considerations. One part of that involved mandatory vaccinations. Military deadlines requiring service members to be vaccinated for COVID have passed, and the branches have been discharging people who refused the vaccine. As with other cases, the Hotline tries to help people understand likely consequences for not complying with military consequences.

The Hotline has also received calls from soldiers in quarantine for COVID. With hours of time on their hands, they are reflecting on their training thus far and realizing that conscientious objection may be their first choice. Different options are discussed with these soldiers and they are mailed the Hotline guide to begin the written application.

Current Staff: Until October the staff consisted of Kindra Bradley (fulltime); Steve Woolford and Lenore Yarger, who share one fulltime position; Joanna, a licensed counselor who is a contract employee; and an administrative assistant who works 11 hours per week. Accounting services are handled by an independent agency in Fayetteville and with considerable volunteer input from our treasurer Charley Pennell from the Raleigh Meeting.

New Director: Wayne W. Finegar II has been selected as the new Quaker House director and plans to begin March 1. Wayne is a birthright Quaker, who comes to us with 12 years employment at Baltimore Yearly Meeting. He served as Administrative Manager, Associate General Secretary and in 2020-2021 as Acting General Secretary. He is a graduate of Swarthmore College and the University of Maryland School of Law. Previously he worked as a lawyer but also as a stay at home parent of three sons, who are now grown. Wayne also worked with the BYM Youth Camping Program. We look forward to having you meet him.

Financial: While Quaker House has no endowment, we currently hold \$50,777.14 with Friends' Fiduciary in Philadelphia. (This will gain interest and can be withdrawn at any time.) There is also approximately \$68,352. in money market certificates. The current treasurer's account balance is \$123,000. While 2021 expenses were less than anticipated with the pandemic, no travel costs and with the absence of a director staff position, we are watching gifts from individual donors and meetings very carefully. (Total meeting gifts declined several thousand dollars.) Fortunately, we ended 2021 in good shape financially.

Chapel Hill Meeting Representation to QH Board: Betsy Brinson and Rufus King are the current CHFM representatives to the Quaker House Board. QH by-laws allow for 5 members and CHFM Nominations

Committee is looking to make additional appointments. (Betsy left the board in July but returned temporarily with the departure of Kindra Bradley. Rufus began his service in the fall, 2021.)

For questions and/or more information about this report, please contact Betsy Brinson or Rufus King.

February 2, 2022