

## Fact sheet re: the Proposed Care Relationship between Delaware Valley Friends School and Concord Quarterly Meeting

Delaware Valley Friends School was founded due to growing sense amongst Friends educators that there needed to be a Friends School for secondary students who learned differently. When DVFS was incorporated in 1986, it had no campus, staff, or students. The Board of Trustees hired Irene McHenry as Head of School. The school opened its doors to 20 students in the autumn of 1987, at a space rented from Harcum College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. By 1997, the school community had grown significantly, and moved to its present home at 19 East Central Avenue, the site of the former Paoli Elementary School.

Since there was no campus at its founding, the Board of Trustees agreed to use "Delaware Valley" to describe the school. Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting generously took the school under its care in 1986. DVFS is grateful for the connection with Philadelphia Friends, but the geographic distance of the past 20 years makes it difficult to have a substantive relationship with Philadelphia Quarter.

Hollister Knowlton, present clerk of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting and a member of the DVFS Board of Trustees until recently, appreciated the relationship but sensed that it was time for DVFS to make a change to a care relationship with a meeting geographically closer to the school. A small advisory group of board members, administrators, staff, and faculty began to prayerfully consider the issue. On September 25, 2017, the advisory group recommended that DVFS engage members of Concord Quarterly Meeting about the possibility of coming under its care. Kirk Smothers, head of school, presented the recommendation of the advisory group to the Board of Trustees of Delaware Valley Friends School at October 3, 2017. The Board united with the recommendation to open a dialogue with the Quarter about coming under its care.

Kirk Smothers presented this idea to Concord Quarterly Meeting on October 27, 2017. He spoke about the school wanting an ongoing relationship with a worshipping community of Friends. No legal or financial obligations are part of this care relationship. *"The meeting approved the appointment of an ad hoc committee to explore the matter further – Debbie Murray-Sheppard (Wilmington MM) and Shirley Wright Kamara (Middletown MM) with further names to be added by the CQM Planning Committee"*. Elisa Barbis (Willistown MM), Susan Brodesser (Birmingham MM) and Tom Ceresini (MT) were later added to the group. The group met later in the fall and planned to visit all the meetings in the Quarter so that Quarter Friends could learn about the school. At April's Quarterly Meeting, Kirk reported on the visits and said *"What the school is looking forward to ... is an active connection to Quaker meetings, so that the students, who often are quite damaged by their experiences at other schools, can feel a part of a larger spiritual relationship which they can interact with from time to time."* After some asked about visiting, and after the next meeting of the ad hoc group, Quarter Friends were invited for a tour and worship at DVFS on May 24. The CQ Coordinator has also been publicizing DVFS events and providing a link to the school's newsletter in the monthly Quarter Announcements.

The ad hoc committee approved a care relationship proposal in late April (after Quarterly Meeting), also now approved by the DVFS Board. On April 29, Concord Quarter Planning Committee decided to hold the item for October Quarterly Meeting. It was an item of brief discussion at QM in July: *"Those who visited the school and attended its meeting for worship also spoke in favor of this course when it comes before the Quarter for formal action. Appreciation was expressed for the care and manner in which this matter is being considered."*

Planning Committee next met on August 5 and decided to schedule a Threshing Session for early October open to all in the Quarter for further discussion. This will be held on October 7 at 1pm at Westtown Monthly Meeting. The proposed care relationship has been sent to all on the Quarter's email lists by email.

By Lynne Piersol, from minutes of Quarterly Meeting (in italics) and Planning Committee, and the letter from DVFS presented on October 22, 2017.