



BeFriending Creation

A Publication of

QUAKER EARTHCARE WITNESS

Affirming our essential unity with nature

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Listening to Roots, Walking in Beauty

By Mey Hasbrook

IN THE MEADOW, I gave thanks beside a beech tree. Sunset neared after a beautiful day with Swarthmoor Area Meeting of Southwest Cumbria, England. This area is called “the cradle of Quakerism” and brings to mind The Valiant 60, the 17th-century law-breaking mystics and traveling ministers from this region. I laid down tobacco and sang with some tears. My thanks followed the beech’s roots toward a creek. Facing brightness between clouds, I bore witness to the Beauty of the land. I also prayed for Quakers and humans to make peace with Creation.

Soon after my arrival to Swarthmoor Hall, after listening to the One-Legged’s roots for wisdom, I found a very clear word on Right Relationship. It’s from Gerald Hewiston’s *Journey Into Life: Inheriting the story of early Friends*, the 2013 Swarthmore Lecture of Britain Yearly Meeting:

“We need to be in Right Relationship with our personal Inner Clerk, with the intense power of God, and with the community around us to whom we feel bound. Such right relationship is not a matter of words, or even deeds. It is a matter of being entire, complete,

as a tree is wholly a tree, albeit root, trunk, bough, branch and leaf. With such complete integrity, entire wholeness, all actions flow from a state of ease and inner rest and poise. Acting from this condition, from this calm and balanced centre, all work is then Spirit-led activity. Our work as human beings is to align ourselves with blessed purposiveness, so that the outward work of our hands is the result of the inner work of our heart.”

Through Right Relationship, I experience our “community” as all of the Earth. This “being entire” is held together when humans respect that we are of the Earth, not separate from or “better than.” Such respect is found in lived experiences of North American First Nations whose remnants have survived genocide all-the-while foretelling what we now call “climate breakdown.”

This wisdom resonates among Quakerism’s roots because complete integrity was the aim of the first Friends. As they listened to the Light, they proclaimed spiritual Truth while standing up to Injustice. As Soldiers of the Lamb’s War, they carried faith-in-practice unto civil disobedience, often at high costs. Their aim echoes that of France

Continued on page 3



- 1 Listening to Roots, Walking in Beauty By Mey Hasbrook
- 4 Beckoned by Living Trees By Marcelle Martin
- 5 For the Love of the Land By Pamela Haines
- 6 Finding Steady Ground By Daniel Hunter
- 7 Flows Repeatedly: Learnings from the Menominee Nation By Tom Small
- 8 Permaculture: The Art of Designing Beneficial Relationships By Carol Barta
- 9 Hey, Ho, Fossil Fuels Have Got to Go Reflections from the Global Climate Strike
- 10 Quaker Earthcare Witness in 2019
- 12 Farming for Social Change By Sayrah Namaste

BeFriending Creation

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We publish *BeFriending Creation* to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, and news of our actions, and encourage among Friends a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation. Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of Quaker Earthcare Witness, or of the Religious Society of Friends. Please share our work widely and broadly, always attributing it to Quaker Earthcare Witness.

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VISION AND WITNESS

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God.

WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity.

WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth.

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Earthcare Calendar

January 1, 2019 Deadline for articles for Jan-Feb-March issue

From the Clerk's Table

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

Friends that I talk with lately have been asking, "Where is the hope?" and saying that they need a sense of hope to carry on with their work.

Hope was everywhere at the Climate Strike in Charlotte on Friday, September 20th. It was a beautiful day, cool and clear. Many of the Earthcare communities in Charlotte were represented, with high school and college-aged young folks, and families, and plenty of grey hair as well. I had heard that the organizers were hoping for a hundred people to come out for the strike, and would have been thrilled with two hundred. There was a parade, march, and dance around City Hall with strikers holding their banners high and chanting. One fellow from 350.org said he counted as everyone went past. His count was 480 marchers! All day, people were talking, laughing, hugging, celebrating our connections and our hope.

For those other days when hope is hard to find, we need only look to nature to comfort us. Yes, the darkness comes; in the city it is hard to see the stars. But, reliably, the dawn does come again, and the birds do sing and another day of possibilities unrolls itself before us. Whatever the fear and hopelessness and grief of the day before, we have the comfort of the dawn for each new day, and we have our gratitude for that dawn. This issue of *BeFriending Creation* highlights how Friends find strength and wisdom in their surroundings, taking special comfort in the trees and soil.

