



Newtown Friends School
Membership Renewal Process
Self-Study Report

Submitted to the Friends Council on Education
December, 2015

NFS Membership Renewal Process Self-Study Committee Members

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I. Mission

Share the school's mission statement and provide a few examples (brochures, promotional materials, publications, web materials) through which the school's Quaker philosophy and mission are disseminated.

Mission Statement

Newtown Friends School provides a dynamic curriculum through which students learn to think critically, collaborate peacefully, communicate effectively, and lead with character and compassion. Rooted in Quaker values, the rigorous education at Newtown Friends School instills the confidence and conviction to succeed in a changing world.

Our mission statement is shared in many ways:

- Large acrylic sign at entrance
- Framed posters in the hallways
- Framed poster in the conference room
- Website pages
- Our *This Friendly Place* publication
- Curriculum Guide
- Parent Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Employee Handbook
- Various brochures and handouts

Attach the organizational by-laws or charter that clearly describe the school's affiliation with the Religious Society of Friends.

See Attachment 1.

Briefly describe how the school maintains a living relationship with the Religious Society of Friends, Quaker meeting communities, Friends organizations, and other Friends schools.

The following excerpts are from the NFS Parent Handbook:

There is a valuable support network among faculty and administrative staff members of the Philadelphia-area Friends schools. Newtown Friends School benefits from services of the Friends Council on Education, workshops at Friends schools, and innovative programs recommended by other Quaker educators. Students enjoy activities with other schools, including Friends schools. For example, our fourth graders are pen pals with fourth graders at Wilmington Friends School. The two classes take turns hosting each other for a day of shared stories and fun. Newtown Friends School promotes an active interchange with its neighbor Quaker institutions. George School, and Pennswood Village flank the Newtown Friends School facilities and enjoy close cooperation in many activities. Newtown Friends School, George School and Pennswood Village share an informal commitment to mutual development and

understanding. The wider Friends community is served by school service projects, which are expressions of caring for others and opportunities for personal growth through service.

RELIGIOUS FOUNDATION

Philosophically, the school adheres to the Quaker belief that the spirit of God dwells within all persons, and that there is continuing revelation by that spirit to all who will listen. This leads, in the broadest possible context, to creative resolution of conflict on all levels through concerns for equality, simplicity and responsibility for the well-being of self and others. Quaker faith and practices are presented as a basis for a good life. The insights of the entire group are given particular attention when reaching decisions, for the attainment of agreement in a spirit of cooperation holds greater weight than does a simple majority.

Similarly, the school in conducting its business employs Quaker practices to the greatest practical extent, reaching decisions through consensus. Pupil service projects and institutional visits help to develop in the students a sense of responsibility to the entire community.

Meeting for Worship is central to school life and to the awakening of these values in hearts and minds. Students (K-8), faculty and staff attend Meeting for Worship each Wednesday at the George School Meeting House. Parents are encouraged to attend and share this time with their children.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The basic tenet of the Religious Society of Friends is that “there is that of God in every person.” Newtown Friends School seeks to educate its students in the practices of Quaker worship and give them the opportunity to live out the “Light of God” in their daily lives through caring for, service to and understanding of others as well as themselves. Once a week, the entire school gathers for Meeting for Worship. Students and teachers alike are free to share relevant thoughts and readings. Small groups of younger and older children gather at least monthly for Meeting and other shared activities as “buddy classes.” Periodically, students gather for Meeting by grade level or division. In addition, worship opportunities such as moments of silence and class meetings are part of the daily schedule. Values and religious connections are taught in subject areas such as literature, history, art and music.

Quaker social concerns and dedication to service are encouraged by providing outreach for students into the lives of others to whom they can be of service. In Upper School, students participate in the activities at Pennswood Village and complete a service learning elective course. It is hoped that by connecting with these agencies, students will come to acknowledge, understand and have affection for the vast variety of human experience...

All meetings held at the school, including assemblies, start with a moment of silence. Student lunch periods also begin with a moment of silence and many teachers choose to begin their classes this way as well. Students, faculty, and staff are well accustomed to settling themselves with a brief period of quiet meditation.

II. Worship

Describe the yearly calendar for weekly meetings for worship, and those held on special occasion (e.g. opening day, baccalaureate, commencement, etc.).

Meeting for Worship occurs weekly at the George School Meeting House for grades one through eight. Weather permitting, we walk as a community to meeting on Wednesdays at 10:45AM. Once everyone has settled into silence, a reading and query is offered by a faculty or staff member. These reflections and queries are an extension of queries which are presented by our eighth graders to the entire community during our weekly assembly. For example, if the student shares a query related to stewardship during Monday Assembly, the faculty member will have a related share on stewardship and reiterate the student's query during our Wednesday Meeting for Worship. During Meeting for Worship many students share reflections and words of wisdom. Kindness, the Golden Rule and a sense of community are frequent themes that emerge as our children share out. Meeting is completed when the Head of School shakes hands with those sitting next to him.

After Meeting for Worship, students break into classroom or grade level groups to engage in afterthoughts. Afterthoughts provide students the opportunity to further reflect and to share thoughts and feelings which they may not have felt comfortable sharing with the larger community. While students are free to "pass" or simply listen during this time, the community appreciates the space and time to share these personal thoughts and feelings. Over time this also leads to a richer meeting as community members build confidence to share in the larger group.

Kindergarten students join us for Thanksgiving and Holiday Meeting for Worship. When their teachers feel they are ready, which is typically after spring break, they join the school community for weekly worship at the Meeting House. They often sit with their eighth grade buddies for the first few meetings.

