

The Green Street Messenger

monthly calendar & newsletter o



Green Street Monthly Meeting of Friends
 45 West School House Lane
 Philadelphia, PA 19144
 267-285-0553
secretary@greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org

Philadelphia, PA 19144 West Philadelphia Preparative Friends Meeting
 4718 Windsor Avenue
 Philadelphia, PA 19143

First Day Meeting for Worship	10:30 AM
First Day School	10:30–11:15 AM
First Day Meeting for Worship at West Phila. Mtg.	10:30 PM
Wednesday morning Meeting for Worship	8:30–9:00 AM with GSFS
First Sunday evening Meeting for Worship	6:30–7:00 PM at Stapeley Hall

For updates and more information: greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org

February–May 2019 **2018**

Sunday, 4th _____ 9:30 AM _____ 9:30 AM _____ Breakfast with a Friend –
~~Cheryl McFadden~~ ~~Bob~~ Breakfast - Michael Van Hoy ~~Doekhorn~~
 _____ Website Working Group Meeting
 _____ Rise of Meeting _____ Hospitality - Sandra R. & Ashlynn
 _____ Rise of Meeting _____ Coffee Hour – Sandra Rodriguez ~~Mariele Thomas~~
 _____ 12:30 PM _____ Care & Counsel Committee Meeting

Saturday _____ **Sunday, 12th** _____ 9:30 AM _____ 10:15 AM _____ Second Sunday ~~Worship &~~
~~Ministry~~ Film & Discussion (see below)

_____ Rise of Meeting _____ Hospitality - Chris & Robin
Sunday, 11th _____ 9:00 AM _____ Second Sunday Worship & Ministry (see below) _____
 _____ Rise of Meeting _____ Coffee Hour – Sue Wasserkrug & Ashlynn Sylvan ~~Russ Endo &~~
~~Victoria Kong~~

Sunday, 19th _____ Rise of Meeting _____ Lunch - Gabbreell & Kenyatta ~~– VOLUNTEER-~~
~~NEEDED~~ ~~The Ehris~~
 _____ 12:30 PM _____ Monthly Meeting for Business

Sunday, 25th _____ **26th** _____ 9:15 AM _____ Friendly Bible Study

Rise of Meeting Hospitality - Traci & Walter Coffee
Hour **VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

-Lucy Duncan

Green Street Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Minutes of meeting for business 21st 4th Month 2019 -
Held at 45 West School House Lane, Philadelphia PA 19144.

Present: JoAnn Seaver (Clerk), Chris Mohr (Recording Clerk), Jason Carr, Margie Felton, Lola Georg, Viv Hawkins, Hollister Knowlton, Traci Sullivan, Walter Hjelt Sullivan, Bill Van Stone, Marille Thomas, Ashanta Washington, Jerry Williams

2019.04.01. Meeting opened with a brief period of worship at 12:45 pm.

2019.04.02. The agenda was read and approved.

2019.04.03. Nominating Committee: Walter Hjelt Sullivan, clerk, reporting.
The following nominations were brought back for a second reading:

- Worship and Ministry Committee: Lola Georg for a 3-year term through 6/30/2022; Lori Sinitzky as clerk
- Recording Team: Anthony DiGiovanni, Walter Hjelt Sullivan, and Chris Mohr, each continuing for an additional 1-year term through 6/30/2020
- Budget Committee: David La Fontaine continuing for a 1-year term through 6/30/2020
- Care and Counsel Committee: Jim Hood continuing for a 3-year term through 6/30/2022
- Property Committee: Paul Jablonski continuing for a 3-year term through 6/30/2022

Friends approved.

The following nominations for the Greene Street Friends School Board of Trustees were brought back for a second reading:

- Tracey Smith, Valerie Anderson, and Michael Landsburg, each for a first term on the board, 3-year term through 6/30/2022;

- Sarah Clarke, Shayna Bayard, Anthony DiGiovanni, and Chris Mohr, each for a second 3-year term through 6/30/2022; and
- Koof Kalkstein and Russ Endo, both for a third 3-year term through 6/30/2022.