For myself, I take my comfort where I can find it. A favorite source is *Alice in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll):

"There is no use trying," said Alice. "One cannot believe in impossible things."

"I daresay you haven't had much practice," replied the Queen.

"When I was your age, I always did it for an hour a day. Why, sometimes I have believed six impossible things before breakfast."

—Mary Jo Klingel, Clerk

Your Support Counts

Quaker Earthcare Witness operates on a budget of about \$100,000 dollars a year. Every donation helps.

Can you make a donation to support our work? Thank you!

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Quaker Earthcare Witness
P.O. Box 6787 Albany, CA 94706.



Photo: Mey Hasbrook documents her visits with the trees, roots, and meadows of Swarthmoor Area Meeting of Southwest Cumbria, England

Continued from previous page

Yearly Meeting’s 1943 Epistle: “We do not ask that you pray that we be safe. We ask that you pray that we be faithful.”

Such faithfulness is the stuff of Spirit-led activity. It arises from listening through the heart while bearing witness to the wholeness of All That Is, including its brokenness. That process resonates for me between Quakerism and indigenous wisdom based on lived experience. I’m a convinced Friend of Celtic-Irish Cherokee Descent who aims to honor the Earth as well as ancestors. Right Relationship speaks to me as The Beauty Path, which names the Beauty of All even in the worst of times.

Quakers’ nearest name for Beauty is the Light—or that of God—in All. The Beauty Path seeks out and co-creates harmony with all our Relatives: Standing People, Swimmers, Crawlers, Four Legged, Winged Ones, Water, and so on. The path resonates with Friends’ lived testimonies such as Peace and Equality. The wisdom and courage of Beauty is what I hear in George Fox’s 1663 epistle written while he was imprisoned:

“Sing and rejoice, ye Children of the Day and of the Light; for the Lord is at work In this thick Night

of Darkness that may be felt: And Truth doth flourish as the Rose, and the Lilies do grow among the Thorns, and the Plants atop of the Hills, and upon them the Lambs do skip and play. And never heed the Tempests nor the Storms, Floods nor Rains, for the Seed Christ is over all, and doth reign. And so, be of good Faith, and Valiant for the Truth.”

In this moment of Creation, scientists detail how climate breakdown’s escalation is soaring beyond initial estimates. Some media outlets recall warnings by Western environmentalists from 50 years ago. Yet even among Quakers we have lost track of a deeper Truth. It has been First Nations who predicted these outcomes for centuries while naming the root problem: tearing the Circle of Life.

A way to mend this tearing is walking The Beauty Path to restore Right Relationship. For Friend Gerald, “[o]ur work as human beings” is “to align ourselves with blessed purposiveness.” It’s an alignment in step with peacemaking as put in Romans 12:18, “If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (NRSV).

Right Relationship is transformative, from “the inner work of our

Right Relationship is transformative, from “the inner work of our heart” leading to “the outward work of our hands.”

heart” leading to “the outward work of our hands.” A grounding question to carry with us is from Jonathan Dale of Britain Yearly Meeting, “Do we recognize that we may need our hearts broken open if God is to break through?” Indeed, the Beauty Path embraces what Quakers name as “tender and broken”; these help to mend the Circle of Life.

May we listen to our roots. May we hear all the way down to the taproot of the shared Tree of Life. May we be courageous in walking The Beauty Path. May we be Valiant like our ancestors.

Mey is a member of Kalamazoo Friends Monthly Meeting (Lake Erie YM). The site <femestiza.com> follows the traveling ministry she carries.



Beckoned by Living Trees

By Marcelle Martin

Photo: "American elm" Melissa McMasters/Flickr

THE FIRST TREE that beckoned me silently, long ago, was a sapling on the far side of a lawn. When I investigated, I discovered it was being strangled by an orange plastic band encircling its trunk. After the sapling had been purchased from a local nursery, the label and price tag had been removed, but not the band. The trunk, now grown, was being choked by the plastic ring.

Did I merely imagine the tree's relief when I cut it off?

More recently, on a hot August day, another tree, large and beautiful, called to me from the edge of the local park. I entered into the welcoming shade provided by the tree's shiny leaves, high overhead and all around. As I leaned back against the trunk, I imagined its roots deep in the ground.

