

Annual Report Friends Camp Director

The 2019 summer at Friends Camp will see the most campers we have ever had at camp, as well as the most staff. About half of our campers are from Maine, while our staff have more widely spread backgrounds. More than half of the Friends Camp staff members are returners this summer, including the entire leadership team. For the second year, our staff orientation at camp included an overnight camping trip to Acadia National Park and a community dinner.

We are especially excited this year about our new Counselor-In-Training program for seventeen-year-olds, called Rising Leaders. Eight Rising Leaders joined our youngest session this summer to explore their own leadership strengths and goals, talk about Quaker leadership, and practice leading effective programming for youth. This group also had an overnight retreat at Vassalboro Friends Meeting.

Along with other areas of the Yearly Meeting, we are continuing to work on growing in inclusivity and equity at camp. Lisa Graustein and Judy Williams spent an afternoon with our entire staff strategizing and practicing how to interrupt moments of racism or white supremacy culture at camp. Friends in Maine have been very supportive of Friends Camp joining the Level Ground project- an effort by camps in Maine to welcome New Mainers (from refugee families). Friends Camp will host at least 4 New Mainers as campers in 2019, with scholarships funded by Friends in Maine.

I am writing this report on the heels of visits from Maggie Nelson, Nia Thomas, and Gretchen Baker-Smith. These members of the NEYM youth staff team visited to spend time with our Rising Leaders and our youngest campers. The web that connects Friends Camp and our youth programs continues to grow stronger, especially through the large number of campers who attend both and through staffing overlap. Several of this year's counselors at camp were JHYM Junior Staffers a few years ago, and many Youth Friends RPs serve as current or recent camp counselors!

We continue to encounter growing edges at Friends Camp. Caring for our property and buildings takes more resources as our facilities age. We were grateful to receive a Legacy Grant for work on our Meetinghouse, which now functions as our art space. This year we also built a new cabin for campers and made many needed replacements around camp including roofs, floors, and appliances. Friends Camp is on solid financial footing due to robust enrollment, although as we look forward to our next several years of operation we must consider ways to invest in our property and possibly in more year-round staff.

This year the camp committee met four times, in addition to several sub-committee meetings. The committee has tackled many issues involving health and safety of campers this year, including water treatment on property and immunization requirements for the Measles vaccine. Our camp committee re-affirmed our priority for mission-driven events in our short spring and fall rental seasons. We would love to host your Friends Meeting, school, or group for a retreat.