



NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING
OF FRIENDS
QUAKERS

April 14, 2022

Dear Friends,

We're writing to share with you that after a loving, grounded and care-filled search process by the Yearly Meeting, Kara Price has been invited to serve as the next Children and Family Ministries Coordinator.

Kara has been part of our youth programs for most of her life—as an attender, a JYM and JHYM staffer, a JHYM Sessions coordinator, and a parent. She brings a longstanding Call to ministry, a degree and work experience in education, and youth ministry leadership experience both within Friends and in a large, diverse congregational context in another denomination. She is known to most of the youth program volunteers in our Yearly Meeting and to many of our JYM and JHYM youth. She's firmly rooted and grounded in Friends' faith communities, including her local meeting in Storrs, Connecticut. She's also a musician, songwriter, and lover of games and silliness. We are deeply grateful for Kara's clear "Yes!" to carrying on the beloved ministry of this Yearly Meeting.

There will be much to learn, to tweak, and to step into, and we ask for your prayers, help, patience, and care. While Gretchen is committed to being a primary mentor and elder for Kara through this transition, the collective wisdom and heart of this ministry is held by the circle of youth staff, Youth Ministries Committee members, young people themselves and families. We have faith that, grounded in the Spirit, prayer, gratitude, trust, and joy, this ministry and community of Friends will continue to thrive and shine.

We're sure you have many questions. Here are some answers (but don't hesitate to be in touch with other questions):

When is Kara starting?

Kara will officially start July 1st, but she'll be part of conversations and planning before that. She'll be on staff for the JYM Retreat in May and be shadowing Gretchen in her work both prior to and during Sessions.

When is Gretchen leaving her current position?

Gretchen will continue in her current role through this summer's Sessions (including coordinating JHYM at Yearly Meeting). After Sessions, she'll be available to Kara in any ways that help our beloved community continue, including staffing retreats and other programs as Way opens.

Who was on the Search Committee?

On behalf of the Yearly Meeting, we are deeply grateful to Anna Lindo (Framingham), Quinn Nortonsmith (Northampton), Karen Sanchez-Eppler (Northampton), and Kristin Wilson (Framingham) for working with Noah Merrill, the Yearly Meeting Secretary, throughout the search process. All four of these Friends have vital connections and overlapping relationships with our youth programs and local meetings—as youth retreat staff, program participants, parents, Youth Ministries Committee members, and as servant leaders in various ways in our wider Quaker community. It is a real gift to so completely trust their process and listening.

What was their process?

From the beginning the search process was shaped and informed by the ongoing listening and input of the Youth Ministries Committee, as well as current youth participants, parents, and youth staff.

Beginning in the fall of 2021, a Search Committee was formed and applications were solicited through a wide range of national Quaker organizational channels and beyond.

The committee met to begin its more active work in mid-February, immediately following the Yearly Meeting Secretary's return from sabbatical. They reviewed a wide-ranging pool of applicants, prayerfully reflected on the guidance received to inform their work, and developed a set of questions to guide and provide consistency to the interview process.

From the applications received, an initial group was selected to be invited for a first round of interviews. Interviews focused on assessing the applicants' direct, relevant experience, their philosophy and theology of youth ministry, their engagement with issues of diversity and inclusion, their responses to concrete scenarios taken from the experiences of our youth ministries, their approach to leadership and collaboration, and their creativity and vision for nurturing and stewarding our youth ministries into the future.

Following initial interviews, the Search Committee met to select candidates from the first round to invite for a second round of interviews. Prior to this second round, in-depth references were sought, and each of the finalists had the opportunity to meet with the Youth Ministries team of Yearly Meeting Staff (Anna Hopkins, the Friends Camp Director; Maggie Fiori, the Teen Ministries Coordinator; Nia Thomas, Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator; and Gretchen Baker-Smith, Children & Family Ministries Coordinator) for conversation and exploration of the role and how they would serve as part of a team.

A dynamic second round of interviews was held, and the Committee met for final discernment. After a challenging and Spirit-led process, and affirming the many rich gifts and commitment each candidate brought to the search process, the Committee was united

in recommending that the Yearly Meeting call Kara Price to this work, and Kara joyfully accepted this invitation to service and ministry among us.


How can we support Kara and the Youth Programs?

Please hold Kara, Gretchen, the Yearly Meeting Youth Ministries Team, and all of the staff, youth and families in much Light through this time. Listen for ways that you can help with this transition. If we all lean into trusting the Spirit and each other, all shall be well.

If you have any questions about the search, the transition, or hopes and prayers for next steps, feel free to contact Noah at noah@neym.org, or by phone at 802-451-6931.

Please join us in expressing much gratitude and welcome to Kara! You can send messages to her at kara@neym.org. Because of the transition, she won't be able to respond to messages for a while, but we'll make sure she receives them.

With love and gratitude,



Gretchen Baker-Smith



Noah Merrill