

**School Committee Report to Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative
Scattergood Friends School
July 2015**

The Mission Statement of the school is as follows: "Scattergood Friends School challenges students with a college-preparatory curriculum, farm experience, a shared work program, and community living in the spirit of Quaker faith."

The ongoing practice of the school has been to use this mission to navigate the year and cultivate our strengths within these guiding principles. To emphasize what we are and what makes Scattergood a unique experience is part of our task to ensure this school can both survive *and* flourish. As a Yearly Meeting we seek to demonstrate our belief to the world, and Scattergood is a most compelling manifestation of our belief.

- Farm life continues to be integrated into the life of the school and provides nutritious food for the community's bodies and minds.
- Academic programs are robust and all of our graduating seniors were accepted into colleges and universities.
- Work crews teach real-life participation and build relationships with students and staff that only the act of working together can create.
- Students and staff practice daily collection, weekly Meeting for Worship, and wrestle with the every-day and often difficult realities of trying to live in the spirit of Quaker faith.

We appreciate all of the staff who have worked this year to keep these legs of this mission as our stable and energizing base.

The 125th celebration in June reminded us that the connections made at Scattergood are enduring, and that lives are changed by this place. Alumni and former staff gathered for four days on the campus, and despite being of different eras, ages, and opinions, the sense of togetherness was palpable and the spirit was alive. Inspired by this gathering an alumni association is emerging to help foster these connections. The school's new database system implemented this year will also help with future communications and event planning. We are thankful for all who helped organize and expedite this celebration of Scattergood and the gathering of friends.

We are also grateful for the wide-ranging and loving work that Debbie Galusha has given to the school committee as a member and as clerk for many years. Her constant presence, leadership, and attention to scattering good will be greatly missed.

After five years of committed service to the school, Christine Ashley and her family bid farewell to the Scattergood campus. Because of her efforts we have increased our visibility within the local and wider communities and we are deeply grateful for her passion and tireless efforts to expand our vision, nurture diversity, and inspire people to

be involved with this school. We hope to continue her work of outreach, activism, and working our way towards greater energy conservation.

Thomas Weber has stepped into the role of Head of School after sharing the role of leadership last year. We are excited to be working with him as he articulates his vision in the upcoming year.

Enrollment continues to be unsustainably low which translates into another financially challenging year. It's a tribute to the creativity and discipline Thomas has brought to the budgeting process that we have a budget with a net positive result for the upcoming academic year. School committee recognizes the monumental effort and commitment of the entire staff to keep the school not just afloat but truly progressing despite operating within this bare-bones financial situation.

That our enrollment remains low at a time when our academic program and our commitment to the mission are so strong remains puzzling. We've been examining carefully what is unique about Scattergood among educational alternatives that currently exist and have concluded that the combination of farm and academics within a Quaker setting is our signature characteristic. To increase emphasis on farm life within the curriculum, starting next year, freshman and new sophomore students will spend all of their academic time during the first quarter on the farm where classes will be taught in an interdisciplinary, project-based setting.

Given the challenge of enrollment and the resulting budget constraints, this year we will shift the focus away from a large campaign and towards smaller and more immediate capital fundraising for projects that will strengthen academic programs and enhance the grounds, both of which can help to attract students.

Increasing the number of students is imperative; this depends on outreach and the telling of our story, but admissions is also supported by the cultivation and rebuilding of connections with those who know us. We must continually weave this web of support by nurturing relationships within the school, within the Yearly Meeting, in the greater community of Scattergood, and the world. We are grateful for the many contributions of time, energy, and finances from the members of the Yearly Meeting. The school intends to actively create opportunities for more interaction and we wholeheartedly invite members to visit the campus, to share meals and time with staff and students, and to experience first hand how Quaker education and residing in community is shaping the lives of these young people. The school committee affirms that Scattergood continues to be a dynamic and living example of our faith, Quaker education, and our Yearly Meeting's ministry. It is our experiment to manifest love in the world.

For the School Committee
Ruth Hampton, acting clerk

