



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

*A publication of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**December 2015**

## **November Meeting for Business: Reports, New Members and a Minute**

### **Ministry and Counsel Reports Three Memorial Meetings**

Consuelo Grushin, Larry Jaeger and Susan Laughter were lovingly remembered in the manner of Friends, at Memorial Meetings sponsored by the Ministry and Counsel Committee. Each made special contributions to the life of Brooklyn Meeting.

### **Two New Members Join Meeting and are Married in the Manner of Friends**

Nadine S. Baldasare and Maria Colleen Cruz were accepted into membership in Brooklyn; at the same time their marriage was taken under the care of the Marriage Oversight Committee.

### **Ministry and Counsel Reports on Its Many Responsibilities and Activities**

This year the Committee reviewed its practices in overseeing marriages. They reviewed practices of other Meetings. They presented to the Meeting an informational card, "The Meeting for Marriage", which is now available for Friends.

The Committee will have members present at the Tuesday evening Meeting for Worship and at the 9:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship on First Days. Ministry and Counsel conducted five Meetings for Clearness for Membership and six to provide support to individual members.

The Caregivers Support Group was revived. It is exploring hearing issues in

the Meeting room and sponsored Sunday Table Talks on advance care directives for members. Ministry and Counsel Adult Education Activities include continuing the



Spiritual Texts gathering before Meeting for Worship on the second Sunday, afternoon readings from the Journal of George Fox, and special sessions on the topics of Apology to African-American Descendants and meeting with Hiroshima survivors. A program to pair Spiritual Friends is being organized.

### **Minute on Planned Parenthood**

The proposed Minute on Planned Parenthood that appeared in the last issue of the Newsletter was revised and sent to public officials.

### **Interim Treasurer Reports:**

The Meeting Savings Account, as of October 31, 2015 is \$3,676.56. The Meeting Checking Account, as of October 31, 2015 is \$42,590.35  
-- Molly Rusnak

## **Brooklyn Meeting Supports Planned Parenthood of New York City**

*In the November issue of the Brooklyn Meeting Newsletter, we erroneously published an incomplete version of the Planned Parenthood minute that was approved during the October Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. We apologize, and now present the (since-revised) minute in full:*

For Planned Parenthood Federation of America and, in particular, its local affiliate, Planned Parenthood of New York City, Brooklyn Monthly Meeting affirms its unwavering support. Appalled, as are many around us, by recent political attacks on this beneficent organization, we take note of its contribution to our nation's wellbeing.

Especially for low-income women, Planned Parenthood NYC provides affordable breast and cervical cancer screening, sexual and reproductive health care, contraception counseling and methods, emergency contraception, HIV counseling and testing, tests for sexually transmitted infections, assistance to women enrolling in public insurance or obtaining private insurance through the Affordable Care Act, as well as surgical and medication abortion. In fact, in spite of media repetition that may make it seem otherwise, less than ten percent of PPNYC's client contacts involve abortion services.

In other words, extreme anti-choice activity threaten a reproductive health network that, nationwide, is filling a huge vacuum in affordable women's health services. Brooklyn Meeting lovingly endorses Planned Parenthood's mission and calls upon our elected representatives -- at all levels -- to

protect and defend its government-based grants and Medicaid reimbursement contracts. These public dollars support Planned Parenthood's many educational and diagnostic and preventative services. No affiliate uses federal funds for abortion except in the rare cases of rape, incest and endangerment to the life of the mother.

## Marriage of Nadine S. Baldasare and Maria Colleen Cruz

On October 14, 2015, at 11 a.m., Nadine Baldasare and Maria Colleen Cruz were married under the care of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. Approximately sixty guests were present and shared loving messages.  
-- Molly Rusnak

## Visits to Boyce Bengé Supported by the ARCH Program

Longtime Friend Boyce Bengé was admitted to the Veteran's Hospital on October 30 after suffering a stroke. Though it first appeared to be mild, in a few hours it became apparent that the stroke was a serious event. After ten days in the hospital, BOyce was transferred to the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation in Brooklyn. His health care proxy agents were very focused -- and fortunate! -- to get him transferred to a good rehabilitation center so soon after he was stabilized.

Although the full extent of his injuries, and his prognosis, are not yet fully understood, observers from all corners are unanimous in saying that Boyce is very happy to see us when we visit.

"It's probably much too early to form sweeping conclusions about his prognosis, but at this time the progress is limited," said Boyce's health care proxy, a friend of many years. "But I will say again that, to my eye, he did not seem despondent. He responds to people with a kind of smile and he seems to appreciate the efforts people

make to help him. Also, he's getting visitors daily from his Quaker and other friends. He has a lot of people pulling for him."

