

## **India Friends Collaborative Report 2024**

The India Friends Collaborative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting continues to strengthen its ties with India Friends. Our Collaborative and India Friends meet by phone, email and occasionally in person. When we have discussions with India Friends, they lead in the decision making process. We learn from them, and support them in the implementation of their decisions. Our focus last year and this year has been the construction of a new classroom building at Sohagpur Friends School for Girls. This year classes are being held in it while the school is purchasing furniture and educational material that is needed. Recently the school purchased a school van for transporting students. The Collaborative has been involved in these two improvements in various ways. One member of our Collaborative has traveled to India and has had discussions with Friends there about the two projects and other matters of concern.

Friends in India from various Yearly and Monthly Meetings have been holding an All India Friends Gathering every three years. They have not met since 2018 because of the Covid pandemic. There will be a Gathering this year and two members of our Collaborative will be attending. The dates are October 9<sup>th</sup> to October 13<sup>th</sup> at Rasulia, a Quaker farm and Conference Center in central India. Most accommodations are bunkbeds and communal meals. The language is Hindi with some translating and worship is programed with some degree of silent worship. Representatives from other Yearly Meetings attend especially from the Asia West Pacific Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. There are discussions, meetings and worship on many different topics that are of concern to all Quakers. Worshipping together, living and working together creates and strengthens a bond between us.

Young Friends participate in the India Friends Gathering, and then afterwards Young Friends from about 12 years old to about 25 years old participate in a Young Friends Study and Work Camp at Rasulia. At both events, members of our Collaborative have spoken on various topics. For instance, I have spoken about John Woolman at both events.

Friends who would like to attend and/or would like to participate in the India Friends Collaborative should write me at [indiafriendscollaborative23@gmail.com](mailto:indiafriendscollaborative23@gmail.com).

Pictures of the new classroom building and the school bus which was purchased this June, are attached to this report. We offer presentations to Quaker groups and would be glad to give a power point presentation to the Program Committee and the Life Council.

While only there for a total of six weeks I have developed a strong friendship in both senses of the word with India Friends. Even though I have not been there since 2015 working with them

via emails and conversations on the phone I (and the other members of the Collaborative) have developed a deep commitment to them.

Quakers in India are a tiny minority of a small minority of Christian based Meetings and Churches in India. Having a strong relationship with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Meetings from the Asia and West Pacific section of the FWCC and Britain Yearly Meeting have strengthened their resolve to continue in the Faith and know they are part of the greater Quaker Community!

Thank you for your support of the India Friends Collaborative.

Jack Walz, Clerk

India Friends Collaborative of PYM