

**Head of School Report  
Scattergood Friends School and Farm  
Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)  
July 2018**

Dear Friends,

It has now been five years since Amy and I came to live and work as Scattergoodians. I remain called to be here, and I'm again grateful for this opportunity to report to the Yearly Meeting.

**Priorities, themes and accomplishments this past year**

Nine students received diplomas June 3th as the Class of 2018 this year with letters of admission to colleges and universities: **Iris Capra-Bateman, Matthew Cook, Marianne Finot, Kian Ganbari, Cameron McReynolds, Sydney Myers, Gifford Pollock, Athena Stark, and Ian Zakelj**. Of these, two were named Bonner Scholars for their matriculation to Earlham College in recognition of not only their financial need but their demonstrated capacity for nourishing community through service in their high school years. Together, these nine also received scholarship offers totaling \$945,000

**Caroline Daly '19** was recognized as this year's Berquist Scholar, and **Latif Behroz '19** earned our Fine Arts Scholarship.

**Marianne** and **Kian** were named Bonner Scholars for Earlham. These are full scholarships that also recognize these individuals' demonstrated capacity for building and nurturing community in the Quaker spirit. **Latif** has also been asked to Clerk for Adult Young Friends at FGC at its 2019 Grinnell Gathering.

The school year began and finished with historically low enrollment: just 23 students, a number which fell short of even our most conservative projections in the July prior. The School Committee report which complements this recounts our challenge and our response, and I encourage you to study the well-told account submitted to this Yearly Meeting. In short, I will say that staff and students were remarkably unfazed by the challenge. We recognized how vibrant our program and community is and we joyfully, joyfully embraced the year's opportunities and experiences. Quite honestly it has been one the most happy and rewarding years of my 31-year career in schools.

We continue to further strengthen the relationship between the farm and student learning in rich ways that prepare them for college and life beyond. Farm Term, in which students begin the first month of the semester in project-based interdisciplinary learning on the farm each morning, saw the entire student body participate in this third year. The program's success with providing high-level learning that combines science, math, the arts, technology and practical engineering

(STEAM education) was recognized by the Governor of Iowa in a visit to the school last autumn. Also of note was the high degree of successful completion of academic coursework by our students this year, thanks to diligent teacher involvement in each student, active coordination of **Gabriela Delgadillo** as Academic Dean, and the consistent presence of **Chelsea Hunt-Teachout** in providing individualized academic support for students. Seniors authored research papers this year on topics ranging from privatization of government services, a comparison of Obama and Trump foreign policies, felon voting rights, Bitcoin, an exploration of non-binary gender, and understanding the origins of religion through the lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Off-campus explorations continued this year. February's Intersession saw students volunteering in Chicago's Catholic Worker House, Su Casa, and various service projects in Iowa City. Some students travelled with Dana Foster to Maryland, where they joined with other Friends School students and staff to share their study and work as farm-based programs. Camping trips included canoeing in the Ozarks and living and working on an eco-collective in Missouri. Last and not least, half the student body were either in Bolivia or on a 250-mile trek of the Appalachian Trail in the last three weeks of May, while the other half engaged in May Term investigations on campus.

### **Staffing**

We wish farewell to the following staff who are moving on:

- **Gabriela Delgadillo**, Assistant Head, 2 years
- **Fernando Finot**, Spanish and Dorm Sponsor, 4 years
- **Keva Fawkes**, Artist in Residence and Dorm Sponsor, 1 year
- **Chelsea Hunt-Teachout**, Academic Support and Dorm Sponsor, 1 year
- **Kelsey Clampitt**, Biology and Dorm Sponsor, 1 year
- **Gwen Morrison Andow**, Social Studies and Dorm Sponsor, 2 years
- **Eric Andow**, Math, Physics, and Dorm Sponsor, 2 years
- **Miranda Nielson**, our Development Coordinator, is relocating to Maryland and will continue to support the work of the Development Office until a successor is named.