I'd been praying about a project and was trying to "think outside the box." I wanted to hear what God desired. As I rested against the tree, a creative idea came, along with a surge of energy and excitement. It felt like a gift—not from the tree, exactly, but received because I had connected with the tree that way. This new possibility later grew into something wonderful.

In the months that followed, I became better acquainted with the tree, its graceful spreading canopy, its dark oval leaves edged with tiny serrations, the ridged grey-brown bark. Friends identified it as an American Elm. I noticed that the roots had thrown up a couple of old paving stones; it had outgrown once tidy park borders.

I've returned to that beautiful tree at different times of day, during every season. It has taken a while to notice my human prejudices. Gradually I realized that I had been thinking of myself as somehow bigger, more important than the tree, in spite of the fact that it's immensely larger than I. The branches rise perhaps seventy feet over my head, with a span more than half that wide. Slowly, I have recognized my belief that I, a human being, am worth more than a tree. I now question this.

I discovered another blind spot when I invited my husband to come meet "my" tree. The beautiful Elm stands beside another, taller, tree. The neighbor is farther into the park and gets more sun.

"It has a friend!" my husband exclaimed, when he saw the two trees side by side.

Suddenly I recognized that I had been viewing the other tree as a rival for the sun. Terry's comment enabled me to see that, in fact, the two are companions. Their roots are intertwined and they help shelter each other from the wind. When I looked around, I realized that the pair are also part of a whole community of trees, a community without borders, not only trees in the park but also those on nearby streets, including a towering Sycamore a block away. Among the many gifts they give, this community of trees purifies the air and provides oxygen that my neighbors and I breathe.

This summer the American Elm's leaves were small and the crown of the tree didn't fill out the way it did before. Did this beautiful tree, like the little sapling on the lawn, call to me because it's in distress? I look forward to learning more from being in relationship with living trees.

From a post that originally appeared on Marcelle Martin's blog, A Whole Heart, <awholeheart.com>. Marcelle is a member of Swarthmore (PA) Friends Meeting.

FILM: Quaker Earthcare Witness: A Panorama

“Like a visual worship-sharing”

“Deep, expansive, life-giving”

“Just stunning”

“Lifts up our love and reverence for the earth, our sense of Community, and the sense of Spirit in everything”

“The way to help people take action or to change is to let them connect to that which they love. This film does that.”

The 20+ minute film, *Quaker Earthcare Witness: A Panorama* is an invitation for Friends to connect with their love of the planet, their own faith, and their work to live in Right Relationship with Creation through testimonies from Quaker Earthcare Witness members, evocative music, and beautiful images of the natural world.

Barb Adams of Richmond (VA) Friends Meeting and QEW Representative from Baltimore Yearly Meeting gifted Quaker Earthcare Witness this film as a labor of love.

Watch the film at www.quakerearthcare.org/gewapanorama and find out how to share with your communities.

For the Love of the Land

By Pamela Haines

I’VE LOVED THIS bit of land for over fifty years. Coming up over the hill, my heart always opens anew to the jewel of a valley spread out below, part of the rolling farmland and woodlots of central New York state. My father bought an old farm here in the ‘60s, preparing for a job move that didn’t work out. But my family loved the land. The old farmhouse became a focal point for a group of young adult Friends—New



Photo: The land in Central New York

Swarthmoor—a gathering and landing place as we attempted to shape lives that aligned with our deepest Quaker values. Our community loved the land.

Then my mother moved up there in her retirement and it became the center of family gatherings for her six children and growing extended family. My sister, Liseli, lived across the road on adjoining farmland, and dug her roots in deep. When my mother died, it took us some time to decide that we needed to sell the house, but none of us wanted to sell the land. How could we ensure that it would continue to be loved as we loved it?

My sister and her partner had been on their own journey, building ever-closer relationships with members of the neighboring Onondaga nation, and coming under the weight of our country’s history of broken treaties, stolen land, and destruction of whole indigenous nations. Living on traditional Oneida territory, Liseli had started exploring the idea of a land trust with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (who used to be known as the Iroquois) of which the Oneida are a part. But as time passed with no visible progress, the outcome seemed increasingly uncertain.

