



**2024 Annual Report from the First Contact Reconciliation
Collaborative
Submitted to the Quaker Life Council Program Support
Committee of
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM)**

Might Philadelphia Yearly Meeting congregants contemplate what relationship and trust building might feel like with/by/ for those whose lifeways over centuries have remained hidden from and slighted by predominant culture; spaces where Friends' words may have fallen short of true loving actions?

First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative (FCRC) has been birthed from darkness, a void within the Yearly Meeting, rectified by a proposal submission, officially approved, debuting at Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) Annual Sessions 2017, held at The College of New Jersey. Previously, PYM lacked a space of T/truth and Healing for/ with Indigenous Nations, verified Peoples who have remained on their ancestral homeland, a space where “loving one’s neighbors” calls-in gifts of listening and restoring relations. By Spirit, Light within guides peacemaking through relationship building and reconciliations. We are led by the Treaty of Amity, where leadership among Lenape: Friends communities agreed to live in perpetual peace and friendship. Today, historic truths call-in Friends of shared convictions across Yearly Meetings, Friends who are acknowledging and reconciling with Indigenous Nations’ leadership, by listening deeply, seeking our hearts and asking what we might do. Indigenous worldviews are best understood by listening to Indigenous leaders. Efforts have been extended to include Indigenous “cousins” who have been removed from their homeland, where PYM Friends’ meetinghouses and congregants reside. This Annual Report, due by the end of May 2024, represents June 2023 – May 2024 with intersections for parts of Fiscal Year 2022 (June 2023 – Sept 2023) and FY 2023 (October 1, 2023 – May 2024).

Congregants of First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative most often “meet” at events – showing up for justice matters. This has included on-site and virtual experiences – Indigenous headquarters/ socials, local Indigenous Nation-hosted Pow-Wows, Friend-hosted talks, National Museum of American Indians (NMAI), National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), Delaware Riverkeepers, Coalition of Natives and Allies, Friends Peace Teams Toward Right Relationship, and quarterly Joint Yearly Meetings’ (virtual) Gatherings.

The work of your FCRCollaborative is being shared with the PYM community on the PYM calendar of events, PYM news pages, and PYM website - <https://www.pym.org/first-contact-reconciliation-collaborative/>. After attending the public, annual Nanticoke-Lenape Nation's Pow-Wow (second weekend in June), Friends wrote and had widely published a 2023 Pow-Wow Epistle. Individual Monthly Meeting and Quarterly publications have posted news/ advertised in-person events when FCRC individuals have made themselves available for speaking engagements. Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings have hosted talks addressing concerns arising from their relative Spirit led spaces, such as Religious Education, Peace & Social Concerns, Restorative Justice, and Indigenous Affairs. With appreciation, this year we have been additionally afforded a PYM dedicated email address – FirstContactReconciliation@pym.org. We look forward to hearing from seekers and potentially showing up in “new-to-us” spaces, toward growing our edges nearer.

Working with Indigenous Nations' leadership engages us with inherently Spiritually based Peoples. During these opportunities we hear consistent abundant gratitude for what the Creator provides, even in dark situations Light endures, where injustice occurs, resilience endures. Culturally, Spirit given gifts are absorbed in community with equity for the diversity of creation, which includes kinship relations with non-human beings. Within predominant culture, FCRC individuals are spiritually grounded in practices of wholeness and care of one's vessel; open to visual & performing arts (music, dance) – noticing and creating beauty, eco-justice advocacy, human justice advocacy, sowing-growing-harvesting food and medicinal herbs, equine therapy, and practices of well-being – meditation, walking meditation, yoga.

The PYM Financial Year and PYM Annual Report dates are not in pure alignment; despite precise accounting by this collaborative during previous years, required documentation, and submission forms, multiple requests for staff assistance failed to produce past reimbursements and honorarium requests; we hold that honorariums are not to be navigated as contracts. The proposed & approved 2023-2024 budget, below, has been created with intention and FCRC is grateful for PYM's Quaker Life Council's subsequent approval of \$1,675. Faithful PYM F/friends of FCRC's shared witnessing remain under the weight of two movements - Honor the Promise and Truth & Healing. The lingering effects of prior unmet fiscal responsibilities shadowed the 2023-2024 approved budget; to a degree, currently, there is some lack of trust with institutional obligations. Instead, to date, Friends have discerned “payment-in-kind” donations for eight of ten expenses moving forward our acts of Light, amounting to no less than \$1,300. Two budgeted expenses (items d & h below) have not been tended and await clearness in the form of actual deeds (named in last year's epistle), promises yet to be kept. With clearness, we

release ourselves of YM financial binds and forgive the YM’s financial obligations; perhaps in time, confidences may be restored.

First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative			
PYM Funding Request for FY Oct 1, 2023 – Sep 30, 2024			
Expense description	Amount approved	Amount used	Explanation of use or justification
a. Local Indigenous Seeds Revitalization	\$50.00		Honor the Promise Project
b. Companion Pollinators (herbs, flowers)	\$25.00		Honor the Promise Project
c. Language Revitalization Project - books and CDs	\$175.00		Honor the Promise Project
d. Powwow booster ads	\$175.00		Honor the Promise Project
e. Indigenous authors' children's stories	\$100.00		Truth & Healing Project
f. Honorarium gifts	\$125.00		Truth & Healing Project
g. Honorariums (no contract, gift)	\$600.00		Truth & Healing Project
h. Speakers and workshops (contracts)	\$200.00		Truth & Healing Project
i. Informational Color fliers	\$100.00		Truth & Healing Project
j. Healing Journals & writing tools	\$125.00		Truth & Healing Project
TOTALS	\$1,675.00	\$0.00	

