

Quaker Earthcare Witness

Annual Report (November 2014 – October 2015)

QEW is the largest network of Friends working on earthcare today. We work to inspire spirit-led action toward ecological sustainability and environmental justice. We provide inspiration and resources to Friends throughout North America by freely distributing information in our newsletter, *Befriending Creation*, and on our website, www.quakerearthcare.org, as well as through popular social media channels Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

We are dedicated to a spiritual transformation within the Society of Friends with regard to our connection with the natural world.

In the spring of 2015, we challenged Friends to take action on climate change by inviting them to read and consider “Recommendations for All Friends” in our newsletter and online. Response to this challenge is required at the local, regional, and national/international levels if we are to prevent the most catastrophic effects of climate change. We also issued a call to Meetings to take action on climate change and consider discerning and publishing minutes that reflect their deep responses to these issues. We prepared and provided information online to help Meetings explore the challenges and consider their leadings:

- The Challenge at Home invites Friends to switch to renewable energy for electricity in their Meetinghouse (see <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/friends-moving-100-renewable-energy>) and/or redo their Meetinghouse grounds to support native landscaping (see <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/friendly-landscapes-birds-soil-organisms-pollinators-and-people>).
- The Regional and State Challenge suggests that Friends encourage state or provincial governments to enact strong climate action plans.
- The National/International Challenge asks that Friends divest from fossil fuels and encourage other organizations (schools, financial institutions, local and state government) also to do so (see <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/fossil-free-friends>).

This was a pivotal year for climate change action. Momentum had been building since fall 2014, when QEW and FCNL were the key Quaker organizers for the 400,000-strong Peoples’ Climate March in New York City. This fall, QEW was part of an interfaith presence in Washington when the Pope addressed Congress regarding climate change and equity. As an accredited Non-Governmental Organization with the United Nations, QEW sponsored events and enabled European Friends to attend international meetings, all in preparation for the Paris negotiations this December. We worked closely with QUNO-Geneva and we were part a Quaker presence at the international climate conference in Paris (note: the conference happened following our fiscal year).

In addition, we launched a video project this summer to give voice to the grassroots, providing a forum for Friends/friends to describe their concerns regarding climate change and articulating their solutions. The video project, called “What Canst Thou Say?” distributes these videos widely via the web and social media. All our voices must be heard so that we can make this a turning point in responding to climate change (see <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjsfk5k6iBqzDQx6tnShvEBeMEhBRZ7p0>).

QEW welcomed the Pope’s message, *Laudato Si’*, on living in right relationship with our environment and sharing natural resources equitably. We published an article in the June issue of *Befriending Creation* that describes the Encyclical and we prepared a formal response (see <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/qew-gives-thanks-encyclical-laudato-si>). In September when Pope Francis visited the United States, QEW organized a presence in Washington, D.C. as part of the faith contingent.

Communications

This year we published six issues of our bi-monthly journal, *Befriending Creation*. Articles in *Befriending Creation* spanned a great array of topics related to lived faith, sustainable actions, opportunities for engagement, and resources Friends felt led to share. Every issue generates comments (mostly favorable!) and kept the conversations going. We regularly post interesting and challenging articles on our Facebook page and Twitter, and have been seeing great growth in our number of contacts online. Archived copies of both *Befriending Creation* and *QEW Resources for Earthcare Action* can be accessed on our website at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/publications> and <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/resources-earthcare-action>, respectively.

This year we updated all of the QEW trifold related to population. We also produced a trifold to publicize the *What Canst Thou Say?* Project. These and other trifolds are available on our website at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/pamphlets> so that they can be printed and used as needed in Meetings. This year QEW saw an upswing in the number of people requesting materials for use in their meetings.