Then, last fall she met an Oneida woman who was working with others in Wisconsin and southern Ontario to rekindle a shared traditional identity—a challenge, given that the only tiny remnant of their traditional homeland was now given over to a casino and entertainment complex. This meeting was the opening my sister had been waiting and hoping for. Over the next nine months, they worked together to create a nonprofit organization, my sister consulted with her siblings, and we joyfully agreed to return that thirty acres to these Oneida women.

At a ceremony in July, the three groups of Oneida women gathered on the land to mark its return. They sang to the land in its home language. They squished their toes in the wet earth. I can’t imagine any better resolution, any better future for that land that so many of us have loved over all these years—and so many Oneida people had loved long before.

I was already struggling to take in the terrible injustice of our nation’s treatment of native people. But being able to be part of one tiny thing that was so completely right has opened me up in a new way—both to the heartbreak and to the possibilities of healing.

Pamela is a member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting and the author of the book, Money and Soul.

Finding Steady Ground

strengthening our spirits to resist and thrive in these times

By Daniel Hunter with help from Pamela Haines and others

Here are 7 behaviors we can use right away to strengthen ourselves, so we can keep taking more and more powerful and strategic actions.



1. Every day: I will make a conscious decision about when and where I'll get news – and what I'll do afterwards. What you choose to pay attention to during the day has an impact on you.



2. Once a week: I will get together with some people face-to-face to support each other and make sure we stay in motion. The goal is accountability, so that we don't freeze up in the face of overload or despair.



3. Once a week: I will pray, meditate, or reflect on those I know who are being impacted by oppressive policies, and extend that love to all who may be suffering.



4. Once a week: I will read, listen to, or share a story about how others have resisted injustice. The goal is to become a student of history so that you can take inspiration and deepen your understanding of how to struggle and thrive.



5. Once a week: I will be aware of myself as one who creates. The goal of injustice is to breed passivity – to make us believe that things happen to us, events happen to us, policies happen to us. To counteract this, we need to stay in touch with our sense of personal power.



6. Once a week: I will take a conscious break from social media. Instead, fill the time with intentional and direct human interaction. You could take a full day a week away from social media as a healthy minimum, but you decide what is right for you.



7. Once a week: I will commit to sharing with others what's helping me. This is not meant to be a complete list, but rather a baseline for maintaining emotional well-being in hard times.

For more, visit findingsteadyground.com. Daniel is an activist and trainer who just released a booklet requested by young climate strikers teaching about movement-building for us in the climate justice movement: Climate Resistance Handbook (trainings.350.org/climate-resistance-handbook).

Flows Repeatedly: Learnings from the Menominee Nation

By Tom Small

NAPANOH PEMECWAN—Menominee for “flows repeatedly.” In nature, there is no foreground or background, no hierarchy, only relations, patterns of change and repetition. Train yourself to see the repeated patterns, to understand, feel, and identify with the flow.

With these two Menominee words and their implications, Jeff Grignon, Regeneration Forester for the Menominee Nation in Wisconsin, began the 2019 conference of the Michigan Stewardship Network. His keynote and workshop topics: “Listening to the Forest” and “The Language of Plants.”

The Menominee have sustained themselves and their logging operation for more than a century on their 230,000-acre Wisconsin reservation yet have left the forest biodiversity and biomass richer than when they began. And here was Jeff, in charge of regenerating the forest, to inform us, with aid from a few Menominee phrases, how he “listens” to the forest and responds to her language.

Jeff’s emphasis was on the Sacred underground: *anamahkamek winskaw*, below-ground communication through roots and their symbiotic partners, fungal networks of mycorrhizae or mycelia, “the Wood-Wide Web.” Elder or “mother” trees stand at the center of far-reaching webs, sharing food, medicine, and wisdom with dozens of younger trees, of the same and different species.

Regeneration at the “Edge of Chaos”

The elder tree, Jeff told us, “teaches” a newcomer to join the community, or to move on; so, at the farther reaches of each network, there is continual interchange, as plants shift communities and exchange chemical and genetic information. There, at the “edge of chaos,” new patterns emerge from the ebb and flow of order and change. Each organism and the system as a whole struggle to maintain balance, *kotapeskocekan*, a dynamic equilibrium, ever-changing in order to remain the same. *Napanoh pemecwan*.