Friends approved. Walter noted that the board will include 10 Quakers and 9 non-Quakers; 9 women and 10 men; 9 persons of color and 10 white people; and 5 current parents and 13 people who are not currently parents.

The following nominations were presented for a first reading:

- Hospitality Committee: Mary Noland as clerk for a 3-year term through 6/30/2022
- Budget Committee: Selette James, continuing for a 3-year term through 6/30/2022
- Hospitality Committee: Gabbreell James, continuing for a 3-year term through 6/30/2022
- Property Committee: Bill Van Stone, continuing for a 3-year term through 6/30/2022
- Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) Support Committee: Jean Prestas, continuing for a 3-year term through 6/30/2022.

These nominations will be brought back for a second reading next month. Friends with any comments or concerns should let the nominating committee know in the meantime.

Mary Noland is withdrawing from the Library Committee in light of her new role, and Shani Taylor is rotating off of Ministry and Worship Committee after completing her second 3-year term.

2019.04.04. Care and Counsel Committee: Margie Felton reporting.

Jerry Williams' application for membership was brought forward for a second reading. Friends approved with enthusiasm. A welcoming committee was formed with Traci Sullivan, convener, Marille Thomas, and Chris Mohr.

Next Sunday there will be a Circles of Care lunch after meeting for worship.

Margie asked JoAnn Seaver to review the next matter. Viv Hawkins requested transfer of her membership from Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting to Green Street. The committee is ready to recommend that this transfer be approved. Ordinarily a transfer would not need to be held over. However, Viv also carries the Life Calls ministry, which is under the care of Central Philadelphia. Care and Counsel would like to open a discussion today on taking this ministry under our care at Green Street, for further discussion and potentially action in May.

Viv Hawkins described the Life Calls ministry as a ministry to foster faithfulness. It has two main parts: to increase spiritual accountability; and to provide resources for ministers, such as people to minister to, or financial support for travel in the ministry, for example. Toward the second part, the Releasing Ministry Alliance is a website Viv developed to publicize and fundraise for ministries. Viv said having Green Street take Life Calls under its care would mean having some kind of spiritual accountability group and being fiscal sponsor. The ministry receives perhaps 13 donations a year and makes fewer disbursements than that.

There was discussion. A Friend suggested comparing the process before us to the existing guidelines for taking a ministry under our care. It was noted that Life Calls was endorsed by Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting in 2015. Viv was asked if she has a vision for how Green Street could take this under our care; she said she is open to what the meeting wants. A Friend mentioned that Viv has also convened two

gatherings of women, non-binary, genderqueer, and/or trans Friends in public ministry; these have been very powerful. A Friend suggested we may wish to reflect on our experience of taking ministries under our care, and consider if we need to revise or recommit to our guidelines. Another Friend suggested the ministry is an extension of Viv's heart and is ready to receive it with open hands and heart.

The Clerk said it appears we are clear about Viv's membership, and we feel no stop to taking the ministry under our care. However, we're unclear about how taking the ministry under our care will actually be accomplished in practice. Lola Georg agreed to convene a working group that includes members of Care and Counsel as well as Worship and Ministry, the treasurer, and the Meeting secretary, to review clearness around process. Lola noted that she is a member of Viv's current spiritual accountability group at Central Philadelphia. We asked the working group to come back to the May meeting for business with a proposal. We will then consider Viv's membership transfer and taking Life Calls under our care.

04.05. Kitchen and Meetinghouse Use Working Group: Margie Felton and Jerry Williams reporting.

The reservation forms and fee schedule for use of the Meetinghouse, including the kitchen, are 90% complete. The working group has dwindled from around 8 to about 3. The group is still waiting for some input from Greene Street Friends School. Then the documents need to be circulated to the former working group members, and then come back to meeting for business next month.

The current working group recommends that it be laid down when it's work is done, and a new standing working group be formed to carry forward this work. They recommend it include one person each from the Hospitality Committee, the Property Committee, and the School.