Our website continues to grow in content and utility as a way to reach people. We added new sections to our website to give Friends resources on Friendly Landscapes (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/friendly-landscapes-birds-soil-organisms-pollinators-and-people>) and Fracking 101 (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/fracking-101>). We expanded the section of our website named “Fossil Free Friends” with all sorts of divestment related materials to share with Meetings (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/fossil-free-friends>). We have continued to update and distribute the Quaker Statement on Climate Change, especially as a lead-up to the Paris conference (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/shared-quaker-statement-facing-challenge-climate-change>).

In 2016, we plan to add resources on carbon fees, climate justice, and indigenous rights. Other possible topics we would like to develop include food and water equity and transition towns, but we are still seeking volunteers to produce content.

Outreach

Our Steering Committee includes 30 representatives from 20 Yearly Meetings plus 19 at-large members. Most representatives and at-large steering committee members visit their own monthly and yearly meetings on behalf of QEW, distribute our resources, and/or provide workshops and interest groups. We held two Steering Committee meetings, one with the help and support of Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting and one at Ben Lomond Quaker Center in California.

This year events also included:

- a. FGC - programmed and hosted a week of presentations, provided informational displays and distributed literature. QEW sponsored a weeklong workshop called "The Sustainability Spectrum," facilitated by our Clerk, Roy Taylor.
- b. Presence at Young Adult Friends Continuing Rev_l_ tion conference at Pendle Hill
- c. Had an information table at FUM's annual meeting and distributed trifolds and back issues of *BeFriending Creation*.
- d. Our General Secretary offered a well-attended workshop at Northern Yearly Meeting
- e. Organize a presence in Washington, D. C. in response to the Pope's visit to the United States in support of his message, *Laudato Si'*.

Our General Secretary and our alternate clerk each had articles published in Friends Journal this year. "Braided Journey" by Shelley Tanenbaum was published in the January 2015 issue, describing how she personally came to connect peace, justice and earthcare in her leadings; "Peace, Climate and Reproductive Health" by Dick Grossman and "One Friend's Experience of Clearness Regarding Childbearing" by Stan Becker were published in the September issue.

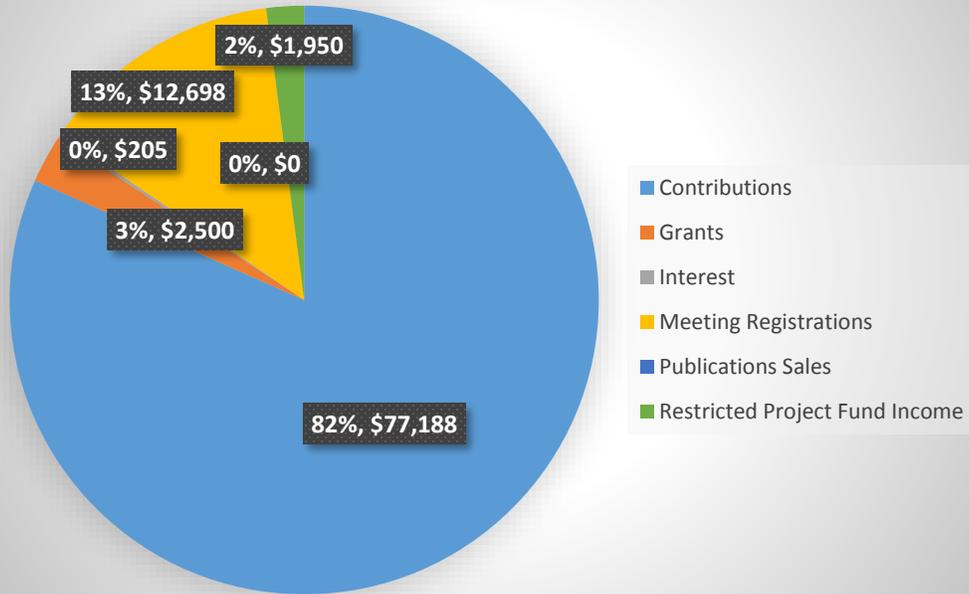
Outreach to Young Adult Friends

This year one of our goals was to bring more young adult Friends into our network. We co-sponsored the Pendle Hill conference, Continuing Rev_l_ tion for a fourth year with a grant of \$2,000 and our alternate clerk attended. Five young adult Friends attended our October Steering committee sessions and we provided scholarships as needed. We encouraged all newcomers, including these young Friends, to sample our committees and working groups during our time together, and we expect that some of them will continue to be active with these committees/working groups between Steering Committee meetings.