Once a month Buddy Meeting for Worship pairs students across grades to build community and deepen students' understanding of the Quaker SPICES. Older students are paired with younger buddies to engage in fun and meaningful activities related to each of the SPICES. At the end of our Buddy Meetings, we take time to reflect on our experiences together and what we learned.

Throughout the year we have special Meetings for Worship that mark special occasions. During our first Meeting for Worship of the school year, our Head of School takes time to explain the Quaker tradition of sitting in silence and how this time of reflection and stillness can honor all people before we settle into silence. Our Thanksgiving and Holiday Meeting for Worship are programmed and include songs and readings by students, teachers and parents. Many extended NFS community members join us for these times of worship. Our graduation is another special time for Meeting for Worship. Small

moment readings from every eighth grader, a speech from our Head of School, and music performed by students makes this a very memorable and moving event.

Briefly describe how each constituency group in the school is oriented to and educated about the practices and purposes of Meeting for Worship and its underlying beliefs, with sensitivity to the religious diversity of the community.

Faculty and staff engage in workshops lead by internal and external resources. For example, in August, 2014, faculty participated in a Quaker workshop lead by Arthur Larrabee, the General Secretary for the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Faculty has access to Quaker resources and information in our faculty resource library located in our Lower School Faculty Room. With the exception of one maintenance person and one member of the office staff, all employees are expected to attend Meeting for Worship.

The larger Newtown Friends School community is educated about Quakerism with evening events such as Quakerism 101 where faculty, administration and parents come to be educated about and to discuss Quakerism. On our website we have a summary of Quakerism, its educational history, and links to more resources including Newtown Friends Meeting, the Friends Council on Education and articles titled “Roots and Witness of Quakerism” and “What is Meeting for Worship?” All NFS parents are always welcome to join the school for Meeting for Worship and Buddy Meeting for Worship.

If the school uses a different term for its Meeting for Worship, briefly describe the community’s language and the decision about using it.

N/A

III. Governance

Briefly describe how the school attracts Quakers to the board and orients board members to Quakerism, Quaker-based decision-making, and Meeting for Worship.

The School Committee of Newtown Friends School is committed to being a strong Quaker presence in the school community. All members of the School Committee help to attract qualified Quakers to the board by referring names of potential candidates to the Committee on Trustees (the School Committee’s nominating and board nurture subcommittee). School Committee members who are involved in local monthly meetings actively network on behalf of the School Committee and the school. The Committee on Trustees assesses all potential board candidates’ interest in service to a Quaker school, their availability and their potential to offer support to the school in work, wealth or wisdom. Quaker candidates are actively pursued and strongly encouraged to consider serving on the board. Candidates who have tentatively agreed to serve meet with the Clerk of the Committee on Trustees and the School Committee Clerk to discuss the practical and spiritual aspects of participating in Quaker-based decision-making and being a member of a governing body of a Quaker school.

Once ratified, all new members of the School Committee meet with the School Committee Clerk and the Head of School to expand on the discussion about Quakerism, Quaker-based decision-making and Meeting for Worship. At the first School Committee meeting of the year (every year) the Clerk reviews the corporate and individual expectations involved in Quaker-based decision-making, with periodic reminders and discussions throughout the year.

School Committee meetings are conducted as Meetings for Worship, with attention to business. The meeting begins and ends with a period of worshipful silence. All School Committee members are encouraged to attend school Meetings for Worship with the rest of the NFS community.

List the members of the school's board and their Quaker meeting affiliations, if appropriate.

Betsy Cadwallader – Yardley Monthly Meeting
Linda Espenshade Heinemann – Newtown Monthly Meeting
Elizabeth Hurst - Newtown Monthly Meeting
Melaina Governatore Mirarchi - Newtown Monthly Meeting
Kevin Moon - Newtown Monthly Meeting
Veronica Wetherill - Newtown Monthly Meeting
Neil Clabbers
Ed Conrad
W. David Henderson
Christopher Josephson
Neal Masia
Ellen Rusnak
Gwen Scott-Hodges
Don Wenzel

List the members of the board's committee or task group whose function is to nurture the Quaker dimension of the school and briefly describe its recent work.

A few years ago, the School Committee Clerk participated, with a few faculty members, in the Quaker Life Task Force that was charged with reviewing and proposing ways to strengthen the Quaker and religious life at NFS. The work of this task force was brought to the School Committee and resulted in an increased awareness of the work that was being done in all aspects of life at NFS.

This year, the School Committee's subcommittee structure is being revised to better reflect important areas of focus. A new subcommittee -- Quaker and Community Life -- is in the process of being formed and will be charged with establishing a better connection with and understanding of the NFS community, especially the Quaker dimension.

Give a recent example of the board using Quaker-based decision-making for a major decision.

After a series of discussions initiated the previous spring and held over during the summer, in the fall of 2013 the School Committee decided to rewrite and update the mission statement of Newtown Friends School. Quaker process was used to support this endeavor and an ad-hoc subcommittee, called the Mission Statement sub-Committee, was formed. During the fall of 2013, the subcommittee met several times to create and refine possible mission statements. The drafts were sent to the full School Committee twice for feedback. During this process, the draft also went to a faculty mission statement sub-committee which provided additional feedback and ideas. A final draft was sent to the full School Committee for their March, 2014 meeting, and it was approved. The new statement appeared in all necessary school publications for the 2014 – 2015 school year.

List the Quaker-related board development and other networking opportunities attended by board members during the past three years, e.g. Friends Council workshops and peer networks meetings, etc.

For the past two school years, some Newtown Friends School Committee members have taken advantage of the ADVIS/FCE Trustee U webinar series of online governance programs for trustees. We have viewed the webinars with members of the School Committee of George School in the conference room of the Molly Dodd Anderson Library.