The Clerk said the school is interested to have a larger group meet to review use of the kitchen and Meetinghouse. And we want the School to know what our vision for the kitchen is. Once the current working group gives the Clerk a sense of when their work is ready to share with the School, she will convene this larger meeting. The Clerk was mindful of the need to maintain good relations with the School, even as the relationship evolves. For example, we look forward to "Morning with a Friend" in the fall.

2019.04.06. Minutes to this point were read and approved.

2019.04.07. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Multicultural Audit: Jerry Williams reporting.

Relevant minutes from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Continuing Sessions were shared. The Multicultural Audit Steering Committee was laid down after they brought forward the name of the selected consultant, Prototype Entities.

Jerry encouraged Friends to attend Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting on April 28 at Chestnut Hill Meeting. There will be an opportunity for monthly meetings to share about their work. It was suggested Green Street could talk about its work to take up the findings of the Friends General Conference institutional assessment on systemic racism.

2019.04.08. Renewal Campaign Update: Jerry Williams reporting.

The campaign for renewal of the Meetinghouse was launched at Thanksgiving 2018. We have raised \$64,000 in 5 months, toward our goal of \$225,000 in 3 years. The committee is now Margaret Wood, Mary Noland, Joann Seaver, Jerry Williams, and Ashanta Washington. We received \$9,500 from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Building Grant Fund. We will have a fundraising "thermometer" graphic in the Meetinghouse soon, as well as figures on the website. Some Greene Street Friends School parents are interested and may be willing to ask others to contribute.

2018.04.09. EMIR Ministry Support Group: Lola Georg reporting.

The group has met monthly for the last 16 months. Using the Quaker Social Change Ministry model of AFSC, its purpose is to support the EMIR Healing Center, which was founded by our member Victoria Greene to provides support to families of murder victims. The support group does work at EMIR's suggestion. Another purpose of the group is to deepen spiritual connections among group members. Lola shared the group covenant, which they read at every meeting.

Last year the group collected 105 backpacks with school supplies for families served by EMIR. They are also collecting donations for a staff self-care fund. Ongoing or future activities include: School supplies drive for fall 2019 will kick off at Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting next Sunday; supporting the staff self-care fund; and supporting EMIR's 20th anniversary celebration in October.

Lola presented the following requests of Green Street Meeting:

1. Pray for EMIR Healing Center and for the ministry support group
2. Join the support group if so led
3. Support the School supplies drive by shopping online or donating funds
4. Donate to the staff self-care fund
5. Attend, purchase tickets, volunteer for, or otherwise support the 20th anniversary gala
6. Consider having the Meeting sponsor the gala; the support group proposes a \$5,000 donation over and above the Meeting's usual annual donation.

The group thanked our member Victoria Greene for her work as founder and executive director of EMIR. The group also thanked everyone who has contributed or participated. Friends approved forwarding the sponsorship request to the Budget Committee.

2018.04.10. Sanctuary Support Dinner: Walter Sullivan reporting.

About 30 people attended the dinner to support families in sanctuary, raising \$900. We are sending \$300 to each of the 3 families currently in sanctuary in Germantown. Speakers included ministers from First United Methodist Church of Germantown and Germantown Mennonite Church, who spoke of their experience having families live in sanctuary at their churches. The beneficiary of the next dinner—likely to be on June 23—may be Juntos, a Latinx-led organization in South Philly. They may be able to offer us advice and suggestions on future actions.

2018.04.11. Community Workshop on Gentrification: JoAnn Seaver reporting.

A community workshop on gentrification was held in our dining room yesterday, sponsored by Germantown Residents for Economic Alternatives Together (GREAT), Men Who Care, Germantown Meeting, and our Meeting. It was an informative and a lively time of grappling with the needs of the community with respect to development in the neighborhood. The gathering was emblematic of our aspiration be in partnership with the community to work for the good of the community. On Monday, 4/22 at 6:30, at Janes Memorial United Methodist Church, there will be a meeting to focus on

proposed development of the former Germantown High School. Members were invited to attend as this is an immediate need and a start at concerted community action.

2018.04.12. Announcement: There will be an all-candidate forum with City Council candidates on April 24, 6-9 pm, at Wissahickon Charter School. Green Street Meeting is a cosponsor.

