

2023 School Committee Report to IYMC

This was a year of the continuing behind-the-scenes steps towards improvement, both to build momentum and lay the groundwork for stability. There is much to be noted and celebrated, and to quote from our Head of School's September report to the School Committee, "...the steady pace of small, meaningful changes is having a noticeable impact that will last for years to come."

Admissions and Outreach efforts have been focused on restructuring and bettering internal systems, updating the marketing plan and materials, and building a web of support—especially locally and with other Quaker schools. There were open houses and visitations throughout the year, and upcoming months will see more travels to make connections around the country. Growing enrollment continues to be a primary objective. As the Farm provides both food and a living classroom for the school, we want to note and celebrate that our Farm Manager Mark Quee and the Scattergood Farm have been a regional ambassador for the school for many years. Last September the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture awarded Mark the Spencer Award for his contributions to sustainable agriculture practices. Another exciting outreach event this year was a campus visit by 20 Education majors from William Penn University in Oskaloosa, Iowa. These students sought out Scattergood to deepen their understanding of Quakerism and Quaker-based education, and spent a day on campus observing and participating. This kind of sharing with educational institutions and Quaker organizations nurtures and widens our community, and we welcome this direction.

Over the last two years the School Committee has conducted a review and update of our Handbook, and we will now consider other policies to add to this living document. Though not much has happened this year on the topic, we also continue to contemplate ways for the business structure of the school to mature and still maintain the deep ties with the Yearly Meeting. We hope for more conversations about this in the future.

Thanks to much work by many, the intensive Self-Study Year of the accreditation cycle has concluded and the school will receive visits from ISACS (Independent School Association of Central States) and FCE (Friends Council on Education) this fall. We look forward to their counsel and feedback. Work continues on the Healing project, especially significant is the ongoing internal work of training staff and students around boundaries, behavior awareness and response. This is part of building and strengthening a healthy culture, and should be celebrated.

The planning for the dorm sprinkler project and other facilities upgrades has reached a new stage as our Feasibility Study has recently concluded. We are grateful for the work of Ethan Huelskamp and the Steering Committee overseeing this Comprehensive Campaign, and for its newest member Nick Knight who has joined the team to lend his construction expertise and advice.

Though we still have a need for higher enrollment and more positive cash flow, June 30th marked the third year in a row the school closed the books with no deficit, and *without* including gifts towards the capital projects. There has been an increase to staff salaries, and additional hires to help with their workload. By joining a Professional Employer Organization, the school has access to better health insurance plans as well as a third-party annual review of all handbooks to help us stay in compliance with any changes in the laws. We are grateful to John Zimmerman and Kim Jones for their creative efforts, ongoing improvements to management practices, and for working with consultant Chris Searle who helps Quaker schools with their internal business systems. The

school finished a full financial audit, and will continue to develop the multi-year projection tools to help with planning. This year's financial situation was also aided by an increase in funds from the Measey Foundation, a Quaker organization helping Quaker schools provide financial assistance to students. All this we can note and celebrate.

A Scattergood Reunion 'with attention to the Arts' will be held the first weekend of August. Along with being fun and meaningful for participants, this is another outreach opportunity to strengthen connection with our wider base, and to encourage those from the past to learn about what is happening in the present at the school. We especially hope to encourage alumni to consider Friends or Artist in Residence opportunities on campus.

Scattergood has weathered many storms over the years: gales of financial stress due to low enrollment; the pummeling winds of a derecho; navigation of a project to help heal wounds of our past; and survival as the world was turned upside-down from a global pandemic. This year, as we are conducting the quieter work of self-assessment, improvements and furtherance, it is Iowa's political squall and challenging legislature that has been deeply felt. We have had to make challenging choices regarding the Education Savings Account, and we want to express clearly that the School and the School Committee are committed to ensuring that our students can safely be themselves while on campus. We hope the Yearly Meeting will stand by the School in maintaining freedom for students to live openly as who they are, in particular our trans students, as they have been targeted by our state in recent months.

Over the years we have occasionally posed the question to Scattergood's seniors "What have you gained from being here, what do you take away with you?" The main reply has been 1) a good work ethic, and 2) a true sense of belonging to a community. This is certainly to be celebrated, especially in a world that encourages division and isolation. Our gratitude overfloweth for those who hold this complex experiment of a school with such grace and care, allowing young people opportunities to thrive and grow from these foundational experiences.

On behalf of the School Committee,
Ruth Hampton, clerk