Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Ninth Month 2024
Meeting for Worship: 10:00 am Sundays (childcare available)

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Portland, Maine 04103
portlandfriendsmeeting.org
207-200-6544

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Doesn't everyone belong
In the arms of the sacred?

~ Lady Gaga, "Angel Down"

Calendar

	Upcoming Events
Saturday, Sept. 28	Cuban Feast and Fundraiser
Sunday, Sept. 29, 12:00 noon	Tamasha Concert
Wednesday, Oct.2, 7:30 pm	ReWilding Quakers (first session)
Sunday, Oct.6, 2:00 pm	World Quaker Day Contradance and Celebration
Saturday, Oct. 12, 5:30 pm	Celebration Supper for Cuban Friends, Durham Friends Meeting
Saturday, Oct. 19, 10:00 am	Portland Friends School Open House
Saturday, Oct. 19, 7:00 pm	Anna Fritz Performance of *An Iliad* at PFS
Friday, Oct. 25, 1:30	Portland Friends School Book Swap and Sale
Saturday, Oct. 26, 9:30 am	Falmouth Quarterly Meeting at Durham Friends Meeting
Sunday, Oct. 27, 10:00 am	PFM and FSP Shared Meeting for Worship
Sunday, Oct. 27, 10:00 am	Thunderquakes program
	Every Month
Every Sunday, 10:00 am	Meeting for Worship* at the Meetinghouse and separately on Zoom
Third Sundays, 8:45 am	Early Meeting for Worship at the Meetinghouse
Every Weekday, 10:30 am	Meeting for Worship on Zoom*
First Thursdays & Third Tuesdays, 7:00 pm	Meeting for Healing on Zoom*

*contact Co-Clerks for online Meeting for Worship links

Young Friends making peace flags at the beginning of September

Portland Friends Meeting
Minutes of Called Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
September 8, 2024

Jim Grace, Co-Clerk
Rob Levin, Recording Clerk

Members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting gathered in worship at 11:05 am. Some 22 Friends gathered, in person at the Meetinghouse and remotely via Zoom. Mags Fehr held us in the Light.

Jim Grace offered a land acknowledgment, borrowed from Hanover Friends Meeting:

> Hanover Friends Meeting acknowledges that we worship, work, and live on the homelands of the Abenaki people. We know this truth: that European and American colonial powers and people overran the Abenaki homeland settlements, changed the names of many places, deforested the lands, polluted the waters, and tried at times to extinguish the Abenaki. No full amends can ever be made. From time beyond memory the Abenaki have been and still are here. We pay our respects to them, and to the wisdom of their elders and their culture. May we prove ourselves worthy and faithful friends and allies.

Jim also read a quote from Rufus Jones:

> In many great American cities the electric light and power companies display at night on their lofty skyscraper buildings brilliant electric signs which flash out across the city the words, "Public Service; Light and Power." Our desire is that all our local churches, whether in city or country, may make that their motto and their constant aim, that they all may aspire to fulfill their double mission for which Christ wrought and for which He died—that each church may be in the world "for public service, light and power."
>
> ~ Rufus M. Jones, from *Report of the Social Service Commission to the Five Years Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in America*, 1912

1. PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVED TECH FOR HYBRID MEETINGS

The Meeting considered the attached Proposal for Improved Tech for Hybrid Meetings (Attachment 1). Peter Woodrow gave an overview of the DTEN system, and how it is an improvement on our former cobbled together and cludgey system. The new system has received generally positive reviews from users on zoom, although sometimes background noise has been distracting. We hope to be able to modify some settings to deal with this issue. We also expect that the new system will be attractive for potential renters of the Meetinghouse, although we will need to come up with clear guidelines for usage by renters.

One slight update from the Proposal: The total cost for the system is $12,400, including shipping. There is a limited one-year parts warranty for the system.

The Co-Clerks are looking into how to establish a tech committee or group to support usage of the new system. We expect that whoever has Care of Worship will be responsible for turning on the system each week.

We discussed that the decision today does not commit us to continue hybrid worship indefinitely. Ministry and Counsel has discussed this issue in recent months. We recognized that purchasing the system gives us a better chance to continue hybrid if we choose to do so. We also discussed the setup of the Meeting room, and what to do with the section under the DTEN screen. Ministry and Counsel will take up this question.

The Meeting **approved** the Proposal, but with the modification that we will defer to Financial Stewardship Committee on where to draw the funds from, rather than deciding today that the funds will come from the Capital Reserve Fund.

We closed in silent worship.

Attachment 1

Proposal for Improved Tech for Hybrid Meetings

■ Portland Friends Meeting ■ September 2024 ■

Background

Portland Friends Meeting moved to on-line Meetings for Worship and Business during the COVID lockdown period when we were not able to meet in person. Later, when it was once again possible to meet in person, many people remained cautious despite care with masking and other health-related provisions. Therefore, Meetings for Worship and Business adopted hybrid technology, adding a projector, microphone, and camera, all operating from an elderly Mac computer and occupying space in the meeting room. Currently, a significant number of PFM community members still participate through the Zoom link, whether for health reasons, convenience, or distance. It appears, therefore, that it will continue to be necessary to accommodate these needs.

