

Abington Quarterly Meeting for Business

Held at Plymouth Monthly Meeting

Second Month, 2nd, 2020

Abington – 12: Byberry – 1 : Gwynedd/Foulkeways- 14 : Horsham – 3 : Norristown – 1 :
Plymouth – 14 : Pottstown WG – 1: Richland – 1 : Unami –2 : Upper Dublin – 2 : Guests – 2

The meeting began with a few moments of worship.

Rebecca Cratin, Clerk of Plymouth Meeting, welcomed Friends to Plymouth.

The minutes of Tenth Month were approved with one spelling correction.

Tom Armstrong (Plymouth) reported that the Quarter paid the down payment to George School for JFC/MSFC.

Carolyn Schodt (Chestnut Hill/Foulkeways) presented about transforming power, an Alternatives to Violence Project concept, and the notion of way opening, as these concepts relate to the Reuniting Family Cash Bail Fund. There are ten members of the local community who each committed to raise \$500 to begin the cash bail fund. The fund already has a place within a 501c3 organization. They hope to pay bail for a man and a woman on Valentine's Day. To support this project, checks can be made to Reuniting Family Cash Bail Fund, Reality Speaking Incorporated, P.O. Box 781, Norristown, PA, 19404.

David Miller (Plymouth) raised a question about putting money up against a meeting's property as collateral. He mentioned several religious bodies that organized to do this in the 70s and 80s.

Vincent O'Grady (Plymouth) noted that magisterial district justices and law enforcement will continue to feel pressure to issue bail and the culture needs to be changed to really change the cash bail system. He urged people to continue to put pressure on magisterial district justices. Several friends spoke in agreement to this concern. David Miller likened this to the moral dilemma facing local abolitionists when the meeting had the opportunity to buy a slave versus fighting the system of slavery.

Carolyn asked the Quarter to consider sending a representative and a back-up to this cash bail fund committee. She asked interested members to speak to her.

Susan Vorwerk (Upper Dublin) gave an update about the Abington Quarter Communications Committee. The group met in November and includes members from all meetings. They will communicate through Zoom conferencing. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 11. The committee is working on building a new Quarter website and improving all kinds of meeting communications across meetings: Facebook, press releases, etc. They are currently considering the website platform and have been studying Byberry's new website (which Susan built). She

thanked AQMF for helping Byberry purchase a URL, which is important to avoid bots. The platform is Church Insight. The clerk expressed appreciation to the committee for moving the Quarter forward in this area.

Florence Degler (Abington) spoke about detention at the southern border. After working in El Paso as a nurse for 25 years, Florence was led to help current immigrant families detained at the border. She supports Annunciation House, a small non-profit that helps immigrants in detention. Abington's Peace and Social Concerns has raised \$2,000 through a silent auction and a flea market. Florence went down to help in El Paso, but on the way down, she learned that immigrants were being transported to Las Cruces, New Mexico. She went there instead to help at a high school in Las Cruces. They set up cots and provided supplies. She then went to El Paso, where they were getting 1,800 people a week. Annunciation House is now getting 20 people a day and has decided to get a house in Juarez for people waiting for their applications to be processed. The Quaker meeting in El Paso has been helping at Annunciation House. Florence recommends Annunciation House to those in the Quarter who want to help.

Stacy Kent Wyckoff (Gwynedd) spoke about her personal experiences with immigrant rights, beginning with the adoption of her son from El Salvador and her daughter from Vietnam. She became involved with immigrant rights activism after attending the first women's march in 2017. Stacy worked with the ACLU People Power Movement, took Eileen Flanagan's online course, "Building a Nonviolent Direct-Action Campaign," and volunteered for Immigrant Rights Action. She also participated in trainings through Pennsylvania Immigrant and Citizenship Coalition and Welcoming the Stranger. She helped to prepare a public art installation entitled Hostile Terrain 94, which documented the 3,200 bodies discovered along one desert area of the Arizona border between 1994-2014.

Last spring, Stacy saw the documentary *Las Madres de Berks* by Michelle Angela Ortiz and subsequently worked with Gwynedd's Peace and Social Action Committee to bring this movie about the imprisonment of immigrant women and children at the Berks Detention Center to the Gwynedd community. Stacy ended her talk with a very moving poem by a Somali poet, and members requested a copy of the poem. Judy Inskip (Gwynedd) suggested that we send excerpts of the poem to Senator Toomey and to contact him often about our country's treatment of immigrants.

Lois Pan (Gwynedd) spoke of her personal experience with immigration.

Jenny Isaacs (Doylestown) presented about her work with Immigrant Rights Action/ Grupo de Accion. She described how she became involved with immigrant rights. The group began after immigrants in Doylestown were detained by ICE. Jenny explained how the group organized, raised funds, retained a reputable immigration law firm, and developed a system of collecting information. They met with immigrants to inform them of their rights and developed a community reporting network. They have also sent hundreds of postcards to shut down the Berks Detention Center. She urged Friends to continue to contact officials about shutting down Berks.

Jenny described IRAGdA's advocacy work and the stories of specific immigrants. There is a movement called "Fix '96: End Mass Criminalization" that began in 2016 before the election. President Clinton signed into law policies that made it easier to detain immigrants and harder to apply for legal status. ICE detentions, deportations, and family separations were much higher during the Obama administration than they are now.

Jenny told us about an e-course "Changing Systems, Changing Ourselves" that is offered by AFSC. She highly recommends this course. Cyndy Levy (Foulkeways) is leading a group through that course.

Jenny highlighted activities and trainings that happened through Immigrant Rights Action in 2019, including a successful roundtable with other agencies and programs in Bucks and Montgomery Counties. In the last year, they also secured funding for an office. During the life of the organization, they have distributed over \$30,000 for legal fees and mental health services.

Jenny suggested ways for Friends to get involved in these issues through Aclamo, PICC, New Sanctuary Movement, and End Family Detention/Shut Down Berks. IRAGdA Meetings are on the First Wednesday of every month. Their website is immigrantrightsaction.org.

The clerk asked whether the quarter's annual report be held over or accepted. Friends accepted the report. It will be sent out with the minutes. Appreciation was expressed to the clerk.

The meeting closed with a moment of worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Paige Menton

Amelia Diamond

Recorder

Clerk