Last April, the Clerk of the School Committee and the Head of School attended the Friends Council on Education Annual Meeting in Philadelphia.

IV. Leadership

Briefly describe how the school attracts Quaker administrators, faculty and staff and orients all to Quakerism, Quaker-based decision-making and Meeting for Worship.

The Quaker culture of Newtown Friends School makes our school an attractive work environment for Quakers and non-Quakers alike. All of our job openings are posted on The Friends Council on Education Job Listings web page. In recent years we have had the good fortune to hire several educators who, though not Quaker, had experience teaching in Friends Schools. The nature of working in a Quaker school is something we discuss with all candidates and their experience while visiting campus as part of the interview process is designed to expose them to as much of that ethos as possible.

Many new employees experience their first Meeting for Worship as the opening agenda item on our first full faculty meeting before the start of school. This year, the Quaker Life and Outreach Committee led the faculty in afterthoughts and has been creating

opportunities for teachers to discuss and plan for use of afterthoughts with their students. Adults in our community also learn about Quakerism through Buddy Meeting. All teachers, not just homeroom teachers, are assigned a Buddy Meeting and it is not uncommon for some staff to join in the monthly activities as well. We purposefully pair new teachers with veterans to allow for informal mentoring that inevitably occurs during planning and co-teaching Buddy Meeting. The Quaker Life and Outreach Committee is always available as a resource to the entire faculty and staff.

Additionally, all new hires meet with the Head of School monthly. The conversation is often oriented around the nature of working in a Friends school. Particular attention is paid by the Head of School towards supporting the new faculty member as their base of knowledge about Quakerism and Quaker education grows.

It can take years for someone to truly understand the power and beauty of Quaker-based decision-making. NFS employees are reminded of the process as part of our welcome back meetings and in our Employee Handbook. Prior to making significant decisions, such as selecting a faculty clerk, the faculty will revisit decision-making principles and practices. Through experiential learning and exposure, faculty members become more comfortable in these discussions and internalizes the benefits of this decision making process.

Give a recent example of the head of school, and also at least one key administrator, using Quaker-based decision-making for a major decision.

Each year, among the most formative decisions that the Head of School and the administration make is whom to hire for any open positions. At Newtown Friends School, we seek wide input during this important process. Search committees are not solely composed of the Head of School and the administration. For example, our Director of Facilities, who in a small school like Newtown Friends School, is also our single full-time maintenance person (and not a member of the administration), served on the search committee for our recent Director of Finance and Operations position. Typically, members of the administrative team serve on the search committee if the open position is relevant to their administrative role. After conducting phone interviews with 7–10 candidates, the search committee meets to select our top 3-5 candidates who are then asked to visit the school as finalists.

At this step, the process is opened up even further as these finalist visits are announced to the community and copies of the candidate resumes are placed in the faculty lounges. Time is created in the visiting candidate's schedule to meet with faculty and staff so that an opinion can be formed. After the visits, a representative from the hiring committee sends out an email asking for feedback about the candidate. In this manner, the wisdom of the entire staff is sought and respected regarding whom we ask to join our educational community. Wider staff opinions have had an impact on the hiring decision in recent years.

List Quaker-related professional development and networking opportunities attended by the head, faculty and other key leaders during the past three years, e.g. Friends Council Workshops and peer network meetings, etc.

Our faculty clerk and Quaker-decision making process allows for significant in-house professional development for teachers. When possible and appropriate, Quaker decision-making is employed using a sense of the meeting to plan as well as solve problems. Some decisions will fall solely under the purview of the Head of School such as any aspects of employee evaluation and employment contracts. Other decisions are made administratively, and some by the entire faculty and staff. When topics are presented at faculty meetings they fall into one of three categories:

1. for information; the decision will be made by administration or a committee
2. for input; faculty are asked to share thoughts, but the decision will be made by administration or a committee
3. for decision by the faculty

Faculty meetings are facilitated by a clerk selected by the faculty. In the spring of 2015 the faculty worked to improve the process of clerk selection, allowing for more voices to be heard and a richer discussion. The process now involves all faculty, as names are submitted via paper slips. At a subsequent meeting, the Nominating Committee then offers a few names for consideration. The nominees are then excused and the remaining faculty use Quaker-decision making to select a clerk. The Upper and Lower School faculties select clerks for their respective divisions as well. Additionally, a faculty member serves as Recording Clerk for each group.

Though it does not happen every year, in many years we have included a workshop related to Quakerism as part of our welcome back inservice week. For example, in 2014, Arthur Larrabee led our faculty and staff in a full day workshop on the history of Quakerism and Quaker-based decision-making. Other offerings have included multiple workshops on mindfulness with Tom Hoopes (Head of The George School Religion Department) and diversity with Karen Washington (Director of Multicultural Affairs at Moorestown Friends).

The Head of School regularly attends the FCE gatherings, and our development and admissions leadership attend their peer networks as well. Our admissions director is currently participating in the Friends Council Leadership Institute. This fall the Head of School and Director of Advancement attended the new Quaker Fundraisers Gathering. Our Pre-k teachers have attended the Early Childhood Educators Peer Network for the past several years. We have also sent new faculty without Friends school experience to the Educators New to Quakerism workshop.

We are looking forward to hosting Edcamp Friends on March 28, 2016. This event, as far as we know, will be the first edcamp specifically designed for educators in Quaker

schools. The NFS Edcamp Friends team has been involving the entire faculty in the planning process, from choosing a logo to inviting colleagues at other Friends schools.

V. School Program and Community Life

Briefly describe how the school attracts Quaker families and orients students and parents to Quakerism, Quaker pedagogical approach and Quaker-based decision-making and supports them in understanding the school's Quaker identity.

Newtown Friends School has a close working relationship with the meetings in Bucks Quarter, as well as Trenton meeting. These relationships, developed by members of the meetings who are also current and former families, alumni, and School Committee members, allow for outreach and sharing of the work being done at the school and ultimately serves to attract Quaker families to Newtown Friends School.

Lower School students experience Quakerism throughout the school day, as they are guided by their teachers to work and play together, make decisions individually and as a group, and see the Light in everyone. The school's use of Responsive Classroom, recognized by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as one of the most well-designed, evidence-based social and emotional learning programs, creates a steady foundation that is consistent with and reinforces many tenets of Quakerism. Please see the attached document "Responsive Classroom and Developmental Designs" for more details regarding these influential programs.

Upper School students experience Quakerism and its impact in the way they learn and collaborate through our advisory program as well as through three annual SPICES Days. Upper School students meet in mixed-grade groups with their advisor three times a week. Faculty advisors employ the Developmental Designs program, which is the adolescent version of Responsive Classroom. Again, the program is highly consistent with Quaker pedagogical approaches, emphasizing the need to hear and respect all voices. Please see the attached SPICES day schedule from October, 2014 for an example of these unique learning experiences. You will notice in the schedule that students and faculty often engage in Quaker-based decision-making during SPICES days. We have been able to come to consensus around decisions such as dances, fundraisers, student leadership positions and after school activities. Students are able to witness, participate and ultimately reap the rewards of Quaker-based decision-making multiple times a year.

Newtown Friends School parents have many opportunities to learn about Quakerism starting with the admissions process and then throughout their time at our school. As mentioned in the Worship section, every year we offer an evening session about Quakerism. Faculty and administration form a panel and lead a discussion about Quaker history and practices, as well as the role of Quakerism at NFS. On our website we have a summary of Quakerism, its educational history, and links to more resources. Also, through our Tuesday Update, NFS families are informed of special events, such as Newtown Meeting's Simple Supper, the Buckingham Friends School Peace Fair, and guest speakers.

For example, one of our students, Anisgul Stanikzai, presented her life experiences at Newtown Meeting last spring. Anisgul came to NFS via SOLA, School of Leadership - Afghanistan, a small independent school in Kabul. Through TASC, NFS had raised money and awareness for SOLA for several years, and through that partnership and an NFS host family, Anisgul joined our class of 2015.

Give a few brief examples of how Quaker history, practice and testimonies are embedded and taught in the academic program.

Students of all ages are regularly exposed to the rich history of Quakers, their beliefs, and their impact on the world. Children as young as four years old learn about nonviolence in an age-appropriate unit study of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. Second graders learn about colonial Newtown, including the life of William Penn and his belief in religious freedom, as well as the influence of Quakers in the history of Newtown. They visit the Newtown Meeting House and research the life of artist Edward Hicks, one of the original organizers of the Newtown Meeting House and painter of “The Peaceable Kingdom.” Seventh graders explore the influential role played by Quakers in the abolitionist movement. Our eighth graders begin the year in English class learning how to write a query. Each student or a pair of students is matched to a week in the school year and they craft a query with the calendar in mind. For example, students who write the query for late April typically choose to tie their query to stewardship and Earth Day. The students read their queries at our weekly Monday assemblies and the text is shared with parents through our Tuesday Update and the school website. Please see the attached examples.

Field trips are an integral part of our academic program and many of our trips have ties to Quakerism and its’ testimonies. Every primary classroom has at least one field trip that encourages students to learn about and care for our environment. Pre-k and kindergarten classes visit many farms, orchards, and the Philadelphia Zoo. Students in second grade visit William Penn’s home, Pennsbury Manor, each year when they study colonial times and the life of William Penn. In 2015 fourth graders went to John Bartram’s home to learn more about a prominent Philadelphia Quaker and his commitment to nature. Stewardship is also a key part of the Echo Hill Outdoor School camping trip, experienced yearly by our fifth and sixth graders. Students in seventh grade visit the Arch Street and Free Quaker Meeting Houses as part of a tour of revolutionary Philadelphia. The eighth grade trip to Heifer Farm helps students to better understand the needs of developing communities around the world and ways in which we can actively help those communities.

Attach a summary of programs in which students, in developmentally appropriate ways, learn about world faith traditions, global studies including respect for commonalities and differences among individuals and cultures; study ethics and engage in moral reasoning; and explore the role of religion in history and contemporary life.

Throughout the year, students in pre-k through second grade learn about many faith traditions, including Diwali, Rosh Hashanah, Kwanzaa, St. Lucia Day, etc. It is not unusual for a parent or grandparent to visit a classroom and share her or his faith and culture.

Though discussions of faith, respect, and ethics occur spontaneously in many classes and across the grades, our Social Studies Scope and Sequence provides specific avenues for students to explore these themes.

In first grade social studies students learn about Native American religious traditions, similarities and differences between groups, and the importance of stewardship of the earth for many Native peoples. Second graders study William Penn and the founding of Pennsylvania, including his relationship with Native peoples and his Quaker faith. The third grade social studies curriculum connects children to world cultures. Students learn not only geography, but also distinguishing characteristics of many cultural groups. Our fourth graders are partnered with students at Wilmington Friends School for a pen pal relationship. Each school spends one day at the other school engaging in community building activities. Fifth graders explore the role of religion in history as part of their investigations of Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, and Ancient Rome. Our sixth graders spend the entire year in social studies learning about world religions, specifically Judaism, Christianity, including Quakerism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. They visit New York City to tour a cathedral, synagogue, Buddhist temple, and mosque. Sixth graders end the year learning about human rights and the role of the United Nations. The seventh and eighth grade social studies curriculum allows for many rich discussions about the influence of religion and ethics in American history. For example, students explore the abolitionist movement, the Holocaust and the world's response, and social change movements such as the Women's Rights Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Gay Rights Movement.

Our seventh and eighth grade elective courses change from year to year. Debate and Public Speaking is a popular, frequent option. Students begin debating benign topics such as owning pets or playing sports, but end with weightier resolutions with many layers and perspectives that lend themselves to the discussion of ethics.

Briefly describe three examples of service-learning/community outreach activities, or attach the service-learning curriculum.

Lower School classrooms lead a variety of annual community outreach activities, including food drives, Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF, pretzel sales to benefit the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, a trike-a-thon and a holiday toy drive for Mercer Street Friends, and Read to Feed for Heifer International. Additionally, the entire school participates in friendly soccer matches on "One Day One Goal," our annual celebration of International Day of Peace.

In the Upper School, sixth grade students participate in our Friday Friends intergenerational program. As part of this program, students visit the neighboring retirement community, Pennswood Village, once a week. Here they build relationships with the residents, learn from them, and perform acts of service for them. Some activities which students have done as part of this program include providing tech tutoring to

residents, making Valentine's Day cards for residents who receive nursing care, and working to help more active residents maintain their garden plots. At the end of the year, the sixth graders reflect upon their experiences and create a final project to synthesize what they have learned from working with older adults in a non-academic context.

Our seventh and eighth grade students are required to take a quarter-long Service Learning elective as a graduation requirement. In this course, students research a problem in the world that is important to them, design a project to help address this problem, and carry out their projects. Students' projects take many forms, including writing informational picture books and reading them to our Lower School students, sending letters to national, state, and local politicians, and preparing donations for local service organizations. At the end of the quarter, students complete an in-depth reflection about their work, exploring the impact they made on their community, their own personal growth, and how their work has related to the Quaker testimonies. Please see the attached service learning course overview.

All Upper School students have the option of joining TASC, or The Agents of Social Change, our student service organization. TASC has two branches, one dedicated to global human rights and social justice issues and one dedicated to environmental concerns. For the past several years, TASC has worked to raise money for the Darfur Human Rights Organization of the USA and for School of Leadership Afghanistan. They have also organized "friendraisers" and dances to build community among the members of our Upper School. TASC also organizes school-wide events such as Spirit Week and an annual sports fundraiser called the Darfurnament which includes Lower School grades. TASC Stewardship oversees our on-site composting program and works to educate our school community about our recycling and composting procedures. All TASC meetings use the Quaker decision-making process to guide their work, and meetings are led by student clerks. Occasionally TASC will bring issues to the entire Upper School at a Meeting for Worship for Business, enabling all Upper School students to have a voice in the decisions of this organization.

Briefly summarize how students are grounded in the school's Quaker identity through the teaching of accountability, responsibility, reflection, respect and non-violent conflict resolution.

The NFS School Counselor teaches lessons at least once a month with students in grades pre-k through eight. Many of the lessons focus on themes such as accountability, responsibility, reflection, respect and peaceful conflict resolution. These lessons are primarily proactive activities to maintain a healthy, fun and functional community. At other times, classroom lessons, small group work or individual meeting times with the school counselor are implemented in order to address a need which has presented itself.

Teachers also use the classroom management and advisory programs Responsive Classroom (for elementary grades) and Developmental Designs (for middle school grades). Both of these programs promote social-emotional learning concepts such as responsibility,

reflection, and respect. These programs help us to cultivate our community and create an atmosphere which fosters learning.

Briefly describe how Quakers and Quaker organizations are involved in school life.

Residents from Pennswood Village, the neighboring Quaker Retirement Community, are actively involved at Newtown Friends School. In pre-k through fifth grade, several Pennswood residents serve as “Pennswood Pals,” visiting a class weekly to assist teachers with academic centers, special projects, reading workshop, and/or writing workshop. In pre-k and kindergarten, residents lead math and literacy centers. In first and second grades residents read aloud to students, listen to students read aloud, and assist students with editing their writing. Several residents also volunteer in the school library, assisting students with book check out. Pennswood volunteers are often also involved in the Upper School Service Learning elective and periodically serve as guest speakers in social studies classes.

Classes also routinely visit residents at Pennswood. Sixth graders visit Pennswood Village every Friday to participate in intergenerational activities with residents. This program, known as “Friday Friends,” is designed to bring generations together and to provide service to the Pennswood community. Other grades visit Pennswood throughout the school year to share student-created projects, participate in seasonal events, and extend curricular objectives. Third grade visits assisted living residents to share poetry writing, second graders visit nursing home residents to share autobiography projects, and kindergarten visits to tour Pennswood as part of their social studies unit about community helpers. On a monthly basis, fifth graders have the opportunity to sign up for “lunch bunch.” On the first Wednesday of each month a group of 4-5 fifth graders go to Pennswood to eat lunch and have conversation with Pennswood residents. Pre-k students visit to sing songs and participate in the annual tree trim. The annual Halloween parade takes place through the buildings of Pennswood Village and is a beloved event for both organizations.

VI. Continuing Revelation

As a result of completing the self-study process, a school will likely identify new or refined areas of focus in affirming its Quaker dimension. Briefly describe the school's focus, timetable and process that will be addressed over the next five years.

