

Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

First Month

Meeting for Worship: 10:30am Sundays

Connections

Co-Clerks

Brad Bussiere-Nichols

pfmbrad@gmail.com 207-756-5586

Lyn Ballou

balloulyn@gmail.com, 207 838-6717

Treasurer, Contributions

Jane Mullen, 215-421-5257

jmmaine@aol.com

Treasurer, Operating Account

Kathy Beach, 207-233-2065

katherinegbeach@gmail.com,

Treasurer, Special Funds

Special Needs Funds

Elizabeth Szatkowski 207-274-3564

Ministry and Counsel

Beth Bussiere-Nichols

Christine Fletcher

Pastoral Care Coordinator

Christina Davis 518-0784

Childcare Coordinator

Susan Grannell 401-413-5951

pfm-nursery-

coordinator@googlegroups.com

Religious Education

Adult: On Hiatus

Youth: Bart Czyz btczyz@gmail.com

Youth Religious Education Coordinator:

Andy Grannell 207-878-8698

grannell90@gmail.com

Use of the Meetinghouse

Lise Wagner 232-1778

lise.r.wagner@gmail.com

e-group membership

pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions

Heather Denkmire

pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

Address/directory changes

directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org



1837 Forest Ave Portland, ME 04103

portlandfriendsmeeting.org

207-200-6544

“Remember that we are only able to act according to our present sense and judgment, in the faith that the light we are given is enough for our needs today. Let us be humble both with one another and in anticipating that there may be more and different steps to take tomorrow.”

— New England Yearly Meeting Advices on Corporate Discernment, Advice #2

Calendar

Monthly

Every Sunday: 10:30a Meeting for Worship*

First Sundays: 9am Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business*

Second Saturdays: 5-8p Youngish adults potluck
Bart Czyz, btczyz@gmail.com, 207 899 5937

*contact Co-Clerks for online Meeting for links

Portland Friends Meeting Email Lists

Our Meeting has two email lists, or, “google groups:”

- 1) *PFM Life of the Meeting*, for items directly related to Portland Friends Meeting business and/or directly Quaker items.
To send an announcement to this list, email:
pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com.
- 2) *PFM Wider Community*, for **any** items of interest from the PFM community to share, not necessarily *directly* related to Quakers, including (but not limited to) personal invitations or wider community events.
To send an announcement to this list, email:
pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com.

For any questions related to the lists, including requests to add yourself to one or both: pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com.

Portland Friends Meeting Directories

To request copies of the most updated directory, or to let us know about changes we should make to your contact information, just email: directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org. If you and/or a household member are not yet in the Directory and would like to add your information - we'd love to have you! You can quickly fill out the Add Me to the Directory form here: <https://airtable.com/shrk1d9Dk3ioE4uyU>

Portland Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business

January 3, 2021

We began in silent worship at 9:02 am, gathered remotely and connected via Zoom, with 27 members and attenders present.

Our presiding clerk, Lyn Ballou, read from New England Yearly Meeting Advices on Corporate Discernment, advice #2

Remember that we are only able to act according to our present sense and judgment, in the faith that the light we are given is enough for our needs today. Let us be humble both with one another and in anticipating that there may be more and different steps to take tomorrow.

Lyn then shared the following:

The last four years, and 2020 in particular, have left me raw and uncertain about our country, our society, our ability to address inequities, historical wrongs, and the continuing abuse of our planet. I look forward to change and improvements, yet know that others may view things differently. I fear that our national government may be unable to take on these challenges, given its divisions and the unwillingness of some leaders to allow constructive debate and consideration of change. I probably need to lower my expectations. As we enter into 2021, let us all heed the Light that is given and proceed tenderly, with patience and love.

1. **December minutes.** The minutes from our December 6, 2020, Meeting for Business were accepted as printed in the newsletter.

2. **Treasurers report** for December 2020. Kathy Beach presented this report showing our year to date expenditures and income for all of 2020. With the year complete, income at \$78,924 (101% of budget) and expenses at only \$68,808 (85% of budget), we have ended the year with a surplus of \$12,116.

