

Peace and Social Concerns 2022
Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Many meetings and individuals have contacted their representatives, appeared at demonstrations, and in other ways worked on issues related to gun violence, racial and identity discrimination, rapidly escalating environmental devastation, and wars. A number of meetings and Friends are making progress helping a family from Afghanistan get to Canada to be reunited with their children.

Quakers today are struggling with what we are learning about Friends' history of the harms done at Quaker Indian Boarding Schools and the policies of forced assimilation.

We don't judge the Friends who worked in those schools. We love them because we are members of one another in the Spirit. From today's vantage point, we can see more clearly that forced assimilation is always a tragic mistake. We realize in retrospect that as Friends, we must not impose our values, beliefs, and ways onto those who grew up in a different culture.

We feel we have been on a continuing journey, begun earlier in our lives and intensifying in the present because so much is opening up. Native peoples are lifting up their voices in greater numbers and are beginning to be heard by those of us who are settlers. Settler people are beginning to be open to awareness of the harm we have inflicted on all that is indigenous to the land we now live on.

In 2019, Friend Paula Palmer held a series of workshops and presentations in Iowa and Nebraska related to her ministry, Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples. One of those presentations was "The Quaker Indian Boarding Schools. Facing our History and Ourselves."

In the summer of 2021, ground penetrating radar located the remains of 215 children near the Kamloops Indian Residential School. Native peoples knew many of the children who attended those schools never returned home. But the location of these remains reopened deep wounds. And as feared, thousands of remains have been found at other schools since. The searches continue.

Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland created the Federal Native American School Initiative in June 2021. The initial report was released recently. The next phase will focus on the role of churches who operated these schools. About thirty of these schools were operated by Quakers.

Today, we support the establishment of a federal Truth and Healing commission. We encourage Friends and Quaker meetings to research the involvement of their ancestors and meetings in the Indian residential schools. And share what they find.

Friends are urged to learn more about injustices indigenous peoples continue to face, including forced assimilation, missing and murdered relatives, racist mascots, