

Scattergood Friends School
Report to the Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative: Academics
July 2016

Dear Friends,

It brings me joy to return to leadership in a school. I bring to Scattergood seven years of experience in teacher training programs combined with experience advocating for human rights, labor rights and social responsibility. For the last 18 years, I have been working at a non-profit organization designing, developing, and delivering multicultural training programs worldwide. Working in this field allowed me to connect with different social actors such as Fortune 500 leaders, government authorities, activists, union leaders, shareholders/investors, and social auditors. These interactions made it crystal clear for me how important it is to educate open-minded, non-violent individuals with vision, values, and respect for diversity.

I have been asked several times: why, if had an exciting and meaningful job, did I decide to change careers and join the staff at Scattergood Friends School? The answer is that this is not just any school position. Scattergood is a different world. I literally fell in love with the community. We moved here two years ago so that my husband could teach Spanish at the school. Since then I have been constantly amazed by the strong connection between students and teachers at Scattergood, something that is unusual in high school settings!! I observed teachers' being passionate about their classes and their students about learning. I was amazed by the incessant activity and productivity of the community. I felt there was always something interesting that I was going to miss due to my constant traveling!

Amongst all this activity, what I enjoyed most when I was at Scattergood, was being able to sit in silence during collection and worship. I have always had an individual spiritual practice, but to have a spiritual community felt invaluable. To be honest, I was also drained, tired, and sometimes hopeless. It is not easy to work for social justice within the belly of the beast. The school and the Quaker values felt like an oasis of hope!

I know I'll have both an exciting and a demanding learning curve ahead of me. If I want to translate all my ideas into action, I will need to have a deep understanding of the school dynamics.

I know this: Scattergood is outstanding college preparatory learning environment but also an intentional community where Quaker values permeate the day to day routines. These values are not acquired by simply reading documents, they need to be learned experientially. I am grateful that I did not need to start this learning adventure by myself! Thomas, Louis, and Catherine have been very helpful. At the beginning I felt the paradox of feeling overwhelmed by loads and loads of information, yet grateful for the systems and processes in place at Scattergood.

Besides orienting myself to the mechanics of Scattergood I was excited to read the Academics Subcommittee Reports of 2016 to the School Committee and learn about all the innovative ideas and projects, such as the Student Support Team, as will the professional development program implemented through class observation and feedback. It was also important to read the Strategic

Plan for 2016-2019 and learn that the Farm Immersion Program is already taking place. Four of our teachers has been meeting on a weekly basis for the past 5 months to analyze the successes and challenges of last fall's pilot farm program. Based on this experience, they have developed an even stronger farm focused curriculum for this year.

At the same time we are not forgetting the more traditional classroom curriculum This fall we will have very exciting class options for the Humanities such as The Sacred Harp -- Music Appreciation, Meskwaki Myths, Elections; American Cinema, Celebrity Musicians and Literature and the Natural World. Science based offerings include Human Health, Disease, and Physiology. Outside of the classroom our students sharpen their skills at Ceramics, Archery, Fencing and Soccer. Add to this the opportunity to address students' individual interests through independent study projects.

With all these wonderful academic actives at Scattergood I am diligently working on understanding how I can support our teachers and let them continue their outstanding work. It is essential for me, as a new educational leader, to understand how Scattergood works. [i] In the coming months , I will be conversing with as many members of our community as possible. That includes teachers, students, the Academic sub-committee, parents, and the administrative staff. In these conversations we will explore:

1. Individuals' understanding's of the school mission, the Strategic Plan 2016-2019, and how they relate their individual strategies and goals to this strategic plan.
2. What is working and how can we proactively continue with those projects/programs.
3. Which projects are in process of being implemented and what kind of support they need to make the implementation successful.
4. What needs to be improved and what are their ideas for improvement.
5. What do they expect from the Assistant Head and how I can help.

It is only after I have had the opportunity to learn from the community that I will be craft my goals for the 2016-17 Academic year. Although I still have much to learn I am very thankful to be a member of this blessed learning community!

Gabriela Delgadillo, Assistant Head of School

[i] "Starting Confused: How Leaders Start When They Don't Know Where to Start" (B. Jentz and J. Murphy 2005)