Major accomplishments for the year include relationship building with Indigenous Nations’ leadership; during the past year (June 2023 – May 2024) we have engaged in the following justified acts – Honor the Promise and Truth & Healing:

- a) participation with PYM Quaker Life Council Land Acknowledgement Sprint Group where a [proposed YM Land Acknowledgement](#) and queries has been drafted, where we may be led toward acts of reparations; this document states:

We gather today as people of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting with affiliations to many groups of worshipers which occupied occupy Lenapehoking, the ancestral lands of and home to many indigenous people. We each recognize and commit to the need to understand the historic and current relationship among all those who inhabit these lands and will each undertake to inform ourselves of these facts. We have much to learn and can only begin with what we know. We understand that knowledge and commitment must underpin action, and that reciprocal and respectful connection and communication must undergird right

relationship. We intend to grow into this commitment, connection and communication, "...as long as the creeks and rivers flow and the sun, moon, and stars endure."

Queries:

- *What do I know about the indigenous people who live and have lived in the region in which I live? How can I grow more fully into that?*
 - *What do I know about the relationship between the indigenous people in the region in which I live and the Federal and State Government? How can I grow more fully into that?*
 - *How am I living into my responsibility to be a good steward of the region in which I live, including the land and the relationships with other living beings? How can I grow more fully into that?*
- b) Friends unified voice & accountabilities lent to the creation of the 2023 Nanticoke-Lenape Pow-wow Epistle
- c) networking with 501 (c4) designated organizations, channeling individuals' Spirit leadings to spaces that are afforded rightly ordered structural liberation – Coalition of Natives and Allies, Delaware Riverkeepers, Friends Committee on National Legislation
- d) hosting virtual Joint Yearly Meeting Gatherings, Quarterly informal sharing of works taking place on land predominantly occupied by non-indigenous Peoples/ of Canada and The United States; Yearly Meetings frequenting these gatherings are Friends in 7 YMs - Canada YM, Pacific YM, InterMountain YM, New England YM, New York YM, Baltimore YM, Philadelphia YM
- e) several workshop proposals yielding presentations by FCRC Friends & Indigenous friends for Friends Association for Higher Education Conference 2023 at Haverford College
- f) relationship building with verifiable (state and federally recognized) Tribal Nations; see National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
- g) speaking platforms with recordings of Chief Urie (Fox Sparrow) Ridgeway, [YouTube](#) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOPYIXU1dEo>
- h) Select FCRC individuals invited by the Lenape delegation for a talk by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and reception hosted by [Princeton University](#) - <https://lectures.princeton.edu/lectures/2024/dr-robin-wall-kimmerer>
- i) Participation with a Quaker Indian Boarding School (IBS) Research Group; access to Friends (Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges collections) is now part of the digital archives of the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), [NIBSDA](#) - <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/nibsda/>
- j) Independent research of Friends: Lenape, including IBS, requested by Lenape leadership with assistance from research historian, Jean Soderlund, utilizing Friends archives and Carlisle IBS digitized records by Dickenson College
- k) Honoring the Indigenous children interred at Carlisle IBS, Carlisle Barracks
- l) Friends are carrying forward our ministry of concern with the guidance, support, and accountability of our monthly meeting, quarterly meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting together, continuing our advocating for a Federal Truth and Healing Commission, presented to PYM during Annual Sessions 2022, recognized by FCNL – web address here

- m) Supporting Lenape Nations' leaders who are refuting Peter Schagen's letter to the Dutch West India Company/ Netherland's 400th anniversary referencing a purchase of Manahahtaanung, Manhattan
- n) Season of story-listening with Indigenous storytellers, embedding language, history, and self-identity - the state of being indigenous, Indigeneity

Financial vestment and management (money) seems to be a hinderance to the mission of FCRC. Historically, our faith-based institution benefits from monies left in its care; in the past, Friends "care" is evidenced toward "civilizing" Indigenous Peoples; less stressed, "Christianization" by Friends was inherent based in daily/ cultural lifeways. We might be left to wonder about "our" inherited Friends' legacy. We are left contemporarily concerned by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's structure which continues a pattern of what might be identified as historic patriarchal oversight (through granting), perpetuating myths, biases, and stereotypes of Tribal Nations/ Peoples. Moved by Spirit, any and all forms of inequitable means of domination, rather than truer relationship building, requires discernment toward reconciliations with all our relatives. We stand by the words of Edgar Villaneuva, "Philanthropy, honey you need an intervention." Given this country's historic relationship with Indigenous Nations, given Indigenous voices rising, might PYM Friends seek to unbind processes of vested funds tagged for Indian concerns: might PYM Friends enter into mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous communities where Nations have been impacted by centuries of civilizing and Christianizing Indians; might Friends reconciliations lead us toward liberating all monies tagged for Indigenous concerns directly and fully to Indigenous Nations?

Measures of truer reconciliation toward equity and empowerment with Indigenous Nations call on the PYM body at large, all congregants, and particularly those who serve as staff and those who volunteer their gifts of leadership - Clerk, Administrative Council, Quaker Life Council, and Nominating Council. Short of lobbying, we ask that you continue to keep us in your heart and on your lips as community(ies) find ways of growing edges toward unity.

Na ne lekech.

As directed by PYM's Program Support Committee clerk. Wendy Kane, this report has been sent to the PYM Community Engagement Coordinator, Claire Kinnel, at ckinnel@pym.org; in addition, the QLC Program Support Committee FCRC liaison, Betsy Crofts.

<https://www.pym.org/quaker-life-council/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2020/02/FINAL-9-12-14-Approved-Minutes-of-Concern.pdf>