To aid in regenerating the forest, cultivate circles—not rows or squares. Work with the circular networks and successional stages. For instance, bring in pollinator habitat before trees take over. Understand the flow before acting. Above all, avoid disturbing intercommunication by which plants themselves establish and sustain community. Observe. Listen. What are the mosses telling you? Wait.

The language of plants, phenomenologist Michael Marder tells us, is “an articulation without saying.” Plants articulate in both senses of the word: they express, and they connect. They articulate the elements—earth, air, fire, water—flowing them together in transformative cycles of sacrifice and gift exchange. They cycle and articulate life itself, the fabled “Round River” that flows back into itself.

For many indigenous peoples such as the Menominee, who proclaim “we are the forest,” dialogue between humans and plants is their heritage, their “everyday awareness.” It flows from their original identification with land and creatures, “all our relations.”

We Have Forgotten the Language

Most of the rest of us, imprisoned within our colonizing mentality and language, have expropriated the culture and being of the plants. They are property: a quantifiable resource or beautifying decoration. Even though we care for them, we are masters, they only servants to our desires, without rights or purposes of their own. At worst, they are “green things that stand in the way.”

No, says Jeff Grignon. “They are our relations and our original teachers, but we have forgotten the language. Relearning that language will bring us to the path of healing and a sustainable future for all of us.”

Jeff and his friend Robin Kimmerer offer us a way to begin decolonizing, remembering, and healing:

- respectfully acknowledge the plant, using the same language as you would with family, your kin;
- become aware of the plant’s specific energy, rhythm and “song,” which enfold and express her entire history;
- allow your own rhythm and energy to attune to and flow with the plant’s;
- as the “doors of perception” open, pass through them into a new state of mind and being, in community with “all your relations.”

It won’t be easy. Trust the teachers. “The plants still remember, even when the people have forgotten.”

Tom (Kalamazoo Friends Meeting) is co-author of the book Using Native Plants to Restore Community.

Permaculture: The Art of Designing Beneficial Relationships

By Carol Barta

PERMACULTURE is said to be “the art of designing beneficial relationships.” Permaculture is a design science rooted in the observation of natural systems, the wisdom of traditional farming methods, and systems thinking. It uses both ancient wisdom and modern scientific and technical knowledge to create sustainable habitats for humans and others.

At the core of Permaculture are three ethics: earth care, people care, and fair share. Recently we have been talking about fair share as “future care,” using only what we truly need so that there will be enough for future generations. These ethical concepts are found in most traditional societies, giving us a way to observe tried and true results from following them.

The twelve principles of permaculture design guide the process of creating sustainable farms and urban gardens. Ethics remain at the center of the twelve principles, ensuring that they are used in appropriate ways. These principles are seen as universal, although the methods used to express them will vary greatly according to the place and situation.

Permaculture design has been taught worldwide since 1978. Examples of successful designs can be seen in areas as different as the Loess Plateau of China and the Dead Sea Valley of Jordan.

By first taking time to observe and engage with nature we can create design solutions that suit each particular situation. Knowing where sun, wind, water, and wildlife cross a property throughout the year

makes it clearer where we place our building and plants.

We also use patterns found in nature to design our solutions. Biomimicry is a fundamental trait of permaculture installations, like herb spirals that create beneficial microclimates and watering systems that branch like a watershed.

After careful observation, we begin to place the elements of our designs in zones both for our own convenience and to create synergies of cooperating elements. This summer, my ducks and chickens snacked on the fig-eater beetles that wanted to eat the peach crop. And they laid eggs well into the fall.

One of the most difficult design principles to get people in the United States to follow is #9: “use small and slow solutions.” In the end, it makes better use of local resources and produces more sustainable outcomes. If you need everything to look right now the way you want it to be, you’ve been watching too much HGTV. Start with one small project.

Soil is the natural capital of the planet. Design principle #5 asks us to use and value renewable resources and services. Permaculture focuses on building healthy soil so that it may function as a living system. Healthy soil is the renewable resource needed to sustain plant and animal productivity, maintain or enhance water and air quality,

and promote plant and animal health.

All these tools can be used to create systems and beneficial relationships outside the agricultural sphere too. They can and have informed building of intentional communities and programs such as Transition Towns. They can also be used as guides for right decision-making in our daily lives.

This is just a taste of Permaculture—permanent culture as well as permanent agriculture. To learn more look for a Permaculture organization in your area. We’re everywhere—except Antarctica!

