

SUMMER 2023 | ISSUE 1

WESTFIELD HOOTS

Westfield Hoots is a bi-annual magazine distributed among the Westfield Friends School community sharing updates on the people and programs that connect and make up Westfield Friends today.



Summer Fun

Summer Camp in full swing

As I write, our youngest campers are outside my office with squirt guns, a sprinkler, and water tables. The rule is, if you have a water toy in hand, you should expect to be squirted or splashed. There are squeals of joy, even as Johnnie Martin WFS '02, reminds the children of the rules. Johnnie is one of our camp directors. We have over 60 children in our summer camp. Many are regular school families, while others are from the surrounding neighborhoods. We are also readying our campus and program for the upcoming year. Our summer work falls into three categories, preparing the campus, preparing our teachers, and engaging our friends and alumni with the life of the school.

Margaret Haviland
Head of School



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Friends Council on Education

Membership renewal

We completed our Friends Council on Education, Membership Renewal in May. Our self-study process asked us serious questions about the ways in which Quaker testimonies, decision-making, and religious beliefs shape, govern, and lead the work we do with children today.¹ The leader of our visiting committee wrote that:

Our weekly meeting for worship is a place where all are welcome to speak from their hearts, if so moved. We focus on the strength of the gathered community, giving children and adults a powerful tool for spiritual growth.

“Our visit, along with the comprehensive and well-written self-study report, has given us a good sense of the Quaker dimension of Westfield Friends School.”

“We were struck by how warm and welcoming the students and faculty were. Your students conveyed strength, joy, and confidence in who they are, in their sense of belonging, and in their voices being heard in the community. They spoke of the care they feel from their teachers. Our meeting with faculty gave us a sense of their strong commitment to their students, the program, and to Westfield Friends.”

¹The Friends Council Membership Renewal self-study is available upon request



Faculty Professional Development

Focussing on three strands of our professional growth

Our teachers actively engage in ongoing professional development. Each charts a path of individual learning focused on keeping abreast of new learning in neuroscience, pedagogy, and best practices in various academic areas. As a professional community, we collaborate on three strands in our professional growth in service of the school and its mission.

The first of these is understanding Quaker history, religious testimonies, and their expression in Friends Schools. In our first year, we considered Quaker history, and the many Friends Organizations in the world today. This past year we have focused on the testimonies - how Friends act in the world. This past winter we considered the testimony on integrity and how it informs every other aspect of how we, as Quakers, act in the world.



Quaker Fridays at Westfield are a time to be creative and be of service, at the same time.



Camp Dark Waters



Cedar Run

Friends Journal has provided us with articles to discuss together. Most recently, we considered what it would mean for us to focus on our ten miles.² Out of this discussion came an affirmation of our field trips to the Cooper River and Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge and Camp Dark Waters as well as our service partnerships with Cathedral Kitchen and Hearts for Hospice.

²"Ten Miles Around" by Andy Stanton-Henry, Friends Journal, April 2023

The second strand of our professional learning grows out of our school mission which includes the affirmation that “We find power and wisdom in our differences”. All staff have helped shape our fourth year of exploring, understanding, and then designing classroom experiences that focus on justice, equity, and fostering belonging for each and every community member.



In January, Anika Forrest spoke to students in 4th, 7th, and 8th grades about her personal story's connection to immigration. She also spoke about her work with the Friends Committee on National Legislation as Legislative Director for Domestic Policy where she focuses on immigration.



Trinity Norwood, a citizen of the Nanticoke Leni-Lenape Tribal Nation in South Jersey, shared with our 3rd-8th grade students insight on her tribe and then taught the students a circle dance.



We have had day-long professional development workshops led by members of the school and by local experts committed to helping us answer the questions we have about our work with children. This has been rich, transformative work shaped by our belief in continuing revelation. Research informs this work, in that we know students learn at their best proximal edge when they feel they belong and are valued for their whole being.³

³ “The Need to Belong: a Deep Dive into the Origins, Implications, and Future of a Foundational Construct” by Kelly-Ann Allen, DeLeon L. Gray, Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary. *Educational Psychological Review*. 2022; 34(2): 1133-1156.