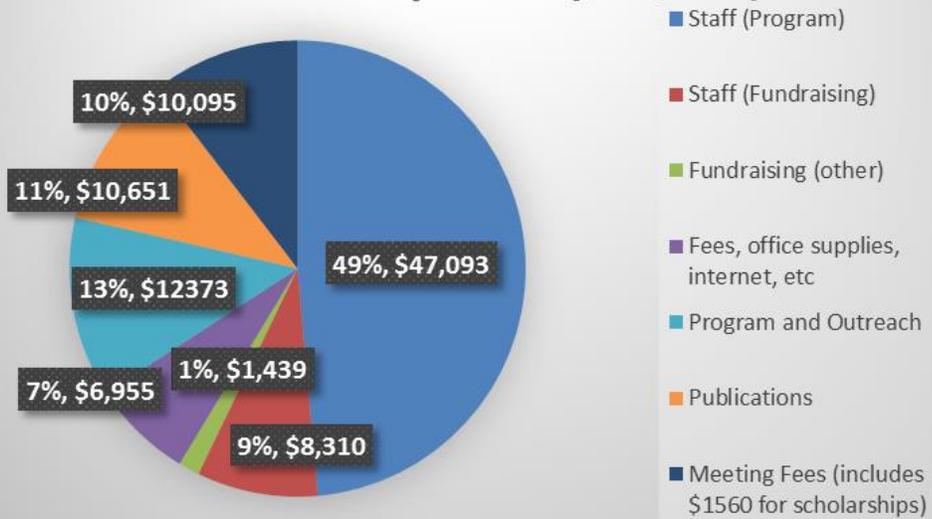
Finances

We have consistently raised on average \$75-85,000 each year for the past several years (excluding the cost of our steering committee meetings, as we bring in enough registration fees to pay for these events). Last year's (November 2014-October 2015) income was no different. We had hoped to expand our network and publications, but were limited by our income. Most of our expenditures go directly to publication costs (printing, postage, editing), outreach (visits to monthly and yearly meetings, and events), and maintaining our network (steering committee meetings, conference calls, database maintenance). We estimate that our staff (two part-time employees and one bookkeeper consultant) spend about 10% of our budget on fundraising (15 percent of staff salaries plus the cost of the annual appeal). Nearly all of our income comes from monthly/yearly Meeting donations and individual donations. This year's income/expenses were about \$10,000 less than last year due to reduced costs for our Steering Committee meetings (we met at a local Meetinghouse for the spring meeting). Charts below show our expenses and income distribution.

2014-15 Income (\$94,541)



2014-2015 Expenses (\$96,915)



What's Next?

QEW will be working closely with FCNL and QUNO as a follow-up to the historic Paris Agreement on Climate. The QEW blog includes a number of posts from our General Secretary's attendance at COP21 in Paris (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/blog/qew-cop21-paris>) and the January/February 2016 issue of *Befriending Creation* contains review articles on the conference from several perspectives.

Some policy/program areas that we expect to engage in as a result of the conference and our other work this year include:

- Strengthen connections with indigenous communities and communities of color
- Working with other Friends' organizations and Monthly/Yearly Meetings, articulate a vision for the sustainable world we seek
- Strengthen ties we have within our network of Meetings, and expand our network by including additional Meetings
- Revise *Earthcare for Children*, a curriculum guide for First Day School
- continue our publishing and outreach efforts by distributing our materials freely in print or electronic format; and
- share resources and scholarships to help Young Adult Friends and Meetings across the globe learn more about sustainability and earthcare practices.

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