

## 2025 School Committee Report to IYMC

*“Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops at all.”*

— Emily Dickinson

In these arduous times, the School Committee is heartened by the good things happening at Scattergood. Last fall the school hosted Bread and Puppet Theater from Maine, the performers shared their colorful political performance art and brought in many attendees who were on campus for the first time. In March, we welcomed over 30 middle school students from the Friends School of Minnesota, where they joined crew, and community singing with songleader and artist Lyndsey Scott. In April, the school hosted a Quaker Youth Retreat with the workshop titled: *Staying Whole: Resistance through Resilience, Resilience through Resistance*. The facilitators invited students to explore questions around being whole, healthy and connected in dark and scary times. These kinds of community-building activities strengthen ourselves and our networks, and give us much needed hope.

The Comprehensive campaign and its capital projects are proceeding successfully: a new well was installed last fall, and the sprinkler system is nearly finished. One of the great, but less tangible, successes of the campaign has been the increased contact with our Scattergood community, reconnecting with many constituents and sometimes finding people who have had no contact with the school since leaving. The ongoing work will be to keep people “at the table” even when the campaign has ended and without the extra funds dedicated to the campaign outreach.

The troubles within our country and state are too long to list, and the effects are felt everywhere. Though our school can be a sanctuary for young people, Iowa’s unwelcoming politics have made it more challenging to attract students from other states. We must consider how the uncertainty and turbulence of these times might affect families, our enrollment, and other aspects of running the school. Amidst all of this, Scattergood continues to work on outreach, building relationships with organizations, and connecting with families and students who seek a community like Scattergood.

The business office has devoted significant time to the full financial audit, and dealing with the complicated issues from the system updates of Quickbooks online. Cash flow has been challenging at times, especially as we more fully understand the restrictions with how the Measey Foundation money can be spent, and how that impacts the budget. The Consultation and Finance subcommittee has met often throughout the year to better understand the cash flow and to update reporting. As always, we are deeply grateful for the many forms of support, including financial, of the Yearly Meeting and the Scattergood Foundation, to help us keep this extraordinary boat afloat.

The School Committee is settling into its new subcommittee structure and the ongoing work of governance training. We hope to begin the process of creating a Campus Master Plan soon, which will

give guidance with decisions involving the grounds and buildings. The SAGE (Structure and Governance Exploratory) ad hoc focused on research this year, consulting with members of other Quaker meetings and schools around their experience with legal structure changes. The ad hoc looked at how these Quaker schools were originally established and their current legal structure, and gathered information to help us better understand some possibilities. It was interesting to learn the different origin stories, that some Quaker schools were privately owned and never incorporated as part of a meeting, and other schools eventually incorporated separately from their meetings but have found ways to stay connected to their meetings. Sometimes change can happen whether we choose it or not, so regardless of what Scattergood's legal status will be, nurturing this relationship between the school and IYMC (and Quakerism in general) is essential, and will become a renewed focus of our Spiritual and Community Life subcommittee.

Friends of Scattergood, the newly formed version of an alumni association, is making gradual headway with its organization. For a second year they raised money to send gifts to the recently graduated seniors, welcoming them into the wider Scattergood community and encouraging them to stay connected as they venture out into the world. The school has started connecting recent grads with alumni in their area, and Friends of Scattergood could become a part of this. Alum and School Committee member Aaron Woolfson has been working on a private community engagement platform for alumni, a virtual space where old school photos and media can be scanned and shared with the Friends of Scattergood community. Aaron generously donated scanners and Macs and provided a crew to set it up.

***“Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up”*** is a quote attributed to Dave Orr, an environmental studies professor at Oberlin College. In a recent interview, Cory Booker said *“Hope is rugged, hope is wounded, and hope has had to be resurrected time and time again...”* It implies that hope is not passive— but rather, hope needs action, attention, nurturing, endurance, and a willingness to dig in. The School Committee is deeply grateful for the hands-on and day-to-day dedication to the visionary work that is happening at Scattergood, on all levels, as this community is the live-action (and much needed) Practice of Hope.

For the School Committee,  
Ruth Hampton, clerk