Climate Change is the Issue of Our Times: I=PATE

By Shelley Tanenbaum, Clerk

Most of us reading this know that climate change is the issue of our times. Knowing that so many of us are working on this together helps lighten this heavy burden. Climate change and what we can do about it is the theme for QEW’s fall meeting, coming up in Chicago on October 24-27. We hope all concerned Friends will attend!

Environmental scientists describe an environmental impact with the equation I=PAT, where I=Impact, P=Population, A=Affluence, and T=Technology. Applying this formula to climate change, we learn that our impact is caused by the combined effects of population, affluence (how much we can afford to buy), and technology (how energy efficient our purchases are). The equation helps us break down the impact to figure out where we can make changes. Friends and others, writing in the book Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy, by Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver (see www.quakerinstitute.org), have added an E for Ethics to the standard equation, making it I=PATE. In addition to population, affluence, and technology, we have a choice about whether or not we consume environmentally damaging products or not.

We will be exploring parts of this equation during our October meetings. Friends are invited to attend all or part of our public and business sessions at the Cenacle Conference & Retreat Center in Chicago. Registration is up on our website (www.quakerearthcare.org) and you’ll also find the agenda for the meeting (subject to change).

One of our three public programs will focus on the growing global population and its effects on climate change (see Roy Treadway’s description here).

We also will be exploring community responses to climate change with descriptions of on-the-ground projects partially sponsored by QEW’s Mini-Grant program. Kenyatta James will talk about Green Street Monthly Meeting’s project on community development through local gardens, and David Schaad will describe community sustainability projects in Vietnam. You can learn more about David’s project by reading the Mini-Grant Profile here.

Our third public session will explore Canadian and U.S. national policy on climate change. Jim Cason
from Friends Committee on National Legislation and Jim Davis from Kairos Canada will lead a discussion on what is and what is not happening at their respective national levels. They will provide suggestions for grassroots activism.

We are looking forward to these important and inspiring meetings in October and know they will provide much information and opportunity for sharing and connection. The time is now, and more than ever we need caring, concerned community to make a difference in all the areas where Earth needs our care.

There is a scholarship fund for Steering Committee members who need assistance to attend the October meetings, and we also have a young adult scholarship fund for Friends between the ages of 18 and 35. Please contact Anne Mitchell (mailto:%20anne@quakerearthcare.org) for more information about scholarships.

If you are concerned for the well-being of our planet and are feeling led to do more with your concern, the time is right to get directly involved in spirit-led action for Earth. Please join us in October! I look forward to seeing you there.

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