2018.04.13. The remaining minutes were read and approved. We were reminded of our query, “How are we becoming an antiracist community?”

The meeting closed with a brief period of worship, intending to meet again on 19th 5th Month 2019.

Our Meetinghouse Renewal Campaign

Hands-on fundraising to renew our meetinghouse began in the Spring of 2018 and the work continues today. Our historic meetinghouse was built in 1876, with additions in 1877, 1901, and 1917. Despite ongoing stewardship, it is time to renew the life of this home of ours.

This hundred-year renewal is making us all feel good and we hope you will share that good feeling for being part of it. The old kitchen has been transformed. We can picture ourselves communally preparing our coffee hours, lunches and dinners with readily available equipment with lots of space bordered by gleaming walls and shelves. There are working areas not only for adults but for our children. Overhead, a smooth ceiling and recessed lights cover necessary pipes and rewiring.

We picture ourselves in the dining room, at last made accessible to all, surrounded by cheerful colors made brighter with new light fixtures for energy efficient lights and ingenious window treatment. And, a dream come true, we are able to hear each other since acoustic panels are part of the scheme.

We marvel at the repurposing and transformation of neglected spaces to create venting for the stove, separate storage rooms for the meeting and for the school, a cleanable floor extending the new colors of the dining room into formerly dark places, the latest in storage units reclaiming under stairs space.

Green Street Friends Meeting has at its heart being warmly welcoming. Now, our presentation matches our practice – thanks to F(f)riends like you.

Our dreams of renewal have been given form by the work of our Property Committee and our architect, Larry McEwen. Let us walk you through all that is planned.

Our aim is to present our meetinghouse as an open place for worship, welcome, and service. While the meeting is able to use some of its reserves—the legacy of generations past—to contribute substantially to the \$825,000 total cost of the project, our meeting community today has committed to raising \$225,000 in a special campaign. The meeting asks you to consider what resources you might share and asks for your gift.

There are several ways that you can contribute directly to Green Street Monthly Meeting’s fundraiser to bring us to our goal beyond what our Trustees have allocated. Donations in any

amount will assist Green Street Meeting. What matters most is that our meeting's Friends consider personally significant contributions to this once-in-a-generation opportunity to reinvigorate our community's physical space.

Our website contains a link for making donations, and the fundraiser brochure and pledge card are available in the office. To receive a copy, please contact our meetinghouse secretary, Ashanta Washington secretary@greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org or call (267) 285-0553. The pledge card shows you several options for making a gift. For more information, or to make your recurring or one-time gift contact joann.seaver@verizon.net.

The good uses of Green Street's meetinghouse are many and cover generations—generations of members and attenders and their families, and generations of children in Greene Street Friends School who fill the dining room every school day and the meeting room on Wednesdays. The school uses the meetinghouse for occasions such as parent dinners, school trustee meetings and Martin Luther King Days of Service. The meetinghouse has held weddings—welcoming same sex marriages since the 90's, memorial services, workshops, committee meetings, coffee hours that last well into the afternoon, conferences, Monthly Meetings for Worship for Business, and a free series of Documentaries and Discussion for all-comers. It has been the spiritual home of our membership, creating a holy space for worship, searching, insight and support. It has helped us build a warm and vital community that is enlivened by our outreach into our Germantown community.

No gift is too small! Please join us in making the meetinghouse fundraiser a success.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting for Business Held First Month 21, 2018

~~At Green Street Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at 45 West School House Lane, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on First Month 21, 2018: Business Meeting convened at 12:30 pm in prayerful silence:~~

~~18-01-01 The clerk welcomed Friends, thanking them for coming to the meeting.~~

~~18-01-02 Friends reviewed and assented to the agenda.~~

~~18-01-03 Nominating Committee~~

~~Walter Hjelt-Sullivan reported. He read names that had been held over from last business meeting.~~

~~For a second reading:~~

~~West Philly Green Street Joint Care Committee~~

~~Kathy Angell for a three-year term through 6/30/2020~~

~~Children and Youth Education~~

~~Anthony DiGiovanni to serve as clerk~~

~~These names were approved.~~

~~For a first reading:~~

~~Care and Counsel~~

Margie Felton for a three-year term through 6/30/2021
Susan Christian for a three-year term through 6/30/2021

These names will be held over for approval during next business meeting.