The Newtown Friends School community has found the Membership Renewal Process to be a powerful tool for identifying those aspects of Quakerism that we do well and those that we would like to improve. We have identified the following three areas of focus for affirming our Quaker dimension:

- 1. Improve Professional Development for the NFS Community Regarding Quakerism**
- 2. Enhance Meeting for Worship**
- 3. Enrich Quakerism within students' daily classroom experience**

Area of Focus #1

Improve Professional Development for the NFS Community Regarding Quakerism

Action Step	Who is Responsible?	Timeline for Implementation
Introduce Quakerism elective course for 7th and 8th grade students.	Sarah Matthews, Quaker Life & Outreach Clerk, and Kristen Sanchez, Director of Curriculum	<u>winter 2016</u> - discuss with Upper School faculty <u>spring 2016</u> - include in students' elective course packet <u>fall 2016</u> - begin course
Create "Orientation to Quakerism" workshop and resource packet for new faculty and staff or anyone who is interested.	Quaker Life & Outreach Committee	<u>spring 2016</u> - develop workshop and create packet <u>fall 2016</u> - offer workshop
Schedule two full faculty meetings per year solely devoted to Quakerism.	Quaker Life & Outreach Committee	<u>summer and fall 2016</u> - planning and lead meeting
Create QuakerQuestions@newtownfriends.org email to address questions and concerns regarding Quakerism.	Quaker Life & Outreach Committee	<u>fall 2016</u> - roll out e-mail and explanation with start of school year

Work to strengthen relationships with Newtown Monthly Meeting, Pennswood Village, and George School to provide more opportunities for collaborative learning around Quakerism.	Quaker Life & Outreach Committee, Head of School, Intergenerational Program Coordinator	<u>spring 2016</u> - begin this outreach work
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Area of Focus #2

Enhance Meeting for Worship

Action Step	Who is Responsible?	Timeline for Implementation
Student greeters (standing and smiling) at door coming into MFW - the greeters each week will be the student author of that week's query and a friend or two.	Sarah Hensley, 7th and 8th Grade English Teacher to coordinate students	<u>fall 2016</u> - start this new tradition
Teaching Meeting for Worship and how to share.	Sarah Matthews, Quaker Life & Outreach Clerk	<u>fall 2016</u> - go into every classroom within first month of school
Visit other schools' MFW.	Quaker Life & Outreach Committee	<u>fall 2016</u> - begin exploring schools to visit

Area of Focus #3

Enrich Quakerism within students' daily classroom experience

Action Step	Who is Responsible?	Timeline for Implementation
Design and install more visible testimonies throughout the school, inside and outside.	Classroom Teachers, Students, Marketing Personnel, and Quaker Life & Outreach	<u>fall 2016 to spring 2017</u> - create differing size and location posters and banners
Share the idea of centering kit within each classroom.	Quaker Life & Outreach Committee	<u>fall 2016</u> - introduce idea and provide supplies for those who want them

Share the idea of activities or morning meeting focused on the query on Tuesday or Wednesday morning.	Quaker Life & Outreach Committee and Classroom Teachers	<u>fall 2016</u> - create document and resources for teachers as guidance for morning meetings and activities and begin this practice.
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*Stewardship is noticeably absent from this section of our report. The School is currently engaged in crafting a new strategic plan, and Stewardship is a pillar of that report. The timelines are not the same and we decided not to include Stewardship here in the MRP so that the Strategic Plan Stewardship Focus Team was not rushed.

Attachment #2 - Responsive Classroom / Developmental Designs

Who/When Started	Responsive Classroom	Developmental Designs
<p>Guiding Principles</p>	<p>Northwest Foundation for Children, 1945</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum. 2. How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand. 3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction. 4. To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. 5. Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach. 6. Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education. 7. How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community. 	<p>Origins Program/Midwest Regional Center for Responsive Classroom, 2004</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowing the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs of the students we teach is as important as knowing the content we teach. 2. We learn best by actively constructing our own understanding and meaning. 3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs when learning is leveraged by social interaction. 4. Goals are best achieved through the incremental mastery of tasks. 5. Social learning in a supportive community is as important to success as academic learning. 6. There is a set of personal/social skills that students need to learn and practice in order to be successful socially and academically: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, Self-Control. 7. Trust among adults is a fundamental necessity for academic and social success in a learning community.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Responsive Classroom</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Developmental Designs</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Classroom Practices</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Morning Meeting—gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead 2. Rule Creation—helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals 3. Interactive Modeling—teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique 4. Positive Teacher Language—using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline 5. Logical Consequences—responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity 6. Guided Discovery—introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility 7. Academic Choice—increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work 8. Classroom Organization—setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goal Setting – Students set long-term and daily academic and social goals for themselves, and periodically assess how well they have met those goals, as well as goals set by the teacher. 2. Social Contract – The Social Contract process brings staff and students together to design and sign an agreement that binds the community to common rules and facilitates students' goals throughout the year. 3. Modeling and Practicing – Social competencies are learned by seeing and doing. Nothing is assumed; all classroom and school-wide routines are practiced. 4. Pathways to Self-control – When the Social Contract is broken, teachers have strategies to repair it, such as redirection, fix its, loss of privilege, and taking breaks. Social skills grow without loss of dignity. 5. Community-building Advisory – Circle of Power and Respect Circle of Power and Respect advisory meetings bring students together in a fun, lively, safe, respectful meeting format that includes a greeting, sharing, an activity, and a daily news

	<p>9. Working with Families—creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches</p> <p>10. Collaborative Problem Solving—using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students</p>	<p>message.</p> <p>6. Activity Plus (A+) – Activity Plus advisory meetings allow for more activity time and flexibility while preserving a sense of community during advisory.</p> <p>7. Power of Play – Play is designed to build community, sharpen thinking skills, and enliven students while restoring their focus on learning.</p> <p>8. Empowering Teacher Language – Gesture, tone, and words combine to create a rigorous, respectful climate for building responsible independence.</p> <p>9. The Loop – An unending loop of thoughtful planning, careful work, and reflective assessment ensures continuous, conscious growth.</p> <p>10. Collaborative Problem Solving – Students and teachers use social conferencing, problem-solving meetings, conflict resolution, and other problem-solving structures to find positive solutions to problems.</p>
<p>Key Social-Emotional Skills</p>	<p>Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-control</p>	<p>Cooperation, Communication, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, Engagement, and Self-control</p>

Attachment #3 - Eighth Grade Query Samples

Paige Kouh and Anisgul Stanikzai
Mrs. Hensley
English 8-2
24 September 2014

4 May 2014

“Life is too short to wake up with regrets. So love the people who treat you right. Forget about those who don’t. Believe everything happens for a reason. If you get a chance, take it. If it changes your life, let it. Nobody said life would be easy, they just promised it would be worth it” (Harvey Mackay). This quote explains that it is important to live in the moment and to enjoy every second of your life.

