



FRIENDS' CENTRAL SCHOOL

May 26, 2017

JTF Message from Kelly Pierre

Quakerism in the Lower School Classroom

Joy is the theme for **Meeting for Worship** this month. On Tuesday, Regina Ziffer shared from the facing bench with third and fourth graders (fifth graders were having a meeting for business, prepping for their camping trip). She encouraged the children to take ownership over finding joy in their life.

There is always going to be someone who we believe is smarter than us or prettier or more handsome than us. One of the ways that we prevent joy from being a part of our lives is by comparing ourselves to others. As Mark Twain, a famous author once said, "Comparison is the death of joy."

On Thursday, Mary Gregg shared from the facing bench with our nursery through second grade students that joy can come from big things like birthday parties and also from small things like being invited by a classmate to play a game at recess or a family member or caregiver teaching you a new game.

As adults, we all need to continuously and consistently help children to identify their own strengths and talents. When we check in with them at the end of the day, we need to support them as they reflect on their day to remember the moments where a classmate *did* invite them to play or *did* offer to lend them their pencil. We know there are going to be moments for all children when someone does something better than them or doesn't invite them to play, but if we focus on those moments, we aren't helping children to create a foundation of resiliency and a feeling of self-worth. When we focus on the positive things that happen, even on days where we have to dig a little deeper to think of them, we put our children in control of their joy, rather than letting other people control it.

Devotions happens in the classrooms on a regular basis. Classes gather in their meeting area at the start of the day and begin with a moment of silence. This silence is then followed by sharing or a query presented by the teacher. During this time, the class builds community – learning to listen and to trust that their thoughts and ideas matter.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students participate in **Feedback**. This is a time where a class and the teachers are joined by the Lower School Counselor to give feedback to one another about things that have made them feel positive and perhaps something that might not have made them feel as good. Students ask permission to give this very direct feedback, and their classmates are expected to listen without responding. The grown-ups facilitate this time and can follow up with students afterward when they feel it's necessary. Students learn to listen, self-advocate, speak-up, and get in touch with their feelings, both positive and negative, and tell others how they feel.

ALLSTOP is our conflict resolution program in the Lower School. The acronym stands for:

Ask, “What is the problem?”

Look at each person speaking, and listen to everyone’s “I” statements.

Listen without arguing or interrupting; search for solutions.

Take responsibility for your part of the problem and of the solution.

Offer to compromise.

Put it behind you.

When students are young, ALLSTOP is facilitated by an adult, and students are coached through each step. As they get older, students take more ownership for talking a problem through and arriving at a resolution. Most often, our oldest students initiate ALLSTOPS with their classmates independently of a teacher. As we teach math and reading and writing, we also need to teach our students how to work through a conflict. This work does not prevent disagreements, it gives our students a way to identify a problem, learn from an event and be part of a solution.

In addition to these identifiable practices, Quakerism influences the classroom communities, Lower School culture, and our curriculum. The books we read, the people we study, the places we visit, and the work we do are all chosen intentionally to teach the values represented by the Quaker testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship – otherwise known as the **SPICES**.

Other Lower School News

Anastasia Shown will be leaving after serving as a part time First Grade Assistant Teacher this year. She has helped to build community in the room and helped to differentiate math and reading instruction, spearheading an integrated approach of math and science enrichment. In addition, Anastasia led two impactful and very well received professional development workshops for lower school faculty on best practices for global education.

Light Lab Update

Parents enjoyed refreshments and conversation in all four Light Lab studios during the Spring Fling. Admissions hosted a successful Early Childhood play date using the Natural Sciences and Fabrication Studios.

Media and Computing Studio	Design Studio
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Coding Club practiced programming skills with Dash and Dot robots.● Upper School service students organized all the robotics materials for ease of use this summer and next year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fourth grade met their new fifth grade teachers while making paper LED lanterns with parents.● 4A painted the backdrop for their play.

Natural Sciences Studio/Solarium	Fabrication Studio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Homesteading Club made homemade soap and lemonade. ● KA used leftover bananas from lunch to make banana bread. ● Fifth graders continued taking pH, measuring plant growth, and adding water with nutrients to the aeroponic towers in the Solarium. ● Upper School Service used the kitchen space to cook over 300 homemade meals for local residents in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paper Engineering Club started building a newspaper geodesic dome. ● Fourth graders constructed a working crane as a prop for their upcoming play. ● Fourth grade met their new fifth grade teachers while making paper LED lanterns with parents. ● 1B cut henna-inspired paper designs on the laser cutter to embellish their pots using modge podge. They personalized their pots with a custom vinyl sticker of their name in Hindi. Thank you to family members who translated all the names! ● Pre-KA laser cut all the planets in the solar system for their final project on space. ● Upper School service students labeled and organized materials in clear bins for easier use.