18-01-04 Care and Counsel

Bill Van Stone reported:

Ryan Hood, who has been a child member, has requested to become a full adult member of the meeting. Care and Counsel seeks approval for this request. The meeting is excited about the request, and approval is held over until next business meeting.

Friends briefly discussed the meeting's practice in this type of transition. The meeting should consider the request as an opportunity to engage with the person making the request, in order to see how the meeting can honor the step and work on developing our adult relationships and a strong community.

Care and Counsel is asked to initiate a clearness committee to deepen our engagement with Ryan.

18-01-05 Property Committee

Dan McDevitt reported:

In the fall, the Property Committee decided the renovation project of the kitchen and dining room, as well as an ADA-compliant entrance, would be delayed. The project may be started in summer 2018, and may have to be completed in phases, which would continue through the fall and perhaps into 2019. The timing depends on the timeline of the construction of the school building, which is currently behind schedule. In the meantime, the committee has worked on improving and finalizing the design, and gathering information regarding contractors.

The committee has also made progress on the meeting room renovations, which will be a separate project. The project has also grown from just replacing the carpet to include repainting, window treatments, refurbishing benches and potentially replacing cushions. Bethann DiGiovanni and Robin Mohr have taken over the management of the project, and are working on selecting materials and contractors.

18-01-06 Report on Outreach Project – Kelly School gardens and greening

Sharon Mullally reported:

Sharon has been volunteering at Kelly school, a K-5 school in Germantown. The school's playground is a paved lot outside of the school; in the past few years, the school has worked on greening some of the space to use as play space and for educational purposes. Sharon has also been helping with their garden project in part of the space where there is soil.

The Kelly Green Project, a neighborhood organization, is now creating a formal Steering Committee to work on planning and fundraising for a large-scale greening project at the school. The organizing group has asked that Green Street Meeting join the Steering Committee. Sharon explained that the current organizing group is predominantly made up of white members, though some efforts have been made to engage the school community, which is predominantly African American. She and others working on the Kelly Green Project have wondered how they can attract parents and/or teachers to be part of the Steering Committee.

The Meeting agrees to join the Steering Committee and has named Sharon Mullally as our representative. We also commit to supporting Sharon and future representatives to be the voice of Green Street, especially to have the deeper conversations around white supremacy and work with other concerned members of the organizing group to develop leadership of the project that better represents the racial make-up of the school.

18-01-07 Spiritual Self-Assessment – Proposal from PYM

JoAnn Seaver reported. She received a letter from PYM Quaker Life council asking us to consider reviving the custom of having MMs and QMs conduct a spiritual self-assessment. The assessment can help

communicate cares, concerns, and works that meetings are engaged in. The deadline is May 31 2018, and meetings are asked to use the queries in Faith and Practice as a guiding framework for the assessment. JoAnn will send PYM's letter to the listserv.

Friends expressed interest in conducting a spiritual self-assessment; however, we would like to do something meaningful and not pro-forma. The deadline for PYM seems unrealistic for a real, valuable assessment. Friends suggested that Worship and Ministry and Care and Counsel take time to jointly consider our participation and what form it might take, and if/how it can be adopted regularly going forward.

~~18-01-08~~ These minutes were approved.

~~18-01-09~~ Friends ended in worship

Meeting adjourned, agreeing to meet again at the appointed time on Second Month 18, 2018.

JoAnn Seaver, Clerk

Blythe Davenport, Recording Clerk

In Attendance: Walter Hjelt Sullivan, Dan McDevitt, Bill Van Stone, Frank Perch, Mary Joy Benson, Margaret J. Walters, Traci Hjelt Sullivan, Margaret Wood, Mychelle James, Sharon MullaHy, Bob Doekhorn, Jerry Williams, Marille Thomas, Chris Mohr, JoAnn Seaver, Blythe Davenport

—*Upcoming Events for F/friends*—

Documentaries and Discussion Series, Saturday, February March 10th, 6:00 PM, GSMM

“I Am Not Your Negro”. This documentary film, based on the book James Baldwin never finished, Remember This House, is a radical narration about race in America, using the writer's original words as read by Samuel L. Jackson. Alongside rich archival material, the film draws upon Baldwin's notes on the lives and assassinations of Malcolm X, Medgar Evans and Martin Luther King Jr. to explore and bring a fresh and radical perspective to the current racial narrative in America.