When the Russian military attacked Afghanistan, most people immigrated to different countries. In their new countries, these people faced a lot of problems. That war made a lot of people from Afghanistan uneducated, including people from my family. When my family immigrated to Pakistan, they stayed there for a long time. In that time my sisters were old enough to start school, but unfortunately, my grandfather thought it was not safe to go to school in Pakistan. He also didn’t want girls to be educated. Now my sisters are uneducated, and they stay at home with my mother. They wish they could go to school. My family decided I have to go to school to get an education, and to be a good leader to support education for girls and help my country. It is very important to have peace with education because no one wants to see any more children with frightened eyes, or stop education because of immigration or war.

When you are able to recognize the joy that comes out of little things in your life, you become one step closer to finding simplicity all around you. To me, simplicity is being able to lead a life that is full without worrying about what you cannot control, and living in

Kouh and Stanikzai

the moment. Growing up I would always think about my future and what being older would feel like. At a young age everyone who surrounds you seems so much taller, louder, and so much more in control of their lives. Throughout my time at NFS, I have always looked ahead and could not wait until I would be an eighth grader, but at the same time I never imagined I would ever get there, because everything seemed so far away when I was so small. I never really took the time to fully appreciate how fortunate I was to be able to wake up every morning and come to a school that provided every student with a safe and warm environment. Now that I am an eighth grader, and I am reading everyone my query like so many have done before me, I have come to realize that time really does fly by. From the time that I took my first step into NFS, until the time I take one last step out, I will always cherish the wonderful memories that have been created here. They will stay with me forever.

Simplicity is accepting the world around you, and living life to the fullest. With simplicity we can have peace in the world, and which will allow more people to have an education and many other essentials in life that everyone deserves. Using simplicity we can make the world a more peaceful place for everyone around us. This week’s query is how can we incorporate peace into our lives to make everyday more simple?

Works Cited

"Harvey MacKay." BrainyQuote.com, 25 September 2014

Sabrina Rockelmann

Mrs. Hensley

ENG. 8-1

18 October 2014

Query: May 11, 2015

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education" (Martin Luther King, Jr.). Throughout my life of education-- not only in school but also in extra-curricular activities-- I wasn't fully experienced with talking to my peers because I used to be shy. I believe this quote involving the understanding of education reflects on one's intelligence, and specifically shows how we as people should handle the lessons of life. The community I was moved to changed my life. This community was and is continuing to be Newtown Friends School.

I was a little afraid on my first day at NFS. I thought, "Who will I meet? Will these friends like me?" Despite my initial fear during the school year, I realized that Newtown Friends School would help me to be more confident in myself, and that I could meet my academic goals in school. Now that I've had much more personal experience, I know that I've made the right decision. From the start of seventh grade to now, I have gradually changed into a different person because of the NFS community.

Newtown Friends School and its students have their own character, giving me the confidence and support to develop my own character for the future. Flashing back to when I went to my old elementary school, I had a difficult time communicating with my peers at school because these peers wouldn't care about you while they were trying to bolster their own self-esteem. I wasn't used to being around people like that. When I moved to Newtown Friends School, I was only astonished at how differing the community of NFS was from my old school. As a community, Newtown Friends School has made an extraordinary impact on my feelings about community due to the fact that I feel more open to asking questions in class, and comfortable with having a good time with school friends. The students and staff at NFS were open to me and what I had to say. The reason why Newtown Friends School has changed me as a person is because of the community's openness and worship, referring to school meetings such as assembly and Meetings for Worship. I've noticed that because of the NFS community's helping me to feel more confident in myself, I'm not afraid anymore. As my time here has continued, I've felt like a new person. Newtown Friends School has allowed me to feel up to the challenges every day with confidence, always starting with a new slate.

In reflection, I have connected to the function of education in many ways. I have always had intelligence; I just didn't know it. Newtown Friends' character of friendship is the reason why I have learned to know how great I actually can be. NFS has given me the

confidence for education, and for life. This week's query is "How does your community affect you?"

Liam Mitchell
Mrs. Hensley
English 8-2
23 September 2014

Query

As humans, we all make mistakes. Sometimes those mistakes can ruin relationships and communities, without you even really thinking about it. But sometimes all it takes is one person to mend that community back together.

As Pope John Paul II said, "...A community needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You, the people must give it this soul" (Community Quotes). This quote means that if you are part of a community, the only way it will function the way it should is if everyone inside of it gives it "a soul" by being together and making the community whole. I myself and part of a few communities where we all work together as a whole and keep the community going. My school community is an example of this. Our school together creates a community that we all know and like. Our school community is a whole that functions and works together to achieve our goals. I also am part of a soccer team outside of school, and they are also a community. Although now we are a closely knit community, we didn't always use to be. By working together and getting to know each other, we soon all became closer and became a stronger community than we were before. If your community is not a whole, think about that you could do to change that. Think about what you could do to bring your community closer together and "give it this soul" as Pope John Paul II said. This week's query is, "How could you bring your community closer together?"

