

## 2019 Annual Report

### Peace and Service Committee

#### **Current members:**

Kathy Harr (co-opted); Steve Bacher; Marguerite Chandler; Caroline Wilson; Betsy Crofts (co-opted); Claire Staffieri, Bill Strong; Nola Bencze; Owen and Noah Buxton, and Nancy Martin, Clerk

#### **Meetings:**

Monthly from September through June

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Month @ 8:30 am in the Committee Room

We have changed the day and time, periodically, when needed to accommodate the schedules of our members.

#### **Peace and Service has been quite active this year. Here are some highlights of our work:**

##### Book Discussion and continued Conversation on Racism

A suggestion came from a committee member that we read the book, White Fragility, by Robin Diangelo. The decision was made to offer the opportunity to all those attending the meeting.

Twenty four people met to discuss the book, White Fragility by Robin Diangelo on a Friday evening in December. We shared pizza, conversation and began an open discussion of what whiteness and White Privilege might mean in our society. The book discussion continued each month and switched to an ongoing Conversation on Racism. Numbers dwindled, but we continued with a steady 10-12 people each month.

In April, eight members of the Conversation on Racism group travelled to Philadelphia to hear the Robin Diangelo speak about her book. In addition, three members of Peace & Service met with Gale Evens from the Peace Center to discuss the possibility of implementing an Up-Stander Training at our Meeting House. Unfortunately, they were not able to make that happen through the Peace Center.

Fortunately, a member of the Conversation on Racism let us know she attended a meeting which included a close version of Up-Stander Training. The member was invited to attend our upcoming committee meeting to speak about her experience. It was decided that we would hold our last two sessions before summer break, focused on unconscious bias and micro-aggressions and how to respond to them.

We hope to resume the Conversation in September / October.

##### Post Card Campaign

Three members of our Meeting attended the FCNL Lobby Training last November in Washington, DC. Participants had the opportunity to meet their own Representative and Senators, or their assistants, in person, speaking in favor of the SNAP Program

The news of this effort was brought back to the Peace and Service Committee. The suggestion was made to use post cards to bring the idea of lobbying back to our Meeting. Agreement was reached, post cards were designed, printed and donated by committee member and her husband. We began our Postcard Campaign the following month, after Meeting for Business, and has continued every month thereafter.

Committee Members sit at a table in the lobby and ask those who attend Worship to stop and fill out a card. Everyone is encouraged to question, make a request of, or thank their representatives. However, little "cheat" sheets are prepared every month to spotlight timely situations that need to be addressed, just in case someone wants help with an idea. Many responses have been received back from our legislators thanking us for our concerns about issues at hand.

The Committee would like to thank all the Members and Attenders willing to give of themselves to fill out a card. The best part of the experience was the opportunity to have meaningful conversations around the table with people we normally greet with just a handshake or a smile.

## POWER

Members attended the kick-off meeting of POWER, as the organization spreads into Bucks County from Philadelphia. Power is multi-racial/religious group whose intention it is to create awareness about and capacity to deal with the important issues facing people of color in Bucks County. Members of our committee have chosen two separate POWER committees in which to work – educational equity and hate.

## Peace Garden

We began preparations to rejuvenate the Peace Garden at the beginning of this year. A small group of gardeners took on the task of care for the perennial plants and weeding. The pathways in the garden were cleared, new edging and plastic sheeting put in place. Our "little task" took longer than expected – Mother Nature seemed bent on stopping our plans. The pathways have been finished with black mulch. The garden looks lovely. Please stop by and sit for a while when you have the chance.

## Peace and Service Web Pages on the Newtown Monthly Meeting Website

The Clerk was trained and given access to the editing process used for the Newtown website. Information was added to the P&S page in January. Unfortunately, updating the site has not been timely. An effort will be made to become more familiar with the editing process this summer.

## **More Peace & Service work by month:**

### **September**

- Co-sponsored the movie, "The Reluctant Radical", with Pennswood.
- Members volunteered at the drinks and sweets table at the Peace Fair.

### **December**

- Brought a request to the meeting for \$1,000. to aid our Syrian families at the December Meeting for Business. The Finance Committee announced at the January Meeting, that \$1,000. was sent on behalf of our meeting to aid the Syrian Families. We thank the Meeting again for such a generous donation.
- Brought a minute to Meeting for Business asking that we become co-petitioners for the Carbon Emission Petition sent to Pennsylvania Governor Wolf. The minute was discussed and accepted. The Minute on Emission Petition helped cause positive results from Gov. Wolfe.

### **January**

- Hosted Debra Wachpress from the Peace Center to speak during ARE continuing our conversation on race.

### **February**

- Hosted tonya tames taylor (lower case is correct) from the West Chester Meeting to speak during ARE. Doctor taylor brought a number of Gospel tunes, the songs of Billy Holiday, and Nina Simone alive while discussing their importance to the history of Afro-Americans in the US.
- Donated three children's books based on African-American spirituals and civil rights songs to the children's library.

### **March**

- Hosted Patricia Finley from Quaker Earth Care Witness to speak during ARE.

### **April**

- As requested by the Friends Committee on National Legislation, members of the Committee met to discuss and discern what, if any, revisions should be made to the FCNL Policy Statement. The work was accomplished, and our thoughts were submitted.

### **April / May**

- Co-sponsored **Draw Down**, the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming. (5 sessions - March through May) with Pennswood. The training is well attended.
- An FCNL Advocacy Group is in the process of being formed in our area. An organizational meeting is happening May 6<sup>th</sup>. Members of several Quaker meetings will get together to plan for a 3 hour workshop that will be open to both Quakers and interested community members.