In late 2023, your clerk, in consultation with Ministry & Counsel, the clerk of Building & Grounds, and various tech-savvy Friends, started to explore alternatives for improved technology that would meet needs for the foreseeable future. Initial consultations early in 2024 settled on the following objectives for any improved system:

1. Enable hybrid format for Meetings for Worship and Business, with as little disruption as possible.
2. Reduce overall obstruction, visually and physically in the room.
3. Ensure people in the room and on Zoom (for hybrid meetings) can hear each other.
4. Achieve ease of use: minimal set up/launch required, easy instructions.
5. Make the room attractive to potential renters: cf., a typical classroom at current standards.

Originally, an additional objective aimed to assist people with hearing loss, integrated into the overall A/V system. While that remains a goal, it will have to come later.

With those objectives in mind, the PFM clerk (Peter) and B&G clerk (Sumner) sought recommendations and advice from Friends in other meetings with experience using hybrid systems, as well as an expert associated with NEYM. All suggestions pointed to the DTEN D7 system as one that has proven quite successful for other meetings. For those interested in complete technical information about the DTEN, please see https://www.dten.com/products/dten-d7/

Trial Period & Decision

After conversations with the DTEN representative and then a local “AV integrator,” a trial of the DTEN system was arranged—and approved at the July 28th Meeting for Business. The new device was installed on August 15th for an expected thirty-day period. As of September 1st, we have now experienced three Meetings for Worship with the DTEN. Feedback has generally been quite positive, with some tweaks of settings that have improved the experience.

Although it would be good to experience a regular Meeting for Business using the DTEN during the trial period, because the September meeting was moved to the 15th, we need to make a decision to finalize purchase before then. A called Meeting for Business with this one agenda item will be held on September 8th to make the decision (and we will also see how the DTEN works for us during that meeting). ***The proposal is to confirm purchase of the DTEN with an overall price tag of $11,619 including installation, to be drawn from the Capital Reserve Fund.*** (Additional cost may be incurred for running a new internet cable.)

Portland Friends Meeting
Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
September 15, 2024

Mary Bachman DeSilva, Co-Clerk

Rob Levin, Recording Clerk

Members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting gathered in worship at 11:56 am. Some 26 Friends gathered, in person at the Meetinghouse and remotely via Zoom. Fritz Weiss and Mags Fehr held us in the Light.

Jessica Eller began with a land acknowledgment, knowing that words are not enough.

Leading us into worship, Mary read two passages from *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White:

> *"Do you understand how there could be any writing in a spider's web?"*
>
> *"Oh, no," said Dr. Dorian. "I don't understand it. But for that matter I don't understand how a spider learned to spin a web in the first place. When the words appeared, everyone said they were a miracle. But nobody pointed out that the web itself is a miracle."*
>
> *"What's miraculous about a spider's web?" said Mrs. Arable. "I don't see why you say a web is a miracle-it's just a web."*
>
> *"Ever try to spin one?" asked Dr. Dorian.*

.....

> *"You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing. I wove my webs for you because I liked you. After all, what's a life, anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die. A spider's life can't help being something of a mess, with all this trapping and eating flies. By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a trifle. Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little of that."*

1. **REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The Meeting next **approved** the minutes of Meeting of July 28, 2024, and September 8, 2024, with one spelling change.

2. **MEMBERSHIP TRANSFER FOR JIM GRACE FROM BEACON HILL FRIENDS MEETING**

Jim's transfer approval has been received from Beacon Hill Friends Meeting and is now before Ministry and Counsel at Portland Friends Meeting.

3. **PROPOSAL TO CONVENE CLERKS' SEASONING COMMITTEE (FIRST READING)**

Ann Dodd-Collins presented the Proposal to Establish a Clerks' Seasoning Committee (see Attachment 1). Jim and Mary and the Clerk's Support Committee (Rob Levin, Ann Dodd Collins, and Fritz Weiss) are seeking a process for

seasoning ideas that don't find a natural home within any committee or *ad hoc* working group. This is a first reading because we know there are details still to figure out.

The hope is that the Seasoning Committee would take some of the burden off Ministry and Counsel, which has become the default seasoning group in recent years. The Seasoning Committee would be comprised of representatives from a core set of standing committees, not all 12 standing committees. These core committees would choose a representative for the Seasoning Committee.

Feel free to write to the Co-Clerks with additional input, as they expect to refine the proposal and bring it back to the Meeting for further reflection and action.

4. GREATER PORTLAND FAMILY PROMISE SEPTEMBER FUNDRAISING MINISTRY

Zora DeSilva spoke about Greater Portland Family Promise's emerging challenge to assist with security deposits for families who are moving into their own homes. General Assistance does not help with security deposits when a family moves from one locality to another locality, as it has in the past. September is our big GPFP fundraising month as a Meeting, and last year we raised $7,000. Given the immediate need, for PFM's 2024 September fundraiser, we as a Meeting are challenging ourselves to raise the equivalent of three average security deposits (i.e., $2,500 x 3 =$7,500 total from PFM) by October 15 (extended beyond September because of the delayed kickoff). Wayne Cobb is the point person for handling contributions. Additional information and updates will be provided over the next few weeks by email and during Meeting announcements on Sundays.

Note: all participating faith communities have been asked to assist in raising funds that may be used for substantial expenses such as security deposits.

5. PROPOSAL FOR BUDGET LINE-ITEM FOR ANNUAL WABANAKI-LED ORGANIZATION DONATION

Wayne Cobb presented this proposal on behalf of the Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples (RRIP) Working Group. (See Attachment 2.) The gist of the proposal is to create a standing line item for an annual budgetary contribution as a demonstration of our ongoing commitment to Wabanaki-led causes.

In general, Friends were supportive of donating annually to a Wabanaki-led organization. However, Friends posited questions about our typical process of deciding on outside contributions from the annual budget, and how this proposal would be different. This past January, after we approved the annual budget, the Financial Stewardship Committee hosted a called meeting, open to anyone, to determine our outside contributions in detail. During the September 15 Meeting, several Friends suggested that we fold the specific decision on how much to contribute and to which Wabanaki organization, into that process, which Friends agreed should be revived prior to finalization of the 2025 budget.

Following this discussion, the Meeting **approved** the general idea of supporting a Wabanaki-led organization through our annual budget process. The details merit further consideration and refinement, and we referred the matter to the Financial Stewardship Committee for seasoning in a timely and transparent manner so that it may be considered for inclusion in the 2025 budget.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

See Newsletter and E-group for announcements.

7. CLOSING WORSHIP

Then, following a period of silence, the Meeting then rose at 1:03 pm, to meet again for the Conduct of Business on October 6, 2024, according to Divine will.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposal to Establish Clerks' Seasoning Committee
2. Proposal for a Wabanaki-Related Line Item in Budget

Attachment 1

Proposal to Establish Clerks' Seasoning Committee

The Clerks Seasoning Committee will be comprised of the clerk(s) or a designated representative of a subset of the standing committees of the Meeting.

It has been the practice at Portland Friends Meeting for all proposals to be seasoned by a committee before coming to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Generally, proposals arise from within one of the standing committees of the Meeting and are directly related to the work of the individual standing committees. The purpose of the Clerks Committee is to season a proposal when there is no standing committee that is suitable for seasoning that proposal.

The Clerks Seasoning Committee does not have regularly-scheduled meetings but meets at the call of the Co-Clerks of the Meeting when there are proposals that need discernment.

Meetings of the Clerks Seasoning Committee are clerked by one of the Meeting Co-Clerks. Notes will be taken by committee members who volunteer for the task at the beginning of each meeting.

Attachment 2

Proposal for a Wabanaki-Related Line Item in Budget

Background

Portland Friends Meeting has a strong history of working in the best interests of the Indigenous people residing in what is now called the state of Maine. Since 2019, some 75 PFM members and attenders have taken part in book groups, educational seminars, legislative activism and other modes of support for our Wabanaki brothers and sisters. In 2023 the Meeting approved a minute of support for legislation restoring sovereignty for their Tribes and Nations.

Approval of this proposal will provide a regular reminder of our ongoing commitment to Native individuals and Tribes in Maine by creating a new budget line to support a Wabanaki-led cause. Financial contributions to those in non-dominant cultures can be seen not simply as "charitable contributions," but as steps toward greater connection and solidarity, fostering relationships based on the principle of reciprocity. With that in mind, and after seasoning, the members of the former Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples Working Group (Ann Dodd-Collins, Jessica Eller, Jennifer Frick and Emily Troll and Wayne Cobb) are hereby offering the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship to the Meeting as its candidate for receiving our first annual donation. This Native-run land-back non-profit organization, whose Board consists of designees of the five Tribal groups in Maine, will likely show up in our region of the state over time, working with non-Native conservation groups to acquire lands it deems of cultural and spiritual importance. This differs from a significant number of Wabanaki-related organizations, Native and non-Native, that operate in parts of the state further from the possibility of our direct contact.

Decision

After seasoning, the members of the former Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples Working Group submit the following proposal:

That the Meeting create a new line in the PFM budget to support a Wabanaki-related cause,

And that we allocate $1,000 in our 2025 budget as a donation to the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship.

This decision can be reviewed annually during budget preparation discussions to determine whether it should continue or be changed in any way.

Developing the 2025 Operating Budget

Hello Friends,

It's that time again! Portland Friends Meeting is beginning its annual operating budget development process, which will establish the Meeting's 2025 budget for our day-to-day operating income and expenses. This process is shepherded by the Financial Stewardship Committee, with significant input from our Committee Clerks and others. The budget will be approved by those who participate in the November and December Meetings for Worship for the Conduct of Business (MfWfCB).

The basic steps in developing the annual operating budget include:

- Anticipating income from three sources:
  - Donations from our members and attenders. We rely on heavily these donations to cover the vast majority of the operating expenses incurred during the year, which in turn enable the meeting to run smoothly.
  - Budgeted transfers from our invested funds to our operating account
  - Income earned by renting out our meetinghouse
- Anticipating operating expenses:
  - In early September the Clerk of the Financial Stewardship Committee asks the Clerk(s) of each PFM Committee to propose a realistic amount for their committee's 2025 budget and to list any anticipated 4th quarter 2024 expenses.

    Note: New or increased expense requests related to the operation of the meeting may be directed to the appropriate Committee Clerk, by October 1, for consideration.
  - Consideration of non-committee based expenses, including the ongoing costs of operating the meetinghouse and non-cemetery grounds.

    Note: The annual operating budget does not include large expense items like paving the parking lot (past), responding to emergency housing needs (present), or buying a new boiler (future). Such expenses are usually addressed outside the operating budget, following discernment by the meeting, which includes how to pay for such expenses.
- Consolidating the income and expense information. The Financial Stewardship Committee recommends a budget that balances realistic income with realistic expenses. If operating expenses are anticipated to exceed operating income, the Committee will pose this query: "What does the PFM community want to do to balance our operating budget? Raise more or spend less?"
- When the Committee feels clear to recommend a draft budget for meeting-wide consideration, that budget will be disseminated to the e-group then presented at the MfWfCB in November.
- As directed by the outcome of the November review/discussion, the proposed budget will be revised if/as needed, disseminated to the e-group, then presented for approval at MfWfCB in December. The final 2025 budget will be published in the newsletter.

With appreciation for the many people who participate in this process,

Financial Stewardship Committee Members

ReWilding Quakers as Living Practice

with Mey Hasbrook - http://facebook.com/sinkdownriseup
hosted & recorded by Beacon Hill Friends House (Boston) during MIDWEEK programming

October 2, 9, & 16 -- Hybrid, stand-alone sessions
7:30 pm to 8:30 pm, Eastern Time

> *"Quakers have become so extraordinarily respectable that you have all forgotten just how wild you used to be." ~ historian Marcus Rediker*

ReWilding Quakers is a three-part series of experiential, living practice to stir our hope, joy, and communal care. This practice is to reinvigorate us beyond "extraordinary respectability" into embodied memories of being courageous in our present. DIY supplies are encouraged for a range of prompts. Each session is stand-alone, while the whole series is sequential and arises from encounters among the Religious Society of Friends. The series is scheduled in tandem with World Quaker Day. Joiners are welcome to one or more sessions.

OCT 2, Everyday Valiance (https://lu.ma/midweek1002)

"Everyday Valiance" is the launch to reclaim a wild lineage as Friends in faith community and informed by real-time encounters. We will imagine a river as it becomes an ocean, inspired by Kahlil Gibran's poem *Fear*. This session is to reclaim the living truth that we are a wild multitude. In doing so, we must reframe "origin stories" as false when they separate and make us singular. Supplies for this session are minimally paper and writing tools; recommended items: blank and lined paper, newsprint, pencil with eraser, and bold dark pen or marker.

OCT. 9, Resilient Joy (https://lu.ma/midweek1009)

"Resilient Joy" unearths hope from Quaker dissident lineage, so that we may carry a transformative song into the world. And in that spirit, cicada broods will teach us about skyward, joyful noisemaking.

* Basic items: "thirsty" paper towel or napkins; ink pens (able to smear; not gel); and matte paper-box carton (white best; not glossy).
* Alternate materials: cloth rag; ink, watercolor, or gouache with varied small brushes; & thirsty paper (handmade, mixed media, or watercolor).

OCT 16, Prism Vision (https://lu.ma/midweek1016)

"Prism Vision" is a session about carrying the entirety of our selves as a pathway for caring, courageous Quaker community. Mey will be on-site and joined by Jen Newman, exploring multi-visions for today from a poetic source about First Friends.

BYO materials are encouraged for intuitive prompts. Consider a DIY "bundle"; no fumes or scents. Some ideas: fiber/ fabric for slow-stitch; mixed media to collage or mini-sculpt; pen with journal for writing.

BIO: Mey (she/ her/ hers) resides on Wabanaki lands in Lewiston, Maine and is active with Three Rivers Monthly Meeting. Her past creative projects spanned Michigan, Peru, and the British Isles. She also traveled in ministry among world Friends. These days, Mey is steeped in repair work as a daily choice and a collaborative journey that carries divine promise. She draws-up experiences as a survivor of violence nearing seventeen years of sobriety and identity recovery as a person of mixed lineage. In this series, Mey offers a "frame" of generative life-giving practices informed by seasoned community work and diverse contexts including Quakers of the US Northeast.

TAMASHA! A Multicultural Concert + Market for Wounded Healers International

Tamasha is our largest fundraiser this year and promises to be a vibrant celebration of culture, community, and creativity, featuring:

Live Performances: Enjoy an array of musical talents and performances that showcase the rich diversity of our community:

- **JULIA GAGNON**: Maine's American Idol
- **BATIMBO UNITED**: Burundian Indigenous Dance Troupe
- **DJ INNOX**: Spinning Afro Beats

Multicultural Market: Explore and purchase unique crafts, delicious foods, and beautiful art from local and international vendors.

Community Connection: Learn about and appreciate the different cultures represented in our community, make new friends, and celebrate with old ones.

This event is not just a celebration but also a vital fundraiser for Wounded Healers International. Your attendance and support through ticket purchases will make a significant impact, supporting our mission to create healing spaces and amplify the voices of sexual assault survivors in Maine and Kenya.

Event Details

Date: Sunday, September 29, 2024

Time: 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

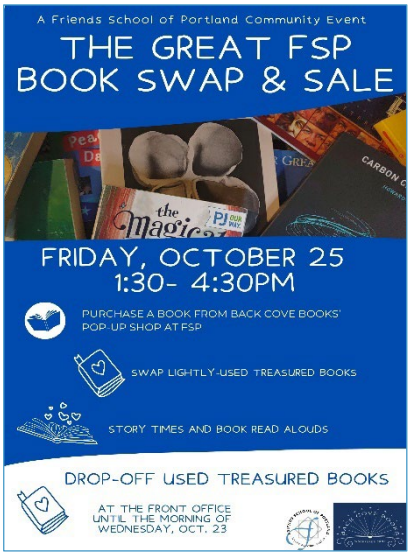
Location: Franco Center, 46 Cedar Street, Lewiston, ME 04240

Suggested Donation: $75 per ticketholder. Whatever amount you donate will further WHI's mission in Maine and Kenya, and we are grateful for your support. You must purchase a ticket to be admitted to any part of the event.

Nuna Gleason (she/her/hers)
Founder/Executive Director, Wounded Healers International
Maine Afro Yoga Project
Tel: +1 (207)536 0684

News from Portland Friends School

1. **Friends School Admission Open House**
   Curious about Friends School of Portland? A great way to learn more about sending your child to FSP is to attend an Open House. Learn more on our website or by reaching out to Director of Enrollment Megan Campbell (megan@friendsschoolportland.org)



2. **Annual Friends School Book Swap and Sale:** Friday, October 25. You can drop off books in advance to swap. Come on the day of to swap books for free or take home a title or two from Back Cove Books' pop up shop. It is a free and family-friendly event.
3. **Shared Meeting for Worship:** Join us at Friends School of Portland for a shared Meeting for Worship on Sunday, October 27 at 10am. Twice a year, the Portland Friends Resource Committee helps organize this special shared meeting. Potluck and pumpkin carving to follow.

Thunderquakes and Junior High

Earlier this month, we kicked off the school year for our Thunderquakes (kids aged K-Grade 4) and Junior High (Grade 5-8), making peace flags for International Day of Peace. This was also my first session as the Thunderquakes leader. Initially, I wasn't sure about leading a youth group for the meeting. But my own child inspired me when he shared that he would love going to Friends Meeting if he knew that other kids would be there and that he would know some of them. Maybe that's the case in your home too?

Talking with families about a routine that would ensure a critical mass of kids each week led me to plan to offer a program on one Sunday a month (either the 2nd or 4th). The next Sunday for a Thunderquakes program will be Sunday, October 27. Middle school aged students are invited to join too!

If you are interested please reach out: brooke.burkett@gmail.com or 410-708-7950. Looking forward to this school year,

Brooke

Friends World News

Dear Friends,

Although only a month has passed, the World Plenary Meeting (WPM) may already seem like a lifetime ago. It was a momentous gathering celebrated with song and stillness, filled with challenge and compassion, felt with heart and soul. After a much-needed break, the World Office is now open again and preparing for World Quaker Day on **6 October**.

This World Quaker Day, FWCC invites Friends to spread the message shared at the WPM. Along with the epistle, Friends may also wish to read out the following prayer, which concludes the WPM 'weaving' document, at your local meeting or church. It encapsulates our mission to "be doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22):

> *God of love and grace, we are a beautiful and broken people, living in a beautiful and broken world.*
>
> *We confess that we have fallen short in caring for each other and for creation. As a faith community we ask you to forgive us for neglecting creation, and for inflicting grave injustices upon one another.*
>
> *Give us the courage and wisdom to move forward boldly. Grant us the strength to seek each other's forgiveness, and the love and courage to hold both pain and possibility in our hearts.*
>
> *We ask you to send us on a new journey with our fellow humans and all your creatures in the spirit of Ubuntu.*
>
> *Amen.*

With this prayer and the outcomes of the WPM in mind, the FWCC Sections and the World Office have set the strategic direction for our future. This involves six priorities which you can read in more detail on our website.

One of these priorities recognises the importance of engaging and connecting Young Adult Friends (YAFs) around the world. 46 YAFs gathered for four days of shared experience before the World Plenary began, resulting in their own YAF epistle and the formation of a World Executive Committee of Young Adult Friends.

Finally, as many Friends have asked for them, WPM business minutes are also now available on our website.

Having helped to prepare the ground for the World Plenary, I look forward to bringing FWCC's new vision to life with you all, so that we might, in George Fox's words, "dwell in what (we) speak and profess".

In Friendship,

Ruby Cumming
Communications Manager,
FWCC World Office

World Plenary Meeting participants attending in person and online

Contradance October 6th!

Portland Friends are invited to join with families from Friends School of Portland for an afternoon of dancing and other family friendly activities. The dance and activities will round out our celebration of **World Quaker Day 2024** that will begin with worship, reading of the Epistle of the World Plenary Meeting, and Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business.

Bring your dancing shoes and instruments: an all comer's band that anyone can join in to play with and Maggie Robinson calling for a contradance. **Bring some food**: we'll have a snack potluck, bring your favorite to share. And **family lawn games** will be set up to play!

The event will take place at Friends School of Portland outdoors in sunny weather and indoors in light of rainy weather. There is no ticket or cost to attend. Bring your favorite snack to share and add to our "snack potluck." Make sure you've got --- World Quaker Day --- **Sunday, October 6 from 2-4 pm** on your calendar.

Update on Ramallah Friends School

As the world's attention remains focused on the unfolding crises in Gaza and southern Lebanon, the resilience and struggles of those living in the West Bank—particularly in Ramallah—remain alarmingly under-reported. Among those profoundly affected by these ongoing tensions are the families, staff, and students of Ramallah Friends School, who daily navigate the uncertainties and fears of this war.

The RFS community faces a series of challenges as part of their daily lives. Ongoing incursions by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Ramallah, the presenting threat of settler violence, and the economic pressures stemming from rising inflation collectively create an atmosphere of stress and instability. Near the gates of our school, a military convoy hit a car belonging to one of our teachers, but fortunately he and his children survived. Additionally, the marketplace neighboring the school was burned. Many families in Palestine, including members of the RFS community, are choosing to relocate—which is causing

Photo by Jaafar Ashtiyeh / AFP / Getty
from FUM E-news: September 25, 2024

additional financial stress to the school which will result in a budgetary shortfall this year.

In the face of such adversity, RFS has taken active steps to ensure that its community can cope. Recently, the school organized training in Alternatives to Violence, a program dedicated to fostering non-violent conflict resolution and equipping participants with tools to manage interpersonal relationships constructively. Moreover, RFS has renewed its commitment to weekly chapel services, recognizing the importance of spaces for reflection and silence.

RFS is doing great work providing a sense of normalcy and care for our students and their families. While the headlines may focus on the immediate crises in the region, it is vital to recognize the ongoing struggles and resilience of the community we serve.

Please continue to hold the RFS community in prayer.

Please consider supporting the Financial Aid programs of RFS.

In Peace,
Kelly Kellum

Report from Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition

MIRC Meeting with Portland Friends
September 11, 2024

PFM representatives to MIRC: Dorothy Grannell, Ann Dodd Collins, Fritz Weiss, Muriel Allen

On September 11, 2024, Hunter Cropsley, Senior Program Manager and Mufalo Chitam, Executive Director, of Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC) filled eight Portland Friends in on some of MIRC's past history and present challenges:

I. MIRC started as a program with ILAPP doing immigration advocacy. By around 2015, it had grown to about 50 organizations in Maine. (NOTE: Currently there are 103 coalition members). MIRC was formed to address needs beyond refugee status. Since 2005, the number of asylum seekers has grown, since US policy allows folks to cross into the US, then ask for asylum. There was nothing in place to support asylum seekers in Maine. Under Gov. LePage, they couldn't get social services; under Gov. Mills, they can.

   The organization "grew out of pain" quickly. The coalition wasn't very coordinated. A big challenge was when 500 people were sent to Portland at once – then COVID hit. The City of Portland paid 7 hotels to shelter folks during COVID. With COVID funding, funds flowing to the coalition grew from around $500,000 in 2019 to around $2 million in 2022. Those funds have now dropped significantly. MIRC is now advocating to get funding for 2 offices, one under health auspices from HHS.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES CURRENTLY:

- Structure: MIRC has to build the "right" structure to attract external financial support
- Communicating and working well across diverse communities and organizations who differ in culture, ethnicity, religion, and language.

II. Attendees from Portland Friends Meeting introduced themselves and shared a little about aspects of their backgrounds that might be helpful · (Individual names redacted)

   Types of experience represented

- Expertise in managing programs and volunteers
- Grants specialist, especially in the area of affordable housing

- First-generation immigrant (both as a child and later through marriage). Was the director of intelligence for a large multinational security company. Has experience in multinational team building, developing SOPs, etc.
- Volunteers with Family Promise. Helps with teens, has developed many connections in Maine. When she sees a need, she responds with action.
- Trained psychologist, experience in nonprofit management, consulting with organizations on interpersonal issues, volunteer background in development and finance.
- Former ACLU lawyer in Florida, experience in immigration advocacy, civil rights law, has volunteer experience in nonprofit governance, finance, some experience with lobbying aspects of 501(c)(3) and (c)(4) nonprofits. Retired teacher of French and former lawyer.

III. Discussion of Organizational Needs and Priorities: There was some discussion about what MIRC offers.. Its main goals are: "Making Maine a welcoming place for immigrants to flourish" and "being the voice of immigrant populations in the state.

- 3 tiers of coalition members:
    a. Grassroots and family-based networks
    b. Small nonprofits, often immigrant service providers
    c. Large nonprofits, often churches, religious groups and non-service providers.
- What MIRC offers coalition members: *(NOTE: Some of these are what MIRC currently does, and some may be things MIRC would like to develop the capacity to offer)*
    a. Advocacy
    b. Providing organizational, HR and financial and administrative support services and channels funding to coalition members (rather like the United Way used to be, but with more attention to cultural differences)
    c. Offering expertise in multicultural work
    d. Building templates that coalition members could use for grant-seeking, program planning
- Need to create strategic plans and build organizational structure to implement them
    a. Strategic Plan
    b. Operational Plan
    c. Program Plans that could be used to form templates ("repeatable structures") that coalition members could use in providing services {NOTE: MIRC's bylaws state they don't provide direct services, but it currently they might be doing this in providing culturally appropriate food that's needed]
- Capacity building: Planning to address "huge needs," developing programming to meet the needs of coalition members, building board of directors
- Current structure: monthly meetings of coalition members. Board is comprised from coalition members; currently there are 13, and there could be as many as 21. The bylaws allow for some board members to be non-coalition members

  There are 3 committees, only 1 of which is functional:

    a. Advocacy/Policy functioning)

b. Information Sharing

c. Fundraising

Current needs for participation in working committees

a. Policy Committee that meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month

b. Asylum Seekers Working Group monthly meeting on the 1st Friday at 9:30 am.

You may have an interest in joining the Board as a working member please let one of our advisory board members know and read the attached board requirements.

Portland Friends would like to encourage other non-service providing MIRC Members to consider ways their constituents can assist MIRC as it works through its growing pains: Advocate, Donate, Participate in the Board of Directors, Committees and providing potential pro bono work in the areas of Strategic Planning, Policy development, and Grant Writing.

A Birthday Wish

Hi Portland Friends,

I turned 50 years old recently, and borrowing a page from Ann's book, I have a request for a birthday gift from anyone who's interested:

Please join me on Election Day by volunteering to gather signatures for a Citizens Initiative for Red Flag Gun Safety Law, led by the Maine Gun Safety Coalition. More details below.

I'm helping as a volunteer organizer for this effort. Please let me know if you can do it, and once you've signed up. Registration link is below and it only takes a minute to fill out the form. There are morning shifts, afternoon shifts, and all day shifts.

Yours in Spirit,

Rob

Friends,

Thanks to your incredible support and deep engagement in our movement, we have made significant progress toward protecting Maine communities from gun violence. But as we all know, having lived through the tragic events in Lewiston and its aftermath, Maine's current laws are insufficient.

So today, the Maine Gun Safety Coalition is launching the *Safe Schools, Safe Communities* campaign to pass an Extreme Risk Protection Order in Maine – and we need your help to get this important initiative on the ballot!

VOLUNTEER TO GATHER SIGNATURES ON ELECTION DAY

SIGN UP HERE

Other News and Announcements

- **Anna Fritz**, a Quaker cellist and performance artist from Portland Oregon who gave the plenary at New England Annual Sessions in 2023 is bringing a performance of *An Iliad** to the Friends School of Portland on October 19 at 7 pm

  Join The Fig Tree Committee for a public showing of *An Iliad* at the Friends School of Portland! No RSVPs are required for this event. Tickets will be available at the door and are all pay-what-you-will. Hope to see you there!

  * *An Iliad* is a modern retelling of the ancient epic by Homer, written by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare and performed by Paul Susi and Anna Fritz, with an original musical score composed by Anna Fritz.

  The Fig Tree Committee is touring with this show to incarcerated audiences. This is a rare opportunity for an audience from the outside.

- **The Bible Half Hours** that Genna Ulrich offered at New England Yearly Meeting are available here: Bible Half Hour first day. This link will take you to the first day's offering; from there you can connect to Genna's following offerings.