Works Cited

"Pope John Paul II" CommunityQuotes.com. GoodReads.inc, n.d. 22 September 2014.

Maximo Hipple and Will Krohn
Mrs. Hensley
8-1 English
25 September 2014

Stewardship

"What's the use of a fine house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?" This quote by Henry Thoreau means that we only have one earth, and if we do not take care of our planet, there will be left with nothing to live on. The many our needs that we take for granted every day like gas, food, water and energy, all take up the world's resources. If we do not conserve these, we will one day run out, even though we may have a "fine house" our planet will not have any more resources to sustain it.

At Heifer Farm we experienced what it was like living in impoverished countries. They showed us how people in these different environments manage their lives. They reuse almost everything; they feed the scraps to the pigs and hogs, they use the cow manure to make fertilizer, and they use sheep fur to make blankets and coats. We had to make all our

own food by cooking it over a fire, and then compost extra food for the animals to eat. They had more sustainable choices to care for the environment. Heifer truly embrace stewardship.

Every summer, I go on vacation to a place called Lake George in the Adirondacks. When we are there, there is no wifi, no cell service, and no TV. The only electricity there is for our lights and for cooking. For our meals, most of the food is grilled or served cold. There is only one place where you can take a shower, and the showers have to be less than five minutes, to conserve water. During the day, we do things like kayaking, swimming, hiking, and archery. But all of the activities are outdoors and get us closer to nature. We have to be more sustainable in all of our actions to protect the environment. When I get home, it makes me think about how I could change my everyday life a little bit to help protect the earth. I have started to take shorter showers, turn off lights when I leave a room, and other things. Even though you may think that these things seem small, if everybody did them, it would make a big impact.

This week's query is: How can we care for the earth in our everyday lives?

Nora Greer
Mrs. Hensley
English 8-2
12 January 2015

12 January 2015

"And now I have to confess the unpardonable and the scandalous...I am a happy man. And I am going to tell you the secret of my happiness. It is quite simple. I love mankind. I love love. I hate hate. I try to understand and accept" (Jean Cocteau). Acceptance is something people learn gradually as we warm up to people or things. It is not easy to be accepting or treat others equally especially when we see something different from *our* "normal."

When I was four years old, my family and I went to China to visit my mom's extended family. As soon as we landed, my dad and I stood out from everyone else. I have always looked more Caucasian than my brother, and standing in that airport gave me yet another reason to think that. In an almost one-hundred percent Asian airport, there were two obviously white people, the complete opposite of Where's Waldo.

We were traveling to two parts of China: the southwestern part, to see my grandfather's family. And the northern part to see my grandmother's family. These areas are not tourist attractions; therefore there are not as many as Americans. In fact, during our last visit in 2010, I do not recall seeing any other Americans- besides my family. That meant a lot of staring. My father and I were the freak show wherever we went even when we were around my families. However, I did not realize they were not judging us, but rather, they were amazed. A Chinese woman and a Caucasian man... together, with not one, but two biracial children?! After a couple days, people started coming up to us asking for pictures. My toddler self thought I was famous, but now I realize that they were accepting my biracial family. Being able to have an Asian woman and a Caucasian man was strange to them. They did not care about race. All they cared about was flexibility in our society, being able to have races intertwine with each other.

We are extremely fortunate to live in a diverse community with many races, but we take that for granted. We take equality for granted. In many parts of the world, racial discrimination is still a problem. Even in America: this summer we witnessed a horrible example of racial discrimination in Ferguson, Missouri. We think that because racism is not a big part of our lives that it does not exist. Our world is still not equal, but you can do something to change that. This week's query is: how can you be more mindful of equality in your community?

Works Cited

"Jean Cocteau." Live-Inspired.com. Compendium, 2014. 25 September 2014.

Attachment #4 - Service Learning Elective Course Overview

Service Learning Elective 2014-2015 Course Overview

Goals:

- To benefit our community through thoughtful, well-planned service projects.
- To reinforce skills learned in academic courses as we create and execute service projects.
- To learn the skills and attitudes necessary to be thoughtful and engaged citizens of our communities, our country, and our world.
- To build confidence and autonomy in students.

Plan for the Quarter:

- First Three Weeks:
 - Students discuss and research a wide variety of issues faced by their communities.
 - They choose one issue on which to focus and do in-depth research on their topic.
 - They create a persuasive presentation about the importance of their issue to share with their classmates.

- Next Three Weeks:
 - Students form groups based on shared interests.
 - Groups select a project format that they feel is most suited to address their issue. o Groups create detailed plans for their projects.

- Last Three Weeks:
 - Groups carry out their project plans.
 - Students reflect on the outcomes of their projects, both external (i.e., What effect did this project have on the community?) and internal (i.e., What effect did this project have on me?).
 - Students prepare an informative presentation about their project to share with their Upper School peers.

Assessments:

Service Learning is a pass/fail course. Even if their service projects are not successful in the traditional sense, students who work hard and reflect meaningfully will pass Service Learning. Students will not receive numerical grades for their work, but comments about their performance on certain assessments will be posted in NetClassroom.

Service Learning is a graduation requirement. This means that students who do not pass Service Learning the first time they take it will have to retake the course until they pass. Students and parents will receive prompt and clear feedback about when a student is in danger of failing.

The most significant assessments of the year will be the Annotated Bibliography, the Project Proposal, and the Culminating Reflection. Each assessment is broken into steps to be completed individually. Students will receive an evaluation of “On Track” or “Off Track” for each step, as well as guidance on how to improve or refine their performance so as to stay or get back on track. Again, parents can check the comments in NetClassroom to monitor their children’s progress. NetClassroom will be updated approximately once a week.