The extent to which each contributed their energy and spirits to the school is immeasurable as is our gratitude for each.

And we welcome the following staff to the school for the upcoming year:

- **Paul Pressler**, Assistant Head and Academic Dean
- **Rachael Button**, Student Dean and Dorm Sponsor
- **Peter Kraus**, Biology and Dorm Sponsor
- **Greg Wickencamp**, Social Studies and Dorm Sponsor
- **Steve Nordlund**, Spanish (returning to a position he held at Scattergood for 5 years)
- **Kim Jones**, Business Manager, hired August 2017
- **Sarah Dirks**, Health Office Coordinator, hired September 2017

We're excited about their strong qualifications and enthusiasm for our program

Searches continue for a second math teacher who would also teach chemistry.

### **Enrollment, Budget, and Financial Review and Look Ahead**

Fiscally the year ended on a very positive note as shown by the June 30 operating statement (after a very bleak outlook in September with the significant downturn in enrollment). Combine prudent management of our budget with gifts large and small from donors, a significant alteration of the School Foundation's distribution policy from the endowment accounts, a special disbursement from the School Foundation, and an estate settlement, the school stood at June 30 with a zero balance on its line of credit and \$144,000 in its checking account, giving the school a head start with cash flow not seen in several years. It is also worth noting that the school lost close to \$150,000 of annual tuition income as a result of denials of visas to academically and financially qualified students from Ethiopia and Afghanistan, despite our unusually strong track record of their recent predecessors' matriculation to colleges.

The new budget returns us nonetheless to facing head-on the continued existential challenge of low enrollment. The budget reflects long-forestalled salary increases for staff, continued conservative projections for tuition income, and the return of an additional administrator to the team. The light ahead is that we're expecting a net gain of at least four students to begin the year, the first increase in enrollment in about six years. We are optimistic that we are turning the corner with our new approaches to markets and continued discipline with admissions.

In the final analysis, an assurance of the Yearly Meeting's support for the school taking on a new credit commitment is essential to the school's ability to make and complete this turn around the corner in the school's history. We're in the midst of a winter. And the larder is full: we arguably have one of the strongest balance sheets of any non-profit in Iowa, with close to \$8 million in assets and just \$123,000 in debt. The wise move in this period is not to hoard the larder and starve to death but to trust in keeping to a diet that protects against disease, nourishes honest work in a lean season, and prepare for spring ahead. We cannot guarantee that spring brings renewed life, yet we cannot lose faith in its promise. The promise lies in tangible signs we're seeing: an uptick in interest in our high school program, tangible and measurable enthusiasm for our middle school initiative, and honest interest by Grinnell College in our capacity to prepare students for their program.

### **Major Capital Improvements and Needs this year**

With thanks to the tireless efforts of **Tim Schulte** and **Harold Jamison**, the Facilities Sub-Committee, the Development Office, and the seniors who installed the dining room floor, we celebrate the following improvements:

- New stoves in the Scattergood kitchen
- A re-surfaced dining room floor

- Water heaters that reduce demand on aging boilers and reduce overall energy consumption
- West dorm middle apartment renovations

Two significant projects ahead for us are negotiating with State Fire Marshal about installation of fire sprinkler system and drafting a site plan and selecting the type of structure to house the middle school classroom, bathroom, and storm shelter on the farm.

### **Outreach**

My personal outreach this for the school this past year has included the following:

- Lincoln/Omaha, DMVF, Iowa City, West Branch, WB Friends Church FUM
- Midyear Meeting at Bear Creek Meeting House
- Alumni Gatherings in SF Bay Area, Oregon, and Seattle
- Northern Yearly Meeting
- Illinois Yearly Meeting
- FGC in Toledo

### **Concluding remarks**

I close with renewed thanks to the Yearly Meeting for their continued care of and for the school. We appreciate how deeply and widely felt the school is as a ministry, as we have devoted our lives and livelihoods to it as well.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas Weber, Head of School