**Personal Aid Committee’s Annual Report: April 2014**

*We must be concerned about the welfare of every member of the Meeting community. While Friends need to guard against prying or invasion of privacy, it is nevertheless essential that Meetings be aware of the spiritual and material needs of members of the community and express caring concern in appropriate ways. –Faith and Practice, BYM*

**Committee Members:**  Pam Callard, Patty Murphy, Rachael Kidanne, Emilie Schmeidler, Malachy Kilbride, Adam Hixson, Montague Kern, (Co-Clerk nominee), and Jim Steen (Co-Clerk).

The Personal Aid Committee meets monthly to review new or ongoing needs of FMW community members who have sought the Committee’s help or been referred by others, plan special assistance/public awareness projects, and address concerns brought to our attention.  Its deliberations are confidential, and we strive to maintain the privacy of Friends while responding to their needs.

During 2013, the Committee was blessed with a core of experienced members including four very valuable members who rotated off the Committee -Ylene Larsen, Steve Williams, Elisabeth Johnson and Janet Dinsmore, Clerk extraordinaire. Sadly, we also lost Sara Satterwaite who was the epitome of the Meeting’s “caring concern” mission and a true inspiration to all of us on the Committee.

Adam Hixson, Malachy Kilbride, and Montague Kern are new members. We also are fortunate to have the periodic assistance of past members Ylene Larsen, Marcia Reecer, Merry Pearlstein, and Janet Dinsmore. Administrative Clerk, Debby Churchman is forever helping us in reaching out to persons in need. We depend heavily on many others beyond the Committee to identify and respond to individuals in the Meeting.

Personal Aid attempts to meet its responsibility for caring concern by providing practical assistance designed primarily to meet short-term needs of member and attenders, e.g. shopping assistance, meal deliveries, transportation, cleaning/moving help, compassionate support, and limited financial assistance.  In the process, we listen, identify expert resources, visit, make telephone calls, track down absent friends and family, and serve on support groups.

Beyond providing confidential personal assistance, the Committee has carried out a number of Meeting-wide activities this past year:

* **Emergency Information** - Three years ago we asked the FMW community to fill out a confidential emergency form providing contact information in the case of an incapacitating event or death. This year we again are asking members to fill out a slightly updated form.  Copies are in the information rack in the Meeting House entrance way The Committee also will be sending out a listserv announcement making it available in electronic form. All submitted forms are kept in a confidential file under the supervision of the Administrative Clerk.
* **AED** - Two years ago we purchased an automatic external defibrillator (AED) for emergency use should someone suffer a cardiac arrest on the property. In 2013, FMW staff were trained in its use and Ylene Larsen and Rachel Kidanne led several training sessions for members and attenders.  The AED is located on the back wall of the Assembly Room, left of the hallway to the Children’s Library.  Members can be assured it is easy to use on adults and children.
* **First Aid Workshop** - In March, the Committee held a full day workshop for some 17 individuals. The workshop included training on First Aid, AED, and CPR. With financial assistance from the DC Government registration was provided to participants free of charge. The workshop was considered such a success that the Committee is considering offering it again this fall.
* **Scholarships** - Several years ago the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business approved a Finance and Stewardship Committee’s proposal for a small scholarship fund to help members and attenders participate in educational activities that enrich the spiritual life of individuals and contribute to the Meeting’s corporate life.  The Meeting for Business assigned responsibility and funding to the Personal Aid Committee.  During this past year a scholarship help finance one young adult friend who developed a teaching curriculum on racism in Haiti. Scholarships also helped support two young adult friends who attended the FUM conference on the issues of attracting and retaining youth and young adults in the Religious Society of Friends. These friends later prepared an extensive report for Meeting for Business recommending actions that FMW might take on these issues.
* **BYM Certificates** - Personal Aid administers Baltimore Yearly Meeting’s two free day certificates for first-time attenders to Yearly meeting.  Last year three certificates were issued. The announcement for this year’s certificates is expected to be made this month.

For years the sales of Bob Meehan’s Treasure Bread have enriched the Personal Aid budget. This resource has enabled gifts to individuals in critical need of emergency funds, help with travel to Quaker gatherings and workshops, and other useful expenditures on behalf of individuals requiring assistance.  We are tremendously grateful to Bob for his longstanding and significant contributions to the welfare of our community!

The Committee’s effectiveness relies to a great extent on the availability of others when specific needs arise.  Since we call on people we know, this means a few generous, hard-working individuals often bear a heavy burden.  We need more volunteers to help with such occasional needs as:  transporting members to Meeting, making and delivering meals, taking someone to the hospital, or phoning an isolated Friend.  Please let us know if you can help provide this type of assistance.

Jim Steen, Co-Clerk