Our ARCH (Aging Resources, Consultation and Help) Visitors, in close conjunction with Ministry and Counsel's Pastoral Care Subcommittee, have been involved, even before Boyce's admission, in supporting his health needs. Quite a few of us at Brooklyn Monthly Meeting have taken the ARCH training and are positioned to provide care and support as the need arises. My present role as an ARCH Visitor revolves around coordinating visits so that we can sustain our energy over time as well as fit into the Rehab Center's structure. If you want to participate in the visitor's schedule, you can email or call me.

We at BMM are especially fortunate in that Callie Janoff, the Director of New York Yearly Meeting's ARCH program, is a member of our Monthly Meeting. When many of us were at loose ends about how to relate to our dear Friend in his present condition, she provided clear suggestions. Here are just a few of them:

*I think the best thing we can do is to continue to journey with him.*

*I'm not really sure how much he can read, but he seems to enjoy perusing and flipping through [a broad range of printed materials].*

*You can ask him if you can hold his good hand, I think he likes this touch.*

*The room is small and shared, but there is room for a small bouquet. Consider a bouquet in a vase. You can also bring cards.*

*I know it can be hard to see someone as lovely as Boyce in the state he is in. I know it is for me. If anyone who visits feels troubled about*



*it, I hope you can speak with me or someone else you feel comfortable with to reflect on your experience.*

Of course, when you visit, you will bring your own special gifts to share, but it is helpful to refer to these guidelines to help get past the uncertainty of the first visit. The bottom line, for me, is to always remember that this is still our longtime

good Friend Boyce. He is still able to relate to us genuinely despite his physical condition. Ask anyone who has seen him; they will tell you that this is true. And by all accounts, he seems -- astonishingly, to me - at peace with his condition. Could it be all those years of ardent worship? Sincere Friendship? Meditation? Service?

Please hold Boyce in the Light, and, again, please contact me if you are interested in visiting him.

-- Linda Clarke

## Transgender Day of Remembrance

On First Day, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, a group of about 20 people gathered after meeting to remember the transgender persons who have died in the last year as a result of violence. This group also watched a documentary, *Beautiful Daughters*, about the first all-trans-woman cast of *The Vagina Monologues*. The movie was directed by Ariel Orr Jordan, who attended the screening and collaborated with *Vagina Monologues* writer Eve Ensler on the original production. The film follows along as Ensler interviews the cast about their experiences transitioning, and then uses these stories as the basis for an adapted version of the script. The women are of all ages and races, and almost all of them have experienced some form of violence

(either directly, or toward partners that became involved with them). As they participated in the production, many women still felt the need to maintain secrecy about their past, even with the people they were most intimate with. These stories, taken together, are a striking testimony to the role of love in determining our identities; it's the search for partnership and reciprocity that defines these women's lives, not their sexuality. Their complicated and often frightening journey only highlights what is true for all of us; that love and acceptance play a central role in the ability to develop our authentic selves.

After the film the group sat in silent worship and read out a list of names of people who were murdered (these names are collected on a site devoted to the International Transgender Day of remembrance, [tdor.org](http://tdor.org)). It was noted that the online list, which had close to 100 people on it, is not necessarily complete. It only has those transgender victims who were reported. The savageness of the violence, and the extreme youth of many victims tells a story of intolerance that suggests there is still a great deal of work to do even as we become more culturally aware of gender's complexity.

-- Catherine Despont

## Chad Cianfrani Appointed Head of Oakwood Friends School

Oakwood Friends School, located in Poughkeepsie, is the New York Yearly Meeting boarding school. Chad Cianfrani, who has served Oakwood for over a decade, was appointed its Head on October 26. Chad had recently been the school's Associate Head of Operations and Technology, as well as the Interim Head of School. Prior to working at Oakwood, Chad spent six years on Wall Street focusing on finance and technology. Chad and his family have called Oakwood home for the last eleven years. During this time he has worn many hats: classroom teacher, dorm parent and coach. His engagement with the students and genuine love for the diverse learning

community continues to inspire him. Recently, he helped negotiate and coordinate the procurement of Oakwood's soon-to-be-built ground-based solar array. The Board of Managers (half of whom are appointed by New York Yearly Meeting) are



confident in Chad's abilities and commitment to Oakwood's core values: academic and extra-curricular excellence, diversity and respect for others.

"I am excited and humbled by the opportunity to lead Oakwood forward," said Chad, in response to his appointment. "Oakwood is home to me and my family, and I cannot imagine a greater honor than to be entrusted with its leadership. I am fortunate to build on the foundation created during Peter Baily's fifteen year tenure and, together with our wonderful community, I will work to make a great school even greater."

Peter Baily has moved to Maryland to become the Director of AIMS, the association of independent schools in Maryland and DC.