Our speaker for the event will be Hébert Peck, Jr. Mr. Peck is an independent filmmaker and the Producer of *I Am Not Your Negro*. He has worked in independent media since the 1990s, producing and directing his own work in addition to spending 8 years as the operations manager of Scribe Video Center. He is currently an adjunct faculty member at Rutgers University and Assistant Director of Broadcast Operations for Rutgers-University TV (RU-tv). *Refreshments will be served from 5:30 PM. Admission, childcare and parking are free.*

Second Sunday with Worship and Ministry, February 11th, 9:00^{AM} GSMM

We will show the film *The Bail Trap* for our second Sunday program. The film explores the reality that 70% of people in jail are there for one reason: living in poverty. Low-income Americans are sitting in jails for days, months, and even years simply because they can't afford to pay high bail amounts. All the while, private bail bond and insurance companies are profiting in the billions each year.

There is movement in Philadelphia now to end the cash bail system. Oliver Inslee, a lawyer and GSMM-attender and Nina Ahmad, former Philadelphia Deputy Mayor for Civic Involvement and 1st District-Congressional candidate, will lead our discussion about what's happening in Philadelphia and how we can be involved. The film will last approximately 20 minutes, and we'll have plenty of time for discussion. Please join us and invite anyone who might be interested. Childcare will be provided during this time.

Young Friends Winter Gathering, Sunday, February 11th, 12:00 PM, West Chester Meeting

Join Young Friends for a weekend of community building, games, spiritual exploration, and digging into the theme "Religious Differences." Guests Lucy Duncan and Denise Altwater will join us from the American Friends Service Committee to lead activities that will us develop a deeper understanding of colonization. We'll share free time, different kinds of worship, chores, and games.

Middle School Friends Winter Gathering, February 16th - 18th, Solebury Monthly Meeting

Calling all Middle School aged f/Friends to come together and extend the love with a Post-Valentine's-Retreat! We will create valentines that celebrate love and appreciation of all kinds – with our family, friends, mentors, people who have been inspirational for us throughout history, etc. There will also be small group worship sharing, lots of laughter, group games, and new friendships to create.

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The Third Query on Spiritual Nurture, Ministry, and Religious Education

Does our Meeting encourage the ministry of both word and deed? How does our Meeting recognize, develop, and nurture the gifts of our members and attenders of all ages?

Does our Meeting prepare all its members and children for worship and for a way of life consistent with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends? How do we teach about Quaker practices in business and worship and their importance to the functioning of our Meeting community?

In what ways do we support each other in order to seek God's will and act upon our understanding of truth? Is there opportunity in our Meeting to share the excitement of religious discovery and the possibility of religious transformation?

Does our Meeting provide opportunities for all in the Meeting to learn about:

-the Inner Light, the living Christ within, the Bible, the writings of Friends, our Christian heritage, other religious traditions and their respective roles in the history and formation of Friends' principles?

-the common testimonies Friends declare?

-the variety of expression Quaker faith takes today?

Do I maintain as part of my personal and family life those daily practices that focus on continued spiritual growth, with disciplined worship, inward retirement, and communion with the divine spirit?

Do I frequently read the Bible and other religious literature, including the records of the lives and experiences of Friends? Do I take the time to explore these resources with others, and likewise encourage my children?

Do I share my own faith and spiritual journey, and encourage such sharing within my family?

The Second Query on Meeting for Business

Is our meeting for business held in the spirit of a meeting for worship in which we seek divine guidance?

Are we careful to keep in the spirit of worship each of the concerns that emerge, whether of nurture, of Spirit, of social concerns, of property, or of finance?