Carol is a practicing permaculturalist, part of the Kansas Permaculture Institute, and a member of Manhattan (KS) Friends Meeting.

Permaculture Design Principles

- 1 **Observe and Interact**
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

- 2 **Catch and Store Energy**
Make hay while the sun shines

- 3 **Obtain a Yield**
You can't work on an empty stomach

- 4 **Apply Self-regulation and Accept Feedback**
The sins of the fathers are visited on the children unto the seventh generation

- 5 **Use and Value Renewable Resources and Services**
Let nature take its course

- 6 **Produce No Waste**
*A stitch in time saves nine
Waste not, want not*

- 7 **Design from Patterns to Details**
Can't see the wood for the trees

- 8 **Integrate Rather than Segregate**
Many hands make light work

- 9 **Use Small and Slow Solutions**
*The bigger they are, the harder they fall
Slow and steady wins the race*

- 10 **Use and Value Diversity**
Don't put all your eggs in one basket

- 11 **Use Edges and Value the Marginal**
Don't think you are on the right track just because it is a well-beaten path

- 12 **Creatively Use and Respond to Change**
Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be


From: David Holmgren (2002) *Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability*



HEY, HO, FOSSIL FUELS HAVE GOT TO GO!

Reflections from the September 20 Global Climate Strike



On September 20, 2019, people across America left school and work to demand that leaders take action to address the climate crisis. Organized and led by youth in the Climate Strike Coalition, the demonstrations were the largest climate strike in history with 4,500 locations in 150 countries and an estimated 7 million people participating. Keep an eye out for continuing actions.

“We are striking because business as usual is a death sentence to those already on the frontlines of the climate breakdown as well as generations to come. To make it through this crisis we need to tear down the systems that oppress us and rebuild our society to be just, sustainable, and respectful of the interconnected web of life of which we are just one part. We owe it to our planet and to ourselves to fight for a better future with everything that we have.”

- Sophia Geiger, National Coordinator, Fridays For Future

“I loved the fact that the strike took place on a weekday, jamming up intersections and forcing everyone else in town to wake up and pay attention. This strike really feels like a turning point for me. The connection to political action, to voter registration, to future actions, and the call to engage with everyone around us on the issue, is what’s new and what’s needed.”

- Liz Robinson, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting



Photos: 1. Central Philadelphia climate strike 2. A young climate activist in Seattle by Gayle Matson (Chico CA Friends Meeting) 3. Strike in Olympia, WA with Carolyn Treadway (Olympia Friends) 4. Brad Stocker and Teresa Campos (Miami Friends) in Gainesville, FL 5. Pam Gilchrist, Santa Fe (NM) Friends

QUAKER EARTH CARE WITNESS

in 2019



Quaker Earthcare Witness has grown over the last 32 years out of a deepening sense of spiritual connection with the natural world. From this has come an urgency to work on the critical issues of our times, including climate and environmental justice. This year we are excited to see that more people are mobilizing than ever before both within and beyond the Religious Society of Friends around the eco-crises we are facing.

With your help, Quaker Earthcare Witness is responding to the growing need for inspiration and support for Friends and Meetings.

OUR WORK IN 2019

- Informed our network about environmental concerns and Friends' witness through print and online publications, like *Befriending Creation*
- Successfully fundraised for building a new website
- Funded meetings' and organizations' environmental projects with mini-grants;
- Promoted and coordinated participation in the Global Climate Strike on September 20
- Hosted the Earthcare Center at the Friends General Conference Gathering
- Worked across the branches of Friends alongside other Quaker organizations, including co-leading a series of webinars on earthcare
- Published a chapter in the book *Friends and Sustainability* released by Friends Association for Higher Education
- Visited yearly meetings and Friends' gatherings, offering workshops and presentations

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Share your Earthcare ministry with us. What projects is your meeting working on? What concerns do you hold?
- Share *BeFriending Creation*—display it at your meetinghouse.
- Become a Quaker Earthcare Witness representative for your yearly meeting. Each yearly meeting nominates one or two representatives to be a liaison between our group and Friends in your region.
- Start an Earthcare group at your meeting. Use Quaker Earthcare Witness materials in your First Day school.
- Share our literature, like pamphlets on key environmental issues, with your meeting, and at special events.
- Apply for a Mini-Grant to support a project.
- Make a donation on your meeting's behalf to support our work.

