

Head of School Annual Report to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

2022/2023 School Year

John Zimmerman, Head of School

The 2022-2023 school year at Scattergood Friends School has been one of challenges, opportunities, surprises, reflection, and learning. We entered the year with a renewed focus on preparation and planning with a goal of making the year less stressful. While I am happy to report that we were most certainly successful in planning ahead and being prepared for the year as it unfolded, it seems that some level of stress is inherent to the operation of a boarding school.

Recent state legislations have both limited the rights of our community members and posed difficult questions about the moral lens through which we view the decision-making and operations of the school. We have begun conversations with the ACLU of Iowa and local educators to seek guidance and wisdom in responding to these and future initiatives from the state of Iowa. It is our intention to remain a safe learning community for all of our students, regardless of race, religion, sex, sexuality, status, or financial means.

To help with that goal, one of our largest supporters, The Measey Foundation, has dramatically increased their annual distribution of funds to Scattergood. This additional funding comes at a critical time and allows us to continue our long-term strategic plan of growth and staffing in spite of lagging enrollment. These funds, when partnered with state savings accounts and scholarships, mean that we are able to provide generous support to families who may otherwise be unable to attend Scattergood, without the need for staff to subsidize these efforts through stagnant wages and under-staffing.

We welcomed 48 students to Scattergood throughout the year across both programs. As of this writing, our enrollment for the Fall is below our goals with 37 enrolled for the upcoming school year, and several prospective students still in process. While there are many factors that impact enrollment, we can only focus on those areas within our control. To that end, we have taken steps to restructure our admissions efforts in an attempt to strengthen our communication, customer service, and marketing. While this new model has only been in place since June, we have already seen an increase in both inquiries and applicants.

On Sunday, June 4th, we celebrated the graduation of 9 seniors: Chris Gauder, Dina Wettig, JP Cortez, Lily Jampoler, Lola Flick, Miles Knake, Moose Koester, Paisley Crouse, and Sigourney Bradshaw. For their senior project, these students worked with staff to refurbish the outdoor lounge behind the art building and install several swings across campus. We will miss this departing class very much and wish them well in the future as they scatter good along their journeys.

This year we say goodbye to a number of beloved staff members, each of whom has contributed to Scattergood's program and community in both their work and friendship. Mark Blackman (Director of Admissions), Chloe Nagel (Health Coordinator), Greta Optz (College Counselor), and Lisa Kofed (Business Office) will be moving on to other communities and roles. Their work will be picked up by a number of current and new staff members including Eli Ehlinger (Maintenance Coordinator), Kate Furman (Business Office/Registrar), Dana Chastine (Marketing), Jess Havlicek Epps (Health Coordinator), Bug Shaprio (Student Activities Coordinator), Jennifer Peterman (Computer Science Teacher), Barbara Fisher (Learning Support Coordinator) and Saunia Powell (College Counselor). We are saddened to say goodbye to our friends and colleagues, but excited to welcome our new staff and their families into the community.

Our academic program continues to thrive as students from both the Middle and High school programs explored a myriad of topics ranging from algebra to the intersection of art and architecture. New teachers brought new passions and interests, some of which have sparked the curiosity of our students, including a renewed interest in woodworking and printmaking. This fall, our middle school students presented an original play "Pop's Diner" which was written as a class. This spring our High School students perform the musical *Pippin* to rave reviews and thunderous applause. Several of our middle school students participated in the Grant Wood AEA National History Day competition and advanced to the state finals, while several of our High School students journey to Olney to compete in a weekend of Ultimate Frisbee. Overall, our program continues to deepen and grow as we find ways of building connections both within and outside of the Scattergood community.

Behind the scenes work has continued on several major projects. Ethan Huelskamp has been hard at work organizing both the upcoming alumni reunion and the impending comprehensive campaign, all the while maintaining our annual efforts for fundraising and communication. Dani Evans-Schreiber has continued to lead our staff in conducting the self-study portion of the ISACS accreditation process, with our on-site visit scheduled for November of 2023.

The year ahead proves to be an exciting and critical year for our beloved organization. While we conclude our ISACS accreditation, launch our comprehensive campaign, and continue to deliver an excellent academic program and student-life experience, we will be devoting much of our institutional energy towards enrollment and restoring a sense of fullness to the Meeting House. With the continued help and support of our extended Scattergood community, I am confident that our momentum will continue to grow and with it, our student body.

Respectfully submitted in peace and gratitude,
John Zimmerman