**Quick Summary of Income and Expenses for PFM
 Through December 2020
 12th Month = 100%**

	Year-to-Date	% of Budget
INCOME		
Donations	\$65,554	108%
Rent	\$1,370	27%
Endowment	\$12,000	100%
Other		
TOTAL	\$78,924	101%
EXPENSES		
Meetinghouse Expenses	\$27,272	98%
Meeting Committees	\$34,656	76%
PFM's Contributions to Quaker Organizations	\$4,880	100%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$68,808	85%
Balance	\$12,116	

Kathy noted her deep gratitude for Friends who have come forward with the resources we need, including several large gifts that were not expected. We accepted Kathy's report, with gratitude for her careful work.

3. **Financial Oversight.** Jo Linder presented the proposed budget for 2021, which had been published in December. Friends approved the budget as presented. We are gifted with the spirit of giving in our meeting, and with our ability and willingness to give in so many ways. Jo shared her gratitude to Kathy Beach and Jane Mullen for their care of our financial transactions.

4. **Ministry and Counsel.** Christine Fletcher reported, since Beth Bussiere had no electricity. Ministry and Counsel is glad to have so many joining meeting – both as new members and as transfers from other meetings, and are preparing to welcome all these members.

The "Friendly Connection Calls" program is approaching the end of their first two month cycle. If you've not yet received a call, you can reach out to Beth at 207-939-8247 or beth.bussiere@gmail.com or to Christine at 207-712-4461 or christine.a.fletcher@gmail.com.

The discussion about places for whole meeting discernment, and how the Business Meeting agenda is formed, is an ongoing topic at Ministry and Counsel. The Meeting co-clerks are trying to communicate more clearly their availability to talk to anyone about how to bring a particular concern to the Meeting community.

5. **State of Society 2021.** As Ministry and Counsel is now creating our State of Society report, Christine invited us all to share our general sense, or reference to specific moments from last year when we experienced Portland Friends Meeting as deeply held, or, perhaps to moments when we "outran our leading". We listened to each other, and to Spirit, in a "worship sharing" format as we reflected on the spiritual condition of our meeting.

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(Minutes continued from page 2)

Here are some of the thoughts Friends shared. Ministry and Counsel will be listening for more reflections of our spiritual condition as they continue their work on this report.

- The extraordinary way we have been able to connect with each other using Zoom.
 - The value of sharing what books we're reading or other content we're finding can help us connect more deeply.
 - The number of new members this year, and the aliveness of our sharing with each other.
 - Particular mention was made of the special work considering how best to use or not use the meeting house during this pandemic. We value the opportunity Zoom has created for us, as we can connect to a much broader community, even as we miss the Friendly hugs that so characterized many of our interactions. Even without use of our building, our community feels strong and is functioning well.
 - We noted the joy of being able to connect with Friends who are on in years, and could not themselves travel safely.
 - Our love your meeting house days have been an inspiration, another opportunity to share in our community, and a chance to do some important physical work on the building.
 - We miss encountering our kids when we gather in the meeting house. The kids may be fine, but we miss them.
 - We are creating new ways to connect with each other, such as faithfulness groups and friendly connections calls, and appreciate the efforts to create all these new forms.
 - Our social concerns have not been forgotten! Our social concerns are as vital as ever.
 - Patience, forgiveness, and listening has grown in importance as we learn to stay connected and move forward during this period of social distancing, and care for each other in the face of a pandemic.
 - We are glad so many Friends trained in non-violence and went out on the streets in support of Black Lives Matter.
 - "How has truth prospered among us?" We have been challenged by the technology to nurture deep ministry on-line, but we have heard of transformative openings among Friends, and in particular of the joy of connecting with Friends around our country and around the world.
 - There is still a perception of an "in group" of Friends of long standing, and a newer "out group", even as we try to get past this.
 - Many among us still long for the deepening in ministry that we feel is more present when we meet in person.
6. **Nominating Committee.** Chris Beach reported that Nominating Committee suggests Fritz Weiss to represent us on the New England Yearly Meeting At Large Nominating Committee. He had this role during his membership in Hanover Meeting, with a term continuing into his time at Portland Friends Meeting, and so we would be just recognizing his continued service as he is now a member of our meeting. Friends were glad to approve.
7. **Quarterly Meeting in January.** Fritz Weiss and Emily Troll are part of group presenting at Quarterly Meeting. All of us are welcome to attend. The meeting will be on-line on January 23.
8. **Closing.** Our meeting closed in silent worship at 10:07 am, with about 33 members and attenders present, purposing to meet again, God willing, at 9:00 am on Sunday February 7, 2020 at 9:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Fink,
Co-Recording Clerk

Youth Religious Education Committee Report for 2020

Andy Grannell, Coordinator for YREC, December 19, 2020

Without interruption and for well over two decades, the Portland Friends Meeting's (PFM) program for children and youth has expanded to include care and nurture for all of our youth, i.e., carefully planned program that begins with infants and continues through to high school seniors.

