NPYM ad hoc Committee on Communication

Report - Executive Summary

Background

At Annual Session of NPYM-2013 the Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate the NPYM Structure recommended that an ad hoc committee explore better ways of communication within the YM, looking at needs, options, costs and methods of organizing or overseeing group communication.

This Committee met during 2013 – 14 and researched the answers to these questions. We identified information flow and communication practices currently used. We interviewed leaders of the YM and members to find their understandings and identify problems. We discussed and held in the Light many concerns and options, including a long list of potential improvements.

Findings

Our Findings are not easy to summarize as many of them come as queries about our priorities as a body and as individual Friends. Key to understanding the communication problem is the experience that information comes as a flood of unconnected data that those responsible cannot handle, do not know how to pass on to their meetings or do not find significant, particularly as their primary concern is building the life of the local group.

There is a great concern that the problem is neither technical nor organizational but rather personal and spiritual:
in the words of one Quaker, “we no longer value and practice the attention it takes to be a Quaker, following a Spirit-led life.”

- Have we dedicated or simplified our lives enough to place Quaker fellowship and communion as a priority?
- How do we support one another in making our spiritual center the Center of our social and individual lives?
- How do we share our personal leadings, our shared insights and experiences, and successes so that all of us can learn and be guided?
- How do we invite Friends to join in with all the activities and opportunities for connection in the YM?
• *How do we facilitate each person’s taking responsibility to invite others?*

The Yearly Meeting needs to consider the implications of these queries immediately.

We find three different communication challenges for NPYM Friends to work on first:

1. **Technological improvements**
   - Web site and electronic communication improvements that
     a) *simplify* regular distribution of all the information that everyone in the YM needs
     b) *facilitate* individuals easily finding the answers to questions
     c) *direct* critical information and leadership data to the individuals who will take responsible action.

2. **System and Organizational improvements**
   - Reassigning tasks that have got lost in the organizational restructuring
   - Improving and standardizing minutes
   - Simplifying and coordinating e-mail messages
   - Expanding use of the Web site with forums, bulletin boards, and forms, etc.

3. **Community Spiritual Needs**
   - More attention to decisions by unity in the Sense of the Meeting
   - More involvement of more people in the decisions that affect us all
   - More opportunities for spiritual fellowship and growth
   - Outreach and other changes to draw in newcomers and seekers
   - Reprioritize our lives

This summary does not attempt to cover any of the details or natural questions that these concerns will raise, including on-going challenges. We encourage everyone to read the entire report and discuss these issues in their home meetings.