

Scattergood Head of School report to the Yearly Meeting, 2014

Every day at Scattergood, students and staff actively demonstrate deep commitment to Quaker practices, love of learning, and living in community. Our work ethic is strong across the board, and deep passion for what we do as a staff and student body is readily apparent. The 2013-2014 school year brimmed with exciting possibilities, and the palpable energy felt last September continues today.

In a school of this size, every student has the opportunity to make a huge impact on the community. Soci '15 designed a learning center for our Prairie and collected pallets and funding for a semi-permanent structure. Anya '17 bottle-fed three newborn lambs. Brais '15 traveled to John Hopkins to attend a six week course in engineering. One student group traveled to Bolivia while the other hit the Appalachian Trail. This intellectually-capable, and spirited student body was recognized by National Merit Scholarship, the Des Moines-based *Education Without Borders* non-profit, the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce, and Iowa's *Coda Day*. These organizations bestowed awards upon our school, individual students and a team of students.

An intense college application year ended with 100% of our seniors accepted to a 4 year college or university; numerous scholarships and grants were also awarded. We congratulate the Senior class: **Sebastian Ashley, Annie Caldwell, Rosa**

Castro, Po Chiao Chen, Esther Keza, Rachel Lightstone, Emily Palmer, Alejandro Rubinstein-Nadeau, Charlotte Schiller, Neal Shaffer, Sawyer Smith, Sharon Uwanyuze, Anna Wilson, Sophie Wolf-Camplin, Can Xu.

Life is rewarding at Scattergood and many staff members stay for extended periods of time joyfully serving the community. **Irving Treadway** and **Dana Foster** return to Scattergood for 2014-2015 after a year away, both beginning their 21st year of service. We bid **Joey Giffen-Hunter** (facilities and farm) and **Sarah Giffen-Hunter** (former college guidance counselor and registrar) farewell after 15 years. **Nicole** (former academic dean, girls' dorm sponsor and seminar teacher) and **Steve Wolf-Camplin** departed for their new home by the ocean in North Carolina. **Rudiger Ruckmann (Director of Development)** and family left Scattergood for their new home and work in Hawaii late March. **Mark Edwards** leaves us with fond memories of fire-breathing and other fantastical experiments for Racine, Wisconsin. **Emma Condori-Mamani** and her visa issues were unfortunately not resolved and we wish her the very best as she pursues a job on the East Coast with Society of Friends. We hold our friends in the Light as they enter this new stage of life outside of Scattergood.

This past year, we enrolled 41 students. The low enrollment highlighted the trends of decades past, making it an imperative for us to research and strategically address increasing enrollment as our #1 priority until we reach our full enrollment of 60 students. The administrative team took this task on early

in the fall. During our January staff retreat, Academic Dean **Louis Herbst** led us in a reflective process researching enrollment using National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), Independent School Management (ISM), and Secondary School Admissions Test Board (SSAT). We asked the following questions:

1. How can we optimize long-term enrollment goals?
2. How will we address Scattergood's long-term financial aid, policies and procedures for sustainability and fiscal responsibility?
3. How are we increasing awareness of Scattergood Friends School in communities who are in the market for our school? What are we promoting, and how are we doing?
4. How is Scattergood's program already successful in meeting student and parent goals and what can we do better/differently/concentrate more on developing?

Our research concluded that the most important educational goals of parents and students who might enroll in Scattergood included the following: maintain and grow students' love of learning; provide a well-rounded college preparatory education; provide high quality teaching that fosters a love of learning; provide small class sizes; provide a program and support a school environment that fosters a strong sense of moral character; integrate and use appropriate technology. We also confirmed our assumption that students are the primary decision-makers about where they would attend high school. This suggested that our word-of-mouth references and

marketing and outreach efforts could and need to be channeled more effectively towards our student-aged population.

So how do we invite future students and parents to Scattergood? Our first action is to identify our successes, identify the ingredients of these successes, and then tell our stories. Recounting these stories, reflecting on our program and continuing to make our school the best in what we offer is essential. We connected with prospective middle and high schools throughout the country including educational consultants and Friends Schools in the East, independent schools in Missouri, Colorado, and Iowa. We met Friends of Scattergood in Washington D.C., attended Cultural Diversity Day and Pride Day at the University of Iowa, and manned tables and spoke with hundreds of people around the country. Greeting our neighboring West Liberty Rotary Club, West Branch and West Liberty school superintendents and the districts' Food Director have helped us grow our Iowa connections. Outreach at numerous festivals and conferences included the Creative Corridor, Seed Saver Exchange Conference and the Sustainability Conference in Dubuque. We also hosted a special showing at the Englert Theater in Iowa City of *Miss Representation*, a documentary examining gender representation in America .