The heart of this program focuses on a twice-a-month (2nd & 4th) Sunday morning experience that functions from September through to mid-June. Each of these Sunday experiences begins with our all-age community worship from 10:30 - 10:45, and followed by separating into three distinct classroom areas (dining area, kindergarten – grade 2 (Thunder Quakes), back committee room of first floor for, grades 3-8 (Middlers), and then upstairs to specially designed 'loft' area for grades 9-12 (Teens).

For each of these groupings, two volunteer teachers provide classroom experiences while at the same time care for infants is provided by a paid coordinator (Susan Grannell) and her assistant. The highlights of the year – until 2020 - have been planning for the now established tradition of celebrating Advent by means of children-focused "Advent Garden" and the planning of a teen-supported fundraising event which is held on Easter morning.

All of this twice a month PFM offering works in coordination with thematic weekend retreats sponsored by New England Yearly Meeting's Junior Yearly Meeting for children (grades 1 to 6), Junior High Yearly Meeting (grades 6,7, & 8) and by Young Friends Yearly Meeting (grades 9, 10, 11, & 12). Each of these are "loving and grounded community." Two of current PFM parents continue a tradition of providing support staffing for these retreats.

Each summer – "Friends Camp, in South China, Maine, is a caring and accepting youth camp community with Quaker values and lots of zany fun. We offer recreational, artistic, dramatic, and aquatic programming with Quaker worship and community work projects. Friends Camp gives youth a unique outdoor camping experience for spiritual, emotional, and creative growth that helps them discern a true and healthy path into adulthood." YREC works to recruit and provide camperships.

Due to the need to discontinue all onsite, physical, gathering due to COVID-19, YREC was challenged to create new programs that would fit the needs of families and youth. This continues to be our focus as we plan for the coming winter and spring months of 2021.

This report then spells out how YREC chose to respond to this challenge as the pandemic surged, abated - and then since October - has steadily grown.

Attendance during the winter into early spring, i.e., Sunday, January 12th – March 8th

Remained consistent with the following attendance typical: Teens (2), Middlers (9), and Thunder Quakes (8) = 19. While overall registration growing: (13) 'Thunder', (17) 'Middlers', and (10) 'Teens' for a total registration of 40. There were two new families with two children each who had registered during this period. From mid-March until the middle of June then no classes could be held and the same was true from September through to December. A continuing health care crisis of unprecedented dimensions required that the Meetinghouse be closed for group use.

Needed: Two or more teachers for our Middlers and one teacher for our Thunder Quakes

In June we thanked Lydia Maier and Sarah Peterson for their years of service as teachers for our large group of Middlers and we thanked Luke for his years of service as a teacher for our 4-8 'Thunder Quakes'. In the months leading up to classes resuming at the Meetinghouse (looking like it will be fall of 2021 at the earliest) we will be recruiting two or more teachers for our Middlers and one teacher for the Thunder Quakes.

Canceled: The "Faith & Play" Teacher Training Session

Melinda Wenner Bradley was recruited to over this weekend training on May 7-8, 2020, at Durham Friends Meeting. We were seeking nominations for those current and prospective teachers and parents interested in being trained. We located such training books as Faith & Play: Quaker Stories for Friends

Organizing & Digitizing of YREC Books

Taking advantage of the unprecedented opportunity presented by a now vacant Meetinghouse (from the onset of COVID in March until mid-September) Andy scanned and made searchable the PFM book and audio-visual collection (1241) and
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(YREC report continued from page 4)

the children/youth collection (250). The main library collection is now attractively housed on three purchased IKEA bookcases and five older bookcases. Two hundred and five books in our children/youth collection were removed from their shelving and digitally scanned. In the coming winter months, Andy will be working with the library committee members (and anyone else who would like to volunteer) to label, card, and re-shelve.

Organizing & Shelving of YREC Curricular Materials

The back classroom now has two new bookcases that are dedicated to YREC curricular materials and teaching materials. In this new arrangement, four additional bookcases located near the 'Thunder Quakes' area are ready for use. In the coming winter months, the books will be labelled and carded by members of the Library Committee so that we can track who is borrowing what book(s) then we can announce "PFM-TinyCat" through the LibraryThing website. The goal of these steps will be to post an invitation to each parent to review these 250 books and the larger collection also.

