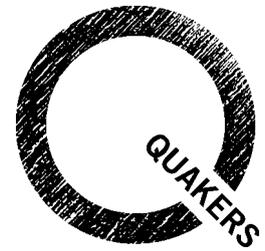


Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting

held at Frontier Centre, Northamptonshire
12-15 April, 2019



To all Friends everywhere,

From 12 to 15 April 2019 70 participants and 13 adult team members met at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire for a weekend of inward and outward reflection on the theme “Diversity and Inclusivity: how can we use our ideals to change our reality?”

A strong undercurrent of this event has been privilege. Many of our sessions have had elements of examining privilege within them. This has led us to look at our own privilege and how it varies for different aspects of our identity. One of our early theme sessions included choosing different colour beads to represent our privilege.



Alison Mitchel, Libby Adams, Maud Grainger, Sadhya Darr, Teresa Parker and Matt Alton ran workshops that enabled us to look at different aspects of privilege in our society. These discussions have been difficult for some, examining our own privilege is difficult due to our unawareness of it. Our lack of diversity prevents us from sometimes seeing our own privileges, but our denial of its existence doesn't remove the inequality caused by it.

After discussing Quaker business processes and having a Meeting for Worship for Business, we wrote a minute addressing the question “What is our reality as a Quaker community and how does our privilege affect how we understand it?” In preparation for this, adult team members facilitated sessions that explored this question in different learning styles, allowing everyone to engage in the question in a way that was comfortable to them.

A point was made that if we do not allow for a diverse way of engaging certain topics, we are excluding those who don't thrive in conventional learning environments.

In addition to theme sessions we have had a multitude of fun social sessions. Base groups (small groups) fostered community and inclusivity throughout the weekend and a quiz on Friday night broke the ice and allowed us to get to know each other better. The Easter Egg Eggstravaganza was a social activity that was for everyone as it had aspects for all to engage in, for example the competitive, sporty, or quiet in us. Our venue had activities on offer, so on Saturday some participants did archery, kayaking or went on the king swing whilst others watched the film Freedom Writers. The Open Mic was a resounding success with so many people signing up that later on in the day we had Open Mic 2.0. Dress up drama brought much hilarity and allowed us to reinvent classic fairy tales with a spin on different aspects of privilege. A highlight of all recent JYMs is the Ceilidh, with mocktails named with Quaker puns and this year was no different.

We began and ended our days with Meeting for Worship, giving us the opportunity to be calmed, settled and spiritual. Some focuses of these worship sessions were Kenyan Quaker hymns, the ocean and a bonfire. These helped us to centre down, providing some Friends new experiences.

Throughout the weekend, we were joined by several guests. Georgina Bailey, Clare Scott Booth, Iain Law, Max Kirk, Paul Parker and Naomi Major joined us in discussions, worship and games and provided insight to their aspect of Quakerism. Kai Weynberg and James Jenkins joined us as ecumenical guests from the United Reformed Church and the Methodists.

We have had an insightful weekend full of learning experiences and hope to go away and apply our new perspectives in making Quakers as inclusive as possible. We hope that the rest of Yearly Meeting takes the opportunity to listen to the opinions and perspectives of younger Friends, and other minority groups within Quakers and actively absorb our ideas. We ask older Friends to be open to change and differences in experience, recognising the diversity of lived experience within us all, just as we as JYM have been learning to do. We feel that all Quakers, young and old, must use our privilege for the betterment of society. It's encouraging to see young Friends inclusion in national Quaker bodies and we wish for this to continue.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2019,



Anya Nanning-Ramamurthy
Junior Yearly Meeting Clerks 2019



Lucy Cox Dodgson