The beautiful thing is, we know who we are and what we do best. We know who we serve and how widely our successes are felt, throughout the generations. We need to deliver these messages! This is the work for all of us. Scattergood is celebrating faith in action, every day and everywhere we go. It

is an exciting time to focus our spirit-led lives. Parker Palmer believes that when “we the people” re-examine connections to beliefs and communities, it creates opportunities for us to heal our communities and beyond. This call was answered during 2013-2014, and resulted in many travels, works, dialogues and planning.

Events on campus helped us connect our Quaker values and practices with others, and allowed us to dig deeply. The farm hosted numerous tours and integrated *Taproot* and Practical Farmers of Iowa events throughout the year. We relished our work on campus with Midwest Regional Sustainability Conference participants in the fall. Our highlight for the fall was hosting the Climate Conference, and students participated in a series of school projects based upon the lectures of staff and Jose Aguto, Legislative Secretary for Sustainable Energy, and Rob Hogg, Iowa State Senator. We were honored to host 51 participants and additional speakers such as Susan Guy, Director of Iowa Interfaith Power and Light, David Osterberg, founding member and former director of the Iowa Policy Project, and Steve Shivers, Iowa Coordinator of Citizens Climate Lobby. Iowa Senator Bob Dvorsky was also in attendance for the morning activities. Students, staff and Scattergood Friends walked to Iowa City to promote a cleaner Earth and picked up a truckload of trash along the way, which we showcased on the Pedestrian Mall.

Several initiatives such as the School Committee challenge grant, Scattergood Art Camp, Scattergood rentals, and a newly-named scholarship called the Gwen Shupe Scholarship Fund

were successfully piloted this year. In 2013-2014, we hired three superb administrative staff, including the aforementioned academic dean Louis Herbst, Assistant Head **Thomas Weber** and Admissions Director **Alicia Streeter**.

Continually streamlining responsibilities and rightsizing staff to 21 FTEs for 2014-2015 is essential for ensuring that we cover our tuition losses of the year and invest in student programs, updating facilities and increasing outreach efforts necessary for admissions and development sustenance and growth. We ask the world of our staff, and they give it to us, but that has costs as well, and if we wish to better retain our staff and continue growing our program, we must align staffing, program and income in a sustainable manner.

This past fall, Scattergood joined Maharishi School and Rivermont Collegiate and successfully lobbied with Iowa's Board of Education to guarantee Scattergood's right to function and be recognized as an independent school accredited solely through ISACS. We join these independent Iowa schools in fighting years of low enrollment, rising costs and an increasingly competitive market for independent schools.

These challenges have propelled three schools to look at change as opportunity. On campus, we have spent the year intentionally crafting a program that fulfills the school's mission, concurrent with promoting and cultivating the school's values and principles. We conducted energy audits with our students and staff, and explored sustainability. We completed a

constituent-wide facilities survey to begin ascertaining the future capital needs of the physical campus so that we can prioritize our needs and resources over the next decade and more. We shifted program staffing to better right-size our staff as well as increased new administrative salaries for positions commensurate with other independent schools. We have a projected loss of \$80,000 for 2013-2014 this year due to a tuition income deficit of \$55,000, a ballooning workman's compensation insurance, payroll increases mentioned above and \$15,000 Annual Fund deficit. We will continue to financially struggle until we increase our enrollment by 10%. In the meantime, classroom spaces, administrative offices, the student lounge and the main lobby have or are undergoing renovation as a result of collective vision and sweat equity with the goal of increasing enrollment.

I am confident that we are strengthening every aspect of the program, and that with sound financial planning and funding, we will truly have a Scattergood for the next 125 years. 2015 heralds Scattergood's 125th anniversary and the 75th anniversary of Scattergood's refugee hostel. May we be strengthened through our commitment, hard work, and faith in this community and continue our good works.

In Peace,

Christine Ashley, Head of School