

SEYM Epistle 2019

Loving Greetings to Friends Everywhere:

Southeastern Yearly Meeting gathered in Fruitland Park, Florida, from Fourth Month 17 through Fourth Month 21, 2019 with 165 participants including 143 adults and 22 children. This was the fifty-fifth assembly of our yearly meeting. We felt the welcoming spirit of the Life Enrichment Center exemplified by their accommodation to our diverse dietary needs and their expression of simplicity in serving meals with reusable dinnerware and cloth napkins.

Days opened with early morning worship by picturesque Lake Griffin followed by small-group worship sharing. During our Meetings for Worship With a Concern for Business, we came to unity of many matters. Among these were a corporate testimony on Earthcare and support for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Alliance for Fair Food in their boycott of the Wendy's Company.

Friends shared with us their spiritual calling to end the detention of immigrant minors with the local example of the for-profit Homestead Temporary Shelter for Unaccompanied Children in South Florida where more than three thousand undocumented children have been imprisoned. The yearly meeting approved a minute for the end of this horrific and unacceptable practice. We call on you, Friends, to hold the people suffering from these wrongs in the Light, and we seek your support while we strive to address these injustices.

During the four days that we gathered here, Friends attended over 20 workshops and events that covered such varied topics as climate gentrification, laughter yoga, non-violent bystander training, prayer as demand, and prisoner issues.

With programming deftly led by our new youth coordinator, Kody Hersch, more young friends attended this gathering than in recent years.

"Taking off the Masks: Undoing Racism as Personal and Community Practice," was the theme of this year's gathering. Two workshops and the Walton Lecture highlighted this topic. The lecture focused our attention on undoing white supremacy as spiritual practice. Lucy Duncan and Noah White collaborated by speaking from the silence to deliver thought provoking descriptions of their struggles against white supremacy both inside and outside of the Religious Society of Friends. In a message of hope in these trying times, Friend Lucy pointed out that having made recent progress, we are experiencing a fierce backlash, and we must push forward in the practical application of the Friends Testimony of Equality. Because activism can be exhausting, Friend Noah encouraged us to "find out what your self-care is and then find a reason for using it."

May grace and peace be with you!



William Carlie, SEYM Clerk

SEYM Youth Epistle 2019

We, the young friends of SEYM, bring forth this epistle to shed light on the problems of racism and being scared of people and solutions such as friendship and compassion. We also got information about climate change, as thunderstorms rained down on us. We want to be moving toward a solution for these problems, not away from them. We participated in ropes course games to discover how teamwork turns into action. Afterwards, we made masks and took them off to represent uncovering our real selves. The Walton Lecture enlightened us to recognize that there is still separation in some communities. We ended the weekend with marshmallows, campfire and new friends.

Sincerely,

SEYM young friends Anya, Audrey, Brendan, Bronwyn, Cassandra, Daniel, Hoyt, Jay, Kiran, Magdalena, Priya, Trinity, Vincent. Also joined for part of the weekend by Antonio, Esme, James, Jazmin, Jaelyn, Zephy and adults Kody, Elizabeth, Jen, Jennifer, Mira, Cece, Caroline