From Joseph Talcott in 1796 to Peter Baily, Oakwood has nurtured a strong, inclusive learning environment grounded in Quaker principles. Friends may recall that Lucretia Coffin met her husband James Mott while serving as a teacher at the school.

Oakwood currently has about 160 students, day and boarding, from

around the world, in grades 6 through 12. We actively seek Friends families and we can provide substantial financial aid to help members attend. If you would like to further explore Oakwood Friends School, visit [www.oakwoodfriends.org](http://www.oakwoodfriends.org) or speak with

me.

-- Ben Frisch

## Appreciation Dinner for Two Quaker Schools to be Held on January 12

Brooklyn Meeting has invited the faculty and staff from Brooklyn Friends School and Mary McDowell Friends School to come to the Meeting House on Tuesday, January 12 from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. There will be a Meeting for Worship and a gourmet dinner.

Tom Buckley from BFS will provide wonderful meats, roasted vegetables and salads.

The people of the Meeting are asked to provide desserts. Please plan to come for worship and the meal, and please bring a pie, cookies or fruit.

The dinner will be a celebration of the dedication and talent of the teachers and staff of the Quaker schools in Brooklyn. Faculty and staff not only impart knowledge and support student learning, they also incorporate the values of our Quaker testimonies into the daily lives of the students and their communities. Sharing worship and a meal together is a good opportunity for the people of the Meeting and the people of the schools to learn more about each other.

-- Mary Doty

## African-American Response to the Atomic Bomb

Peace and Social Action Committee will co-sponsor a speech delivered by Professor Vincent Intondi, from Montgomery College in Maryland. He

will speak in the Meetinghouse on January 30 at 2 p.m. on the African-American response to the Atomic Bomb.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

## **Will Friends Seminary Finally Become Independent?**

On December 6 at 1 p.m. in the Fifteenth Street Meetinghouse, Friends from all of the Meetings in the New York Quarter will consider a proposed agreement between the Quarterly Meeting and Friends Seminary for the school to be separately incorporated. Friends Seminary would then join Mary McDowell Friends School and Brooklyn Friends School as an independently governed Quaker school reporting to the Quarterly Meeting, with some Trustees appointed by the Quarterly Meeting. The proposed agreement will be brought jointly to the Quarterly Meeting by the Friends Seminary School Committee and Administration and the Trustees of the Quarter. They have been working on this project together for several months. However, the effort to accomplish this goal began fifteen years ago and many Friends from the Meetings have worked on it through the years.

Recent members of our Meeting may not realize that, originally, there was one Friends Monthly Meeting in New York City and, within that Meeting, Brooklyn Meeting, Morningside Meeting, Friends Seminary and Brooklyn Friends School were formed. When my family joined Brooklyn Meeting, we didn't join Brooklyn Monthly Meeting specifically, but rather New York Monthly Meeting. Through the years there has been a process of separation of Meetings and Schools, while continuing New York Monthly Meeting as a Quarterly Meeting as a way of remaining

connected in some important ways. Friends very much believe in simplicity of organization and direct responsibility. However, we want to remain a part of each other as well.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

## **Apples to Quakers**

November 22: At First Day School, among the Spirit group, the options for worship at the beginning of meeting were silence or bird sounds.

The group voted for the birds of New York, and listened attentively to the calls of the cardinal, blue jay, sparrow, crow, and mourning dove (the closest relative of the pigeon available). Next they went around the circle and said their names as well as a favorite bird, or the thing they were most looking forward to at Thanksgiving, or else the kind of cookie they would be if they were a cookie. There was an American goldfinch, a macadamia nut cookie, a duck, a gratefulness for cousins, a hummingbird, espresso-flavored shortbread and a penguin.

The group then settled down to the core activity of the meeting: a version of the game Apples to Apples, called Apples to Quakers, where players try to match Quaker values to hands of cards that have words printed on them. Among the rounds that were played, "cheerleaders" were chosen for "community," and "the last day of school" tied with "waterparks" for

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"joy." "Integrity" and "equality" were also considered, but this observer failed to remember the outcomes of those other pairings. The group re-centered briefly, stacked their pillows, and then

joined their families in the meeting room. No reports were made by the Spirits during the period of requests to be held in the Light.

-- *Catherine Despont*

## **Breakfast for Visiting Brooklyn Friends School Families, Brooklyn Meeting Friends**

The Care Committee for Brooklyn Meeting and Brooklyn Friends School hosted a breakfast for all on First Day, November 15, in conjunction with the annual visit of BFS families to Meeting for Worship. Breakfast treats were served and adults and children socialized before Meeting for Worship and a crowded First Day School.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

## **Lease with New York Explorers Will Be Renewed**

Brooklyn Property Committee will oversee the upcoming 2016 lease with our tenants, an early childhood program called New York Explorers. The Explorers have cooperated with Brooklyn Meeting to resolve several issues, including storing equipment used during the week in the Social Room in a classroom in the basement and removing some items from the hall in the basement.