Future Funding of YREC: Kanaar Family 2007 Trust

In October of 2019, Andy met with David & Jennifer Kanaar at their family's PFM gravesite. David & Jennifer had flown from their home in Pacific Palisades, California for the express purpose of making this first-time visit to the gravesite of David's father Adrian Kanaar and David's 'adopted' stepmother Margaret Jones Kanaar (1904-2001). The Youth Religious Education connection here is that this gravesite memorializes David Kanaar's adoptive and late-in-life stepmother Margaret Jones Kanaar.

In her 2002 will, Margaret Jones Kanaar endowed PFM's youth religious education programs with approximately \$10,000. For the past 18 years (2002-2020) this fund has been carefully invested and the annual drawdown maintained at 4%. As a result, this fund continues to be an important source of our annual funding. Following the visit to the family Jones-Kanaar plot, we retired to the Meetinghouse to discuss the prospect of a separate but related endowment - and in this case - the David & Jennifer Kanaar Fund.

Six months following this onsite visit, i.e., May of 2020, we received this message from David & Jennifer Kanaar: "In terms of our endowment to the Portland Friends Meeting (in Portland, Maine), yes, Jennifer and I have just amended our Kanaar Family 2007 Trust, the Revocable Living Trust Amendment now reflects a \$20,000 endowment to the Portland Friends Meeting. Our plan is that \$20,000 is our minimum endowment to the Portland Friends Meeting in our amended Trust; as we get closer to our end of life, this endowment amount might be increased depending on the size of our nest-egg at that time. We hope that this token amount will help you continue doing God's work in your community."

Clarifying PFM's Commitment to Bradly Lwugu

Co-founder of the Kakamega Care Center, local Portland Public School music teacher, and member of Durham Friends Meeting, Sukie 'Sukie' Bellows Rice aided Dorothy Solebwe to fund the building and subsequent growth of the Kakamega Care Center.

Over the past eighteen years, Sukie and her 'Friends of Kakamega' have raised upwards of \$50,000 a year. Annually many Portland Friends have traveled to Kenya with Sukie on her summer trips and contributed financially. YREC's current support for Bradly grows out of these PFM summer visits to Kakamega and the number of PFM Friends who have served to raise the annual funds.

After a two-and-one-half year battle with cancer, Susan Bellows Rice (1946-2020) died peacefully on July 17th at her home. With Sukie's passing, her planning for the transition went into high gear. We can count on the team led by Sukie's son John Chisholm to carry on.

In lieu of the contributions that have been annually realized at our Easter breakfast and this year had to be canceled due to COVID-19, Muriel Allen initiated a 'go fund me.' As a result, our scholarship assistance to Bradly Lwangu of \$1,000 (now funded through PFM) has been supplemented by these donations. Thank you to Muriel and all Friends who contributed.

In November, Emily brought YREC's request to fully fund Bradly's scholarship for 2021 to PFM's Financial Oversight. Emily explained that since we are not likely to be able to hold an Easter Breakfast fundraising event in 2021, we are requesting that the full \$1,000 be paid out of designated PFM funds.

At this month's Sunday, December 6th - Meeting for Business, this request was reported out by clerk of Financial Oversight, Jo Linder as part of the FY 2021 proposed budget. Responding to questions, Emily Silevinac explained that Bradly graduates

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(YREC report continued from page 5)

from preparatory school in 2022, and at that point, our current commitment ends. Should there be a request to extend this scholarship support beyond 2022, i.e., to college years, then this request will be brought to the Meeting by YREC for its consideration as a time-limited designated fund.

Cleaning and disinfecting of the infant care room

Emily Silevinac worked with Susan Grannell to identify the needs for cleaning the infant care room. Following this, Paula Rossvall spent considerable time giving every surface a good antiseptic cleaning – including all of the little playthings. Thank-you Paula.

Thank-you to Luke Hankins

At our first YREC meeting in August we thanked Luke Hankins for his steady and able leadership through some challenging times – both in his own business world and in the life the Meeting. For a number of years - working closely with Chris Fitze - Luke delighted in reading stories with the Thunder Quakers.