The third strand supports our multi-year project to shift our pedagogy to Project Based Learning with its emphasis on queries (a foundational Quaker concept), collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication. Several teachers focused their projects on our theme "We Seek an Earth Restored."

For instance, Second and Third Grade students spent a month considering the problem of trash. They interviewed experts, considered several possible solutions, many of which they rejected, and then decided on a few changes we could make at Westfield Friends School. Then these 7 and 8-year-old students stood up in front of the entire school and made their case for our reducing consumption of packaged foods at lunch, composting lunch waste, and banning single-use plastic bottles from school (we already require that students have a reusable water bottle). They also argued that whole industries would need to rethink their production practices.

The following month, First Grade students presented their findings and recommendations to the school from their work to answer, "Why are bog turtles, tree frogs, and Tiger Salamanders endangered in New Jersey?" The faculty believes our students deserve to understand their world, see beauty in it, and be empowered to address their inherited environmental challenges. Building on last year's theme they have chosen "We Seek To Create an Earth Restored" as the theme for 2023-24.



The Recycle/Reduce Committee interviewed our custodian, Mr. Wayne asking about recycling here at WFS and his thoughts about starting a new program, PAR Recycle Works, here at the school.



First grade students present on their Project-based learning study on Endangered Species

Alumni Search Project

Inviting our alumni family to reconnect with their Westfield community

This year we are engaged in a year-long project to connect with as many of our alums as possible. As we dig through LinkedIn and other social media, we are finding Westfield alums who are engaged in exciting, fun, and transformative work. If you are in contact with other Westfield alums ask if they have shared their most up-to-date email with us. Have them connect with us on social media as well.



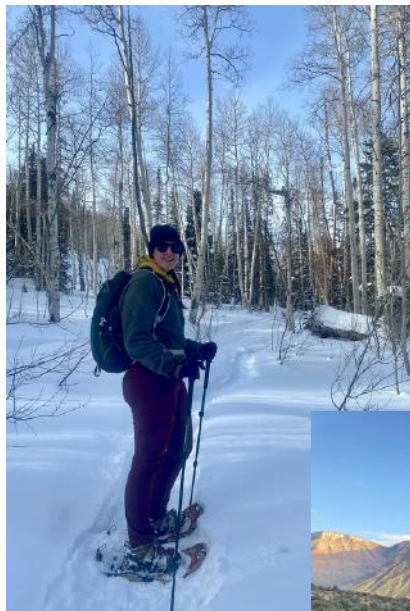
WESTFIELD
est. 1788
FRIENDS SCHOOL
THE WORLD WE SEEK FOR CHILDREN BEGINS HERE



Alumni Spotlight

Paige Dubrow WFS '08

Recently, Margaret Haviland was able to visit with Paige Dubrow WFS '08 who shared her many wonderful memories of Westfield Friends School and how her early years set her on the path she finds herself on to this day.



“

I consider writing my graduation speech for 8th grade to be one of the truly unique experiences of Westfield. My speech was based on a story I had heard about appreciating the little things in life just as much as the big important parts. I think I still have a printed copy of it saved at my mom's house somewhere.

While I am not a Quaker, Meeting for Worship is a big part of all of my memories. I still practice the Quaker approach to holding someone "in the Light" when I know someone needs support and love. Out of the years of Meeting for Worship, I believe I developed a type of thoughtfulness that serves me well in my chosen work.

”



Read the rest of Paige's interview in our "[Where Are They Now](#)" feature found in Alumni Stories on our website. These are interviews conducted with Head of School, Margaret Haviland.

2023 Alumni Speeches

Featuring our recent alum, Baron Levan WFS '23

Baron Levan, WFS '23 is one of our newest alums. He will attend Holy Ghost Prep. This has been his first choice since he realized he would have to leave WFS for high school. He is a lifer at Westfield. Entering PreKindergarten, he has lived and breathed all that Westfield has to offer.