The First Day School, which shares the basement area, has requested that the new lease provide that the glass brick walls be kept clear to provide daylight in the area and that the hall from the classrooms to the back door be kept open to make a rapid emergency exit possible.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

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## Submission Guidelines

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The Communications Committee welcomes Brooklyn Meeting News contributions from all Meeting members and attenders. Our newsletter includes a variety of content which may be of interest to our community, including but not limited to:

- Recaps of recent Meeting events
- Previews of upcoming events
- Issues pertaining to our Quaker faith and history

The newsletter is published on the first Sunday of each month, and we request that submissions for the next issue be submitted by **December 21st**.

General Guidelines:

- Please send an email to [newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org) so that we may briefly discuss your contribution, as regards its timeliness, appropriateness, and length.
- Contributions should

- generally be brief, between 150-450 words in length.
- Please send your newsletter submission as an attached Word document.
- Keep in mind that contributions will be copy edited, and may not appear in the newsletter in exactly the same form as how they were submitted.

Thank you for your interest - we look forward to your input!

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## Regularly Scheduled Activities

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### Meetings for Worship

9:00–9:50 AM and  
11:00 AM–NOON on Sundays,  
in the meeting room  
6:30 PM Tuesdays,  
in the meeting room

### Childcare

Sundays during 11:00 AM worship, for  
children of 3 months to 3 years, in the care  
of an early childhood teacher and dedicated  
volunteers

### First Day School

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM, Sundays, September to  
June. Three classes, roughly related to age:  
Bodies (4-6), Minds (7-9) and Spirits (10-12).

### Social Hour

12:00 PM Sundays,  
Ground-level dining room

### Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

1:00 PM, first Sundays, in the meeting  
room

### Hymn Singing around the Piano

10:00 AM, first Sundays, in the meeting  
room

### Readings of Spiritual Texts

10:00 AM, second Sundays, in the meeting  
room

### Worship Sharing

10:00 AM, third Sundays, on the third  
floor

### Community Dinner

1:00 PM-3:00 PM SET-UP  
3:00 PM-4:00 PM MEAL/SERVING  
4:00 PM- 5:00 PM CLEAN-UP, COME FOR  
SOME OR ALL!

Last Sunday of every month, ground-level  
dining room; volunteers appreciated for  
this monthly dinner for anyone who wishes  
a free hot meal. Children encouraged to  
volunteer.

Contact: Andres Colapinto,  
acolabus@gmail.com

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## Upcoming Events

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*Ongoing additions to upcoming Meeting events are regularly added to the Meeting website at <http://www.brooklynmeeting.org/calendar>.*

***To submit an event, email [events@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:events@brooklynmeeting.org)***

### December

***December 6<sup>th</sup> 1:00PM 15<sup>th</sup> Street Meetinghouse:***  
**Will Friends Seminary Finally Become  
Independent?**

***December 12<sup>th</sup> 9:30AM-4:30PM 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Meetinghouse:***

### **Why Am I? YAF mini retreat**

Through worship, fellowship, learning sessions,  
and games, we will dig deep into the big  
questions of why we are here and what we are  
being called to do.

Email Emily Provance at  
eprovince@hotmail.com by Wednesday,  
December 9!!

***December 19<sup>th</sup> 5:00PM-8:00PM Meetinghouse:***

### **Winter Festival**

Cookie decorating  
Crafts  
Santa visit  
Chicken dinner  
Talent show

### January

***January 12<sup>th</sup> 5:00PM- 7:30PM Meetinghouse:***  
**Appreciation dinner for Brooklyn Friends  
School and Mary Macdowell School**

Brooklyn Meeting has invited the faculty and  
staff from Brooklyn Friends School and Mary  
McDowell Friends School to come to the  
Meeting House on Tuesday, January 12 from  
5:00 - 7:30 p.m. There will be a Meeting for  
Worship and a gourmet dinner.

***January 30<sup>th</sup> 2:00PM Meetinghouse***  
**African American Response to the Atomic  
Bomb**

Peace and Social Action Committee will co-  
sponsor a speech delivered by Professor Vincent  
Intondi, from Montgomery College in Maryland.

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*Send additions to Regularly Scheduled Activities or Upcoming Events to [events@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:events@brooklynmeeting.org).*

*Send inquiries or suggestions about the newsletter to [newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org).*

*The Monthly Meeting Newsletter is published by the Communications Committee of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting.*

*Current members: Catherine Despont, Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.*

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