Purchased of a Visio 40" 2019, 'Smart' Television

With PFM's high-speed internet connection lying in wait, the collection of FGC resources expanding, and an unexpended end-of-the-year financial capacity, we purchased Visio one of the top-rated of the 2019 Smart TVs. Purchased at Best buy (\$269.98) and delivered the Visio 40" to Teen/upstairs. A two-year contract for service was also purchased. In the post-COVID-19 era, this interactively designed 'smart' television has the prospect of being used during worship as we are now have expanded participation due to our Zoom online Meetings for Worship.

Survey to aid us in planning for the fall term of 2020

In early September, Bart sent out a survey to aid us in planning for the fall. We received feedback from 9 families representing 15 youth. Equally reflective of our three age groupings, i.e., 6-8, 9-12. and 13-18. (a) "This fall, how likely would this child participate in... outdoor physically-distanced religious education activities on 2nd and 4th Sundays" – 53% (maybe), 25% (likely) and only 20% (yes or very likely). We discussed a variety of approaches on how best to proceed with no satisfactory options then emerging.

Fall & Winter NEYM online and onsite retreats for PFM Middlers & Teens

Several of our middlers and teens are active with NEYM online virtual retreats. Thank you to Maggie Nelson for her good and creative work first with our PFM Teens and now with the New England Yearly Meeting's Young Friends retreats.

Quaker Religious Education Collaborative

With Sally Farneth's steady encouragement and emailed updates, Andy has participated periodically in Quaker Religious Education Collaborative. These are Zoom sharing sessions and occasionally online demonstrations sponsored by Friends General Conference and reaching an international set of Friends Meetings. Sally Farneth is a founding member of this collaborative.

Canceled: Advent Garden celebration on Saturday, December 5th at 4:30 – 6:00

Planned with the cooperation of the owners Cumberland's Hideaway Acres horse training facility, this event was canceled due to the first winter of 2020-2021 Nor'Easter. Unfortunately, the storm arrived at the worst possible time for our purposes, i.e., late afternoon and early evening. Canceling turned out to be the right call as travel soon became difficult if not dangerous and the wind caused the loss of power to thousands in Greater Portland. Two notices were sent to the 8 parents representing 21 children/youth who had signed on. We want to thank Chris Fitze for making the connection with Hideaway and for leading the way in planning.

Emily Silevinac's Request to PFM's Meeting for Business on Sunday, December 6th

Emily requested that Friends consider joining our YREC Committee and/or offering programmatic support. Explaining that currently, all four YREC participants are serving as at home parents and wage earners. This requires juggling work and family and all of this 24/7. This then leaves too little energy or time for YREC. From those not caught up in this COVID induced, stressful pattern, we are requesting additional support. In the hours following this request, Andy received the suggestive list of names to be contacted and one concrete programming proposal. More on both soon. We have the offer of Doug Malcolm who will join us on the 20th.



**NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING
OF FRIENDS
QUAKERS**

Thursdays Parents' Tea-and-Chat

On-going drop-in conversation about Quaker parenting in these times

Every Thursday from 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Weekly conversation time for parents at home with their children at this time.

Hosted by Junior Yearly Meeting and Jr High Yearly Meeting (elementary and middle school) Coordinator Gretchen Baker-Smith and longtime coordinator of the Quaker Parenting Initiative Harriet Heath.

Join the mutually supportive free-form conversation Thursday evenings via Zoom. Get the link by emailing Gretchen gretchen@neym.org.

Many of you have noticed and commented on the virtual background that is usually behind me in our Zoom meetings. It's a picture of our lovely meeting house, taken by Quaker photographer Jean Schnell.

Jean has been on a journey, photographing Quaker meeting houses throughout New England. To see this body of work, go to her web site, www.jeanschnell.com, click on "Meetinghouse galleries", and then on the particular meeting of interest. — Arthur Fink

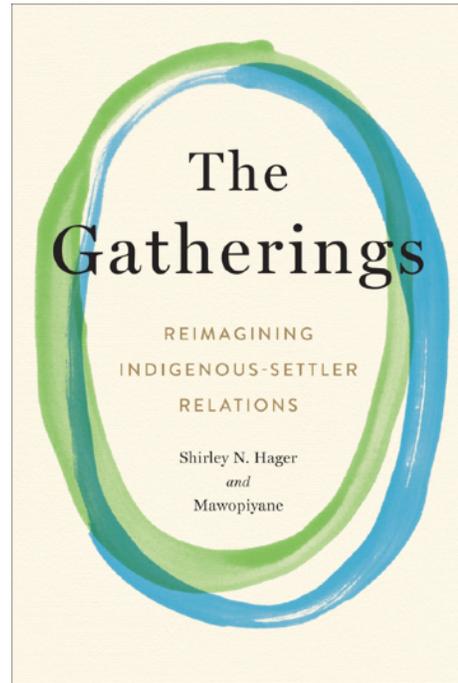
State of Maine support available for COVID-19 cases or close contacts

As the numbers are increasing and the CDC is having challenges identifying and tracing contacts we have created an online referral process. We go to local community organizations with referrals.