- **Dear Friends,**

  On September 25, more than 140 participants attended a panel discussion, "Building a Just and Lasting Peace: Perspectives & Experiences from Palestinian Quakers", sponsored by Quakers for Peace. Joyce Ajlouny, executive director of AFSC, and Walid Mosarsaa, a Ramallah Friends School and Guilford College graduate, were the panelists and they were speaking from their own lived experience. It was both inspiring and heart breaking. I urge you to watch the recording at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeJoXj8yQfE .

  Please forward this message to your non-Quaker friends. It deserves a wider audience.

  Ann Dodd-Collins.

- **Emma Condori report to Quaker Earthcare Witness:** Friends will remember Emma's visit to Portland in the summer of 2023 when she told us of the needs of the people of the Alto Plano area of Bolivia due to climate change. Emma and two Young Adult Friends recently reported on some of the work of Friends International Bilingual Center in LaPaz, Bolivia. On an international Zoom webinar with Earthcare Witness, Emma described volunteer activities of the center since 2017. From 2017 to 2020, volunteers built and distributed bio-sand filters to families in the high plains of Bolivia due to the fact that there was so little water coming from the glaciers. As the snows and rains disappeared the water situation grew worse. Drought killed off the potato crop in the same region.

  Last year, PFM sent a gift of $30,000 from the shared witness fund which supported the efforts to get seed potatoes, eating potatoes and basic food supplies to families. In addition our gift helped the organization stabilize by supplying a printer, bookcases and an excellent high speed internet connection.

  The volunteers exceeded their goal of reaching 159 families last year. They were able to supply food and seed potatoes to 300 families. In the process of developing their volunteer work, they developed a way to survey where the need is greatest. The rain came in 2023 and the snow as well and crops were successful. FIBC's goal this year is to work with 150 new families in need of seed potatoes. They are seeking $7,500

for the October planting. Gifts may be given online. When we receive the link to the recording of the webinar we will post it online along with US address where gifts may be sent.

The volunteers have learned that loving their neighbors by meeting the families in need, working with them and celebrating the harvest has enriched their spiritual lives and they are grateful for the experiences. One of the interesting things that was shared is that Bolivia created an export crop of quinoa, the price of the seed has risen so high that the indigenous people who depended on it along with potatoes can no longer afford to buy it - surely an unintended consequence. The Bolivia government is beginning to work on digging wells and expanding the quinoa crop but it will be a while before that helps the people of Alto Plano.

- **Ubuntu – I am because of your Love:** Falmouth Quarter will meet on October 26th from 9:30 to 3:00 at Durham Friends Meeting

  We invite you to come and share about the life and spirit in your meetings. Our hope is that our entire time together is a time of worship, with laughter, business, connections and fellowship. All are welcome.

- **Family Promise Fundraising**

  Dear Friends,

  The days are getting shorter, the children are back in school, gardens are yielding their last fruits, and it is time for Portland Friends Meeting to honor our partnership and fundraise once again for Greater Portland Family Promise.

  This year the need is greater. Because some of our families are moving from greater Portland to more affordable communities, general assistance offices are no longer paying their security deposits, which can average $2,000 to $2,500 per family. GPFP is asking us to raise our level of support this year to help meet this need. This has caused us to raise PFM's goal this year to $7,500.

  How can you contribute? (Any amount will help.) We want to keep track of how much our meeting is contributing, so please give in one of these ways:

  - Bring cash or a check made out to "Greater Portland Family Promise" to meeting for worship and give it to Wayne Cobb or Mary DeSilva
  - Venmo Wayne: @wcobb2
  - Pop a check in the mail to Wayne at 147 Allen Ave, unit #34, Portland, ME 04103

  You can also donate directly to GPFP online via PayPal by clicking this link. But if you do, please send an email note to Wayne letting him know how much you've donated, so we can track our progress.

  Will this solve homelessness in Greater Portland? No. Will it help? Yes. Let's dig in and see what we can do together.

  Love, Ann

  Ann Dodd-Collins
  she, her, hers
  Phone: 207-232-9576

Greetings from the Pastoral Care Committee

We would like you to know more about PFM's Pastoral Care Committee. We are available to provide assistance with a variety of needs, such as

- Rides to Meeting
- Planning and providing food
- Visits at home, hospital, and assisted living
- Prayers for holding you or a loved one in the Light
- Errands when it is difficult to do them on your own

Contact our Clerk, Stefanie Fairchild, at stefaniefairchild@yahoo.com or 207-272-6500, for assistance, or any other member of the Committee: Kristina MacCormick, Joyce Blossom, Paula Rossvall, or Mags Fehr.

Address Service Requested

Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Ave
Portland, ME 04103

Next newsletter deadline:
Wednesday, October 9th, 11:58 pm

submissions: **dhingston@comcast.net**
Please note "PFM Newsletter" in the subject line.