Are Meeting decisions directed by prayerful consideration of all aspects of an issue and are difficult problems considered carefully with patient search for truth, unhurried by the pressures of time?

How do we respond if we notice the meeting has lost an understanding of the presence of God?

Do we recognize that we speak through our inaction as well as our action?

Do I regularly attend meeting for business and in a spirit of love and unity? If unable to attend, how do I attend to my responsibility?

Do I consider prayerfully the many concerns that are lifted up on any issue, acknowledging that the search for truth in unity involves what God requires, being open to personal transformation as the community arrives at the sense of the meeting?

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Victoria Greene's presentation on EMIR Healing Center, 1/14/2018

Notes by Chris Mohr

About a dozen people came to the Green Street Meetinghouse on 1/14/2018 to hear Victoria Greene talk about her work with the EMIR Healing Center.

She founded the organization in memory of her son, Emir, who was murdered on March 26, 1997. EMIR stands for “Every Murder Is Real.” They provide support and counseling to families of murder victims in Philadelphia and even beyond.

The Problem

There were 317 homicides in Philadelphia in 2017, the first time since 2012 that the number has been over 300. Many of the murder victims are young black men. Police Commissioner Richard Ross said the increase is because of opioids, and the fact that the Police Department is down by 400 officers. There should be another 300 new officers by fall 2018 when the next class graduates from the academy. There are also gangs in many areas of Philadelphia.

Support Groups

EMIR Healing Center runs support groups for families of murder victims. Friends from Green Street Meeting provide meals so that the families can eat together from 6 to 6:30 pm. The meals enable people to get there without having to worry about eating first. Having a meal together helps people socialize and bond, which is a very important step in the healing process. There are about 25 people per group. Over the course of a year, Green Street Friends are providing something like 700 meals a year!

Friends from Green Street who want to help can sign up to cook a meal, bring takeout food, or just donate money toward buying food for the evening. If you do cook, please don't use pork or nuts.

The process starts when, each week, EMIR gets a fax from the Police Department with the list of homicides from the past week and contact information for the next of kin. EMIR follows up with a letter and later a phone call to invite them to participate in the support groups. Some people are referred by other individuals or organizations in the community.

In the groups, EMIR teaches families about trauma: how to recognize it; and how to cope with it in healthy ways. Frequently people who do not recognize trauma end up coping in unhealthy ways. People can come back again, too. Often the second year is hardest for people — the second Christmas or birthday — when they realize it's real, the person is never coming back.

The first two meetings of the groups are open to drop-ins, but after that, no drop-ins are allowed. The group needs a chance to bond together, and that rule helps them do that. Each time there are separate groups for women, men, and teens and kids.

Intervening to Prevent More Violence

EMIR has sometimes gone to individuals to prevent them from retaliating with violence after a murder. Recently a family asked them to intervene in a gang dispute in South Philly. They are looking at being mediators.

At one point EMIR was part of a collaborative that applied for grant funding. It would have included money to pay “interruptors” who are already on street corners doing this work, for no pay. It did not work out for EMIR in the end. There is still a serious need for interruptors.

Public Policy

EMIR also has growing interest in public policy. the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victims Compensation Fund. The source of money for this fund is fines paid by convicted criminals, not taxes. However, the VOCA law excludes families of people accused of “causing their own demise.” If a police report says the victim was committing a crime when killed, then the family cannot get money from the fund. There is no process for judging whether or not the police report is correct; and even if it were, why should the families of the victim suffer?

EMIR has worked with attorney Angus Love on some cases. In one of them, a father was upset that his son was accused of dealing drugs, when he didn't, and there was no evidence he did. They were able to get the office in Harrisburg to overturn the initial decision. There may be a lawsuit in the courts or a change in the law in the legislature.

In September, EMIR held a forum on gun violence. Families of victims had the chance to be heard by public officials, including Congressperson Dwight Evans, Commissioner Ross, several City Council members, and some state legislators. EMIR has formed committees around illegal guns, education, and housing.