We have staff available 7 am to 7 pm. Support includes groceries, food, essentials, diapers, assistance with unemployment or rent relief, and many other as-needed services --whatever people need to stay home for the isolation or quarantine or for those that need it they can go to a quarantine shelter (we have hotels set up).

Background and direct link to the DHHS Website for community care and social support: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus-resources/support-for-isolation-quarantine>

Questions: Email dhhs.covid.socialsupport@Maine.gov



Dear Friends,

For over a decade, Wabanaki and non-Native individuals in Wabanaki territory (Maine and the Maritimes) have been working together to create this book.

I'm happy to announce that the website for introducing, sharing and pre-ordering the book, *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*, is open! Here is the link: <https://utorontopress.com/us/the-gatherings-3>

The book will be out in March, e-book in April. Pre-orders are being taken now, with a pre-ordering discount. Note: the "browse inside" button on the website won't be active until the actual book is available. If you want to share the link with anyone and everyone, please do! The link is compatible with Facebook. You can post the link and say something about the book...it shows up with the book cover and everything! Pre-orders will help the publisher know how many to print.

I am deeply grateful to Portland Friends Meeting and its support over the years for this book. A number of you have been following our progress, and I am so grateful for your interest and encouragement. It was a Leadings Fund Grant from PFM that enabled the writing phase of this project, and you'll see my acknowledgement of your generosity in the "With Gratitude" section.

Our hope is that this book will be a resource for healing and strengthening Indigenous-settler/tribal-state relations.

Yours in gratitude,

Shirley Hager

Greater Portland Family Promise 2020 Report for Portland Friends Meeting

The world turned upside down this year, and we've struggled to come to terms with it. Worship on zoom replaced worship in person. We learned to consolidate our shopping lists and minimize our trips to the grocery store. "Thinking of you" emails replaced hugs. Babies were born, people got married, friends died, and we couldn't be there with them. Our hearts feel bruised, but even as we mourn all we have lost, we know the impact of the pandemic has not affected us as brutally as it has affected so many others.

Nonprofits have struggled to meet the needs of the people they serve, and Greater Portland Family Promise is no exception. When Governor Mills declared a Civil State of Emergency in March, GPFM had one family in the program and was committed to caring for a second family, related to one of our graduate families, if they made it out of Angola before the borders closed. They did. Realizing that a rotational model was no longer safe and viable and that both families needed to quarantine, it was decided to house one family at Clark Memorial and one family at HopeGateWay.

From midMarch to midJune, our two families were basically isolated. Rick and Lynne Gammon from Trinity Episcopal checked on the family at Clark Memorial each day. Yvonne Jumper from First Lutheran took the mother, who was pregnant, to her doctor appointments. I delivered groceries once a week. The family at HopeGateWay is related to one of our former families who checked in with them. Linda Anderson from Woodfords Congregational delivered groceries and took the mother, also pregnant, to her doctor appointments. Wendy Barmore from First Lutheran delivered food boxes from Wayside to both families weekly. In June, two apartments in the same building became available and a small moving team moved the families into their apartments.

At the same time, work was going on behind the scenes. The moving team was able to consolidate its furniture inventory and reduce the number of storage units we are renting. GPFM began to focus on housing stabilization and homelessness prevention. While a number of our parents have received their work permits and found jobs, others who had jobs have had their hours reduced or been laid off. Because GPFM's mission is to help families achieve sustainable independence, it feels right to help these families keep their housing so that children can continue to have a safe place to sleep at night.

Clark Memorial United Methodist Church closed its doors at the end of June, but Greater Portland Family Promise signed an agreement to use the parsonage for the next three years. When it became clear that one of our families was going to lose their housing, a small group of volunteers sorted through piles of donated bedding, boxes of toys and games, mountains of kitchen "stuff", and tons of office supplies. Volunteers gave the building a thorough cleaning, and our family moved in the week before Thanksgiving. They have a safe place to live as they look for an apartment that is both affordable and large enough to accommodate a family of eight.