GET IN TOUCH

Contact us at shelley@quakerearthcare.org or call 510-542-9606 to get involved.

SUPPORT EARTH CARE

Visit quakerearthcare.org/donate
or send a check to: Quaker Earthcare Witness
P.O. Box 6787 Albany, CA 94706.



Continued from page 12

Fidel grows organic vegetables and fruits for the local community on land surrounding the AFSC New Mexico office. He uses low-till methods to reduce the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere. Recently AFSC worked with him to get solar panels so he could use fewer fossil fuels. With the panels, Fidel created a mobile solar unit to take to farmer’s markets so he could make healthy smoothies in a blender from his fruits and vegetables.

“I have to care for the Earth that I am on,” Fidel explains. After graduating from the AFSC farmer training program in 2010, he has worked with AFSC to train more farmers in sustainable agriculture. He is now the president of the farmer cooperative incubated by AFSC. All of the food the farmers grow in the cooperative stays in the local community and they model an alternative to exploitative agribusiness practices, one of the largest drivers of climate change.

In Los Angeles, a new urban farm was created this year by AFSC’s Roots for Peace program with All People’s Community Center and Meta Housing. Through this urban farm, AFSC is supporting community leadership and climate resiliency efforts in South Central through youth organizing trainings, urban agriculture workshops centering peoples’ wisdom, and producing hundreds of pounds of food with fourteen families in 2019. “This farm is an important neighborhood asset, a green sanctuary for residents, and part of larger efforts led to address climate change and food apartheid in LA,” said Eli Tizcareño, program coordinator for AFSC Los Angeles.

AFSC New Orleans Peace by Piece program supports and mobilizes Black youth and young adults through political education and community organizing to address disparities by building sustainable green spaces. These spaces are intended to feed, as well as to promote, healthy and whole communities through gardening and political education.

“Our curriculum teaches the art of gardening and urban farming,” explains DeeDee Green, AFSC New Orleans Program director. “It teaches methods of sustainability—planting, harvesting, composting—while raising awareness of food insecurity in areas of the city that strategically deny access to residents.”

At AFSC, our programs support the leadership of communities impacted by historical and systemic violence to create spaces that support livelihood, self-determination and just transformations in our society. Our work toward justice is shaped by the places and people with whom we work, and our programs are diverse

for that reason. Through this work, communities are building neighborhood resiliency and collective power in the presence of increasing climate change.

As Fidel shares: “Don’t do things out of guilt but out of love. In order for me to be sustainable, I have to create my own ecosystem of balance inside myself. My own climate control—balance my own inner heat and my own inner cold. If you have this balance, you can help others.”

Sayrah is the Program Director for American Friends Service Committee New Mexico.



Above Left: New Mexico farmer and dancer Fidel Gonzalez. Above Right: Author Sayrah and Fidel at Moktezuma Farm. Above: Hollygrove Community Garden in New Orleans

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Farming for Social Change

By Sayrah Namaste

“To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves,” Gandhi said.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has been addressing the impacts of climate change through programs in New Mexico, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Baltimore, to name a few. These four U.S. programs are part of AFSC’s “Farming for Social Change” Network which believes in the power of farming and land-based work with and for communities most impacted by historical oppression in order to increase self-determination, environmental justice, economic justice, and long-term wellbeing of our communities. This network envisions a world that values and centers the leadership of those most impacted by historical and state violence to create real systemic change.

For over 40 years, AFSC has had international and U.S. based programs that support farming to bring peace and economic, social, and environmental justice. Growing food is a practice that land-based people



Los Angeles community garden supported by AFSC’s Roots for Peace program.

knew how to do before and after white supremacy and imperialism created forced migration, displacement, and environmental destruction across the globe. Today, AFSC is accompanying community members to (re)learn and practice traditional and sustainable farming ways, building economic and environmental justice while increasing the wellbeing of neighborhoods they live in.

“The Nahuatl ‘ome teo’ is what we say during ceremony and it refers to the divine balance,” says New Mexico farmer and Aztec dancer Fidel Gonzalez. Fidel learned to farm sustainably through a year-long AFSC program in Albuquerque. “This is what I am doing on my farm. I align myself with nature. Right now, nature is moving. Many refer to it as climate change.”

Continued on page 11