Families who get involved with activism often find some healing. It's therapeutic because they may find some help for other people and also work for the common good. This can especially be helpful when the perpetrator of the murder isn't caught. Less than half of murder cases in Philadelphia are getting solved now, so there is a lack of closure for many families.

Victoria's Spiritual Journey

Finally, Victoria spoke about her spiritual journey through this work. Soon after she started EMIR, she organized conferences two years apart. She had no experience doing this. Yet when she asked, people said yes. And both were successful. She felt God was guiding her.

People ask Victoria how she can cope with the stories, so similar to what she went through with her son, Emir. She said, "When I hear a family's story, I am with them. I'm holding their hands, listening to them. That's God."

She sees how fragile life is. When she felt suicidal after Emir's death, she heard his voice saying to her, "What? It's bad enough I got killed, now you're going to go?" And she held on. Now she won't hold grudges. If someone is good, she'll tell them. She added, "Because you never know if you'll see them again. Be authentic. Don't take people for granted."

That's why Quakerism attracted her. She heard about Spirit-led activism. She had never heard that anywhere before finding Quakers. Her experience is definitely of Spirit-led activism.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH EMIR HEALING CENTER:

Join Green Street's brand-new **Quaker Social Change Ministry group!** We have our first meeting to get organized on Feb. 19 (TENTATIVE).

Work with EMIR on **amending VOCA**

Join one of the committees formed after the September forum (education [ON THE ISSUE OF HOMICIDE? OR, to SUPPORT EDUCATION SO THERE IS LESS VIOLENCE?]; stopping illegal guns; or housing)

Volunteer to help with the **annual fundraising concert**, usually late in the year

Donate! If you do, you'll multiply the impact of our meeting's annual gift to EMIR

Watch Victoria's QuakerSpeak video and share it with people you know: <http://quakerspeak.com/every-murder-real/>

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Ecology & habitat repair

7:00 PM talk with refreshments at Arch Street Meeting House on the topic: "Wissahickon Habitat Repair: Plants & Birds & Rocks & Things." Learn about research and best practices with restoration ecologist William J. Ryan Ph.D. from the Patrick Center for Environmental Research at Drexel University's Academy of Natural Sciences. www.pym.org/fellowship

MARCH 8

Op-Ed and Trans Cartooning

7:00 PM talk with refreshments at Arch Street Meeting House, 4th and Arch streets, Philadelphia. **Ramona Sharples (Trans Girl Trans Comic)** and Pulitzer Prize winning **EDITORIAL CARTOONIST Signe Wilkinson** will speak on the topic "The Art of Persuasion" www.pym.org/fellowship

EQAT

Nonviolent civil disobedience actions as part of our Power Local Green Jobs campaign. During Holy Week of March 27.

Multiple days during the traditional work day and during traditional work hours. Mostly downtown at the PECO headquarters.

Roles for those risking and not risking arrest.

Also looking for people who can help us gather used and expired inhalers.

For more information, Walter at hjeltsullivan@gmail.com

I am writing to alert you to the opportunity for the children in your Monthly Meeting to participate in Abington Quarter's Junior Friends Conference and Middle School Friends Conference. Please visit the Abington Quarter website to view scenes from previous year's events.

<http://www.abingtonquarter.org/photos>

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Save the Date:

Sunday, June 19 - Friday, June 22, 2018

Westtown School

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The Junior Friends Conference (grades 1-6) and Middle School Friends Conference (grades 7-8) programs are making preparations. We call it a conference and not a camp because while we have fun, our focus is to provide an environment rich in Quaker values. JFC and MSFC are wonderful opportunities for children to live in a Quaker community setting, make Quaker friends, and learn Friendly ways. The fee for students outside of Abington Quarter is \$ 800.00. I am writing now to provide time for your Monthly Meeting and/or the Quarterly Meeting to consider and decide to provide financial support to reduce the cost to families as Abington Quarter does for students.

Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) is a year-long fellowship program (August 26, 2018, through July 2019) in which young adults 21 to 30 years old live communally, work full time at social service and social change agencies, and explore themes of spiritual and personal growth with local Quakers. The application deadline is March 15. More information about the fellowship program and the application form are available by [clicking here.](#)