



NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING
OF FRIENDS
QUAKERS

August 19, 2019

Dear Parents of Sixth Graders,

Welcome to an amazing year of child development and parenting! This letter will hopefully answer some questions and give you some encouragement about JYM and JHYM and your child's participation in either or both.

As you know, JYM is for children in grades 2-6 and JHYM is for children in grades 6-8. Acknowledging the wide range of development in this one amazing year, JYM and JHYM has let 6th grade be a "swing year" between the two programs. Our long-standing policy has been to let 6th graders go to 1 JHYM Retreat at any point during the year, and then decide on whether to stay in JHYM or go back to JYM for the rest of the year.

I have been a major proponent of keeping this 6th grade year a "swing year." If they stay in JYM they have the opportunity to be "leaders" and elders of the community, and for some this is very powerful. In JHYM, they have the opportunity to be more with their developmental peers.

The most common reflection among kids who move up from JYM to JHYM is "I thought JHYM would be scary and that it wouldn't be as fun as JYM, but it was at least as much fun if not more so. We do more things together as a group and it's a place where you really are accepted for who you are."

6th graders have been remarkably successful in JHYM -- it's been amazing.

JHYM doesn't have breakfast bubble gum, but it does have the name tag fairy. It doesn't have dress up, but it does play an infamous version of "contact" Big Wind Blows. JHYM small groups go longer than JYM, but the conversations are around the JH'ers everyday lives, and most kids complain loudly if they don't get enough time in them on a weekend. In JHYM, we sing, do chores, have worship and Quiet Hour just like in JYM. JHYM plays more games and does more activities together as a large group than in JYM. Some of the staff – like Anne, Dave, Carol Baker, Wendyl, and Kevin – are beloved in JYM, too. Others – including my husband Buddy, Adam Kohrman, Lilly Campbell, Emily Edwards, and Steve Ball – will be brand new to your child. They are awesome, and I am so grateful for them!

Your child may be clear they want to remain in JYM for this entire year – and that's fine. But I really encourage you and them to consider coming to one JHYM Retreat this year, too – the transition is so much easier if they do. *Either way, please do encourage them to attend our special retreat for 6th and 7th Graders titled **Bodyworks**, this year to be held March 27-29, 2020 at Portland Friends Meeting.*

I am deeply grateful for your support and for your child's participation in our beloved community. Be in touch, as always, with questions or concerns, or ways that I could be supportive.

With love and thanks,

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