

Report on Zora Carroll

I spoke this evening with Marissa Colston, Zora's sponsor. Marissa is leading a service trip by a group of Westtown students to Ghana tomorrow, so I tried to keep the vetting short and to the point. I asked for specific activities that Zora had been involved with beyond the MLK Day program which is described in the application. She responded that Zora has been a leader in facilitating discussions between marginalized communities and the rest of the school that has given voice to the concerns of the marginalized and enabled understanding of those concerns by the greater community. She gave two examples (beyond the MLK Day program).

- She led a discussion on intersectionality that gave voice to the Black women in the school. The discussion started small and eventuated in an upper school assembly. Zora initiated this group with an "opinion board post."
- The students of color in the school believed that their voices were being shut out of Meeting for Worship*. Despite much outcry about this, the students felt that their concerns were not being addressed. She was one of the leaders of a walkout from the Meeting for Worship that was joined in by over half the school. That walkout led to meaningful discussions between the students and faculty that led to changes in the Meeting for Worship as well as changes in the Sunday Quaker service.

In her application, Zora noted that most of the groups in which she is a leader have multiple leaders. I asked Marissa how the other students would feel if Zora received recognition while they did not. She replied that she believed the other students would be pleased that Zora was honored. Furthermore, in Marissa's opinion, Zora was the principal leader in most of these groups.

As she wrote in her supporting letter, (Zora) cares deeply about racial justice and will work tirelessly to create more understanding which can lead to systemic change.

*A **meeting for worship** is a practice of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) (or "Quakers") in many ways comparable to a church service.

A Meeting for Worship may start with a query; something to think about during Meeting. The query is most of the time based on one of the Quaker testimonies. Meeting will then sit in silence for varying amounts of time, but usually from twenty minutes to an hour and a half. If an attendee is provoked to share, they can stand up and speak their mind, usually but not always with regards to the query. Attendees are encouraged to speak once "the Spirit finds you", thus meaning one should only speak if the message is good for the community and beneficial to the meeting. A traditional Quaker belief is everyone has "that of God" inside, and everyone's inner light and spirit can be shown. At a few meetings, some people will stand up and sing songs or recite poetry.