GPFM also realized that many of our families may have stable housing, but they are having difficulty meeting basic needs. We currently have 14 congregations supporting 15 families. Our goal is to not only keep our graduate families in their homes but also to make sure they have the food and basic supplies they need.

Portland Friends has committed to supporting one of those families, a mother with four children ages 12 to 5, from DR Congo. I am deeply grateful to all who have stepped up to support our family with donations of money, Hannaford gift cards, and clothing. Thanks to you, our children have winter gear, school supplies, and clothes for school. The mother has a warm coat and winter boots. I have been using the Hannaford cards to purchase nonfood items such as laundry detergent and trash bags for the family so that Sandra can use her General Assistance vouchers to purchase the African food her family prefers. A special thank you goes to Lise Wagner who is tracking donations, to Dorothy Grannell who is reloading the family's bus passes each month, and to Sarah Cushman who has translated for me on more than one occasion when complex issues needed to be addressed.

Feeling led to widen its circle of support, GPFM provided a homemade Thanksgiving meal or a box of African foods to the 25 families being temporarily housed at motels in South Portland. Other hunger relief agencies have been delivering food boxes but most of the families haven't had access to prepared meals or ethnically appropriate foods. Thank you to all who contributed to this effort.

As always, I am grateful for the support and the prayers of Portland Friends. This is work I feel called to do, but I'm not sure I could do it without your compassion and your generosity. —Ann Dodd-Collins



Awaken Seed
by our friend and neighbor Mihku Paul

INDIGENOUS MATTERS

by Wayne Cobb (wcobb2@gmail.com)

As legislative momentum toward a historic shift in Maine State-Tribal relations was building in early 2020, it was brought suddenly to a standstill by the Covid pandemic. A 21-point task force report recommending major enhancements to self-determination of the Tribes in Maine was delivered to the Legislature in February. It was quickly transformed into a massive bill, LD 2094. Two public hearings attracted large numbers citizens, most of whom were supporters. A State House rally was planned for April 1 to push for its approval. And then the Legislature closed its doors. The jurisdictional committee, Judiciary, modified the bill slightly to improve its chances in a hoped-for Special Session that was never convened. And then 2020 ended without a vote on this important measure.

Now in 2021, with a new legislature having been sworn in and Covid precautions in place, a new set of proposals is beginning to emerge, building on the intent of LD 2094. Removed from the original omnibus bill and placed into a separate one is the question of freeing the Indigenous communities to conduct gaming under the purview of the federal Indian Gaming Act rather than under State regulation. Other modifications to the larger bill may be forthcoming. Stay tuned.

A major factor this year in advancing the interests of our Indigenous neighbors is the creation of the Wabanaki Alliance. The Native communities in Maine, led by President of the Alliance Maulian Dana of the Penobscot Nation, have joined to create this public education and lobbying entity, which is supported in part by public contributions. The Alliance will provide focused guidance to Maine citizens and legislators who wish to participate in moving Tribal self-determination to its proper level. I encourage you to learn more about the Alliance at (<https://wabanakialliance.com/>).

Also, this is a good time to reach out to your State Representative and Senator to express your support for upcoming bills that will advance Indigenous interests in Maine. Urge them to follow the new bills closely, reach out to the Wabanaki Alliance if they have questions or concerns, and give these bills their support. It's time to correct the errors of the past and allow Indigenous communities the self-determination they deserve.

Donations to Portland Friends Meeting

Many thanks to everyone who provided financial support to our meeting during 2020! Portland Friends Meeting is fortunate to have received support from members, attenders, and well-wishers both near and far during this especially challenging time.

Although we are not currently meeting for worship at the meetinghouse, it continues to be the physical hub of our community and where we receive our mail. For those who donate by check, please continue to use this mailing address:

Treasurer, Contributions
Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Avenue
Portland, ME 04103

If you currently donate by check and would like to convert to donating by direct payment from your bank account to the bank account of the Meeting, please contact me at jmmaine@aol.com.

With thanks and great appreciation,

Jane Mullen
Treasurer, Contributions

Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Ave
Portland, ME 04103

Address Service Requested

Next newsletter deadline:
Tuesday, February 9, 11:59pm

submissions: pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