His graduation speech included reflections on his time at this school. In our final meeting for worship, his first-grade buddy stood up and wished him much success, thanked him for being his buddy, and said he would miss him and love him always.

Summer Building Projects

Enhancing our classrooms and hallways

While children are playing outdoors, new floors are being installed in Fourth Grade and in the OWLS Lab. Over time, we will replace the old industrial-grade carpet with new vinyl tile flooring. We have been impressed with the ways this flooring enhances the room's soundscape and is so much easier to clean. Other rooms have been painted and following the strictures of our COVID protocols, the Middle School lounge is being reconstituted.

“

“No man is wise enough by himself” Titus Maccius Plautus.

In life everyone is unique, everyone has a unique personality which helps define who they are. Everyone also is influenced by someone or something they see. These influences make people who they are and have the ability to make you great.

”



A long-standing tradition, and one that many alumni, including Paige Dubrow WFS '08, recall that writing their graduation speech compositions helped them encompass their years at Westfield and describe to themselves how they had been formed by their time here.

Read more of the 2023 graduation class speeches on our website, [here](#).



Rushmore House

Our new Preschool 3 Building almost ready

Of course, the big project is the Rushmore House remodel. I will share more about that soon. For now, suffice it to say that this exciting project, a gift from devoted friends of the school, will provide us with the space to answer the demand we are experiencing for our Quaker-grounded, child-centered early childhood program.



Two Ways to Give Today

This among other opportunities to support Westfield

1 The Fund for Westfield supports the school's operating budget and helps us keep the school's tuition attainable for a wide range of families. It also supports everything from balls for the Gaga Pit, the Middle School Musical, the elementary school canoeing trip, books for the library, speakers we invite to share their expertise on a variety of topics, purchase of art supplies and STEM equipment, and also helps us achieve our sustainability goals.

Longer term, consider adding Westfield Friends School to your will and estate plans. Take a look at the opportunities for planned giving in this comprehensive [brochure](#) and visit our school's [Opportunities for Giving page](#) to see all the ways that you can contribute to supporting our wonderful school.

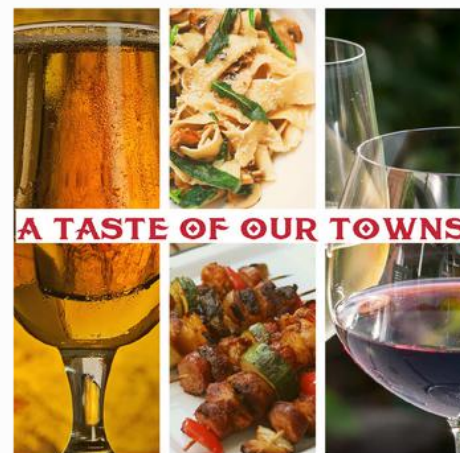
2 The William Probsting Scholarship Fund underwrites our Burlington County Scholar's Program which helps remove financial barriers to mission-appropriate students who live in our community.

A generous friend of Westfield has launched a challenge. This means your gift to the William Probsting Scholarship Fund will be doubled. Learn more about it [and contribute here](#).

Fund & Friend Raising

Our Westfield community's generosity shines during these two annual events

Both of these annual events bring together the Westfield community in support of the school's Responsive Tuition Program which is designed to remove tuition as a barrier for families considering our school. Finances should not come between your children, a Westfield Friends education, and a fulfilling childhood experience.



Monday, September 18th, 2023 -- Join us for a fantastic day of 18 holes, including lunch, a cocktail reception, and auction at the superb Riverton Country Club. Every year, we appreciate the support of our generous sponsors, donors, auction item donors, and volunteers. You all make this event a success!

Saturday, April 20th, 2024 -- Be sure to join us for this delectable occasion. Local restaurants donate their food and drink to support this annual event held at Westfield Friends School. There will be an auction and fun activities, and you will tour our halls to see featured art by our Westfield students. Do not miss this event!

Summer Camp at Westfield

It's all about fun!

