

Head of School Report to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) July 2021

What a year it has been! The 2020-2021 school year at Scattergood was one of transition and adaptation as we launched a new Middle School program, responded to a global pandemic, and continued to further the mission of the school.

We began the year with 32 students in High School and 11 in Middle School. Throughout the year we saw 5 students depart the HS community while 5 others joined; the middle school gained 1 student to end the year with 12 total.

On May 30th, 2021 we celebrated the graduation of seven seniors: Caleigh Stanier, Dasani Bichell, Jad Tamari, Hussain “Leo” Kooshan, Ruth Zakelj, Sona Bedeyan, and Tom Kuo, all of whom were joined on campus by members of their families and Scattergood students and staff for a beautiful outdoor ceremony. In our awards ceremony prior to graduation, it was announced that Eliza Mesenbach was selected for the Gwen Shupe Arts Award, while Gillie Schmidt-Queen was chosen for the Berquist award.

We say goodbye to two of our dear friends and colleagues as they move on from Scattergood, Kendall Smith (Director of Development) and Jenevieve “Jenny” Beben (College Counselor/Teacher). The Scattergood community is grateful for the contributions made by Jenny and Kendall during their time with us. While we are saddened by their departure, we are also heartened by the arrival of several new staff members. Joining our team for the 2021/2022 school year are Sadie Kirschenman (Math/Science), Chloe Nagel (Health Coordinator), Katie Herbert (Marketing/Communications), and Ben Heller (Biology/Farm).

In a bit of serendipitous timing, we were joined this fall by journalist Andrea Seabrook as our Friend in Residence. This proved particularly fruitful during the presidential election and transition between administrations as Andrea was able to offer us unique insight as both a Quaker and a former congressional correspondent for NPR. We are grateful for Andrea’s time at Scattergood and the perspective she brought to our community during this historic year.

Scattergood finds itself in a financially stable position following a year filled with challenges and surprises. While our annual giving efforts did see a 14% dip, this decrease is less than the 20-25% drop we had been anticipating. A second PPP loan was granted and forgiven, helping us close the budget gap and end the year with a small surplus.

One of our goals for the year was to shift our timeline for re-enrollment to occur in March, rather than the end of the school year. This allows us to more accurately project for the following year's budget and staffing. This shift has been a success as the vast majority of our families re-enrolled in the early spring and paid deposits which greatly improved our cash flow throughout the late spring/early summer.

Our tuition schedule for the 2021/2022 school year is \$13,000 for Middle School, \$19,000 for High School Day, and \$36,600 for High School Boarding (5 and 7-day). Tuition assistance is available for all grade levels.

A major focus of Scattergood's work to the 2020/2021 school year was responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in a manner that kept students safe and allowed for in-person learning. To this end, we examined all aspects of Scattergood-life and adjusted our procedures and expectations accordingly. Thanks to the hard work of our staff, students, and parents, we successfully prevented the transmission of Covid-19 on the Scattergood campus. As we look ahead towards a return to normalcy, we hope to hold on to the things we liked about this year, such as an increased focus on utilizing outdoor spaces and using communication technology to allow for greater collaboration over a distance.

In my conversations with staff members, it became clear that health insurance was their most pressing concern and one that would require creative solutions to address. One of the biggest healthcare challenges facing Scattergood is the relatively small size of our organization. This limits our ability to secure competitive premiums for insurance and severely limits our options. With this in mind, Kim Jones and I began a conversation with Focus One, a professional employer organization, or PEO. By partnering with Focus One, we can provide our staff with a variety of services and benefits, including a dramatically reduced healthcare deductible. Our partnership with Focus One will also provide access to payroll management tools, a wellness program, and professional support services. Best of all, we will accomplish this with only a moderate increase to our anticipated budget for insurance using our previous provider.

As I close this report, I would like to thank IYMC for the continued support given to Scattergood. From the members of the School Committee to the Friends who joined our presentation at Mid Year Meeting to the generous Friends who donated to our annual fund or in response to the Derecho, I have been repeatedly humbled by the love and care this community so clearly holds for Scattergood Friends School. I am honored and delighted to continue to lead and serve our Scattergood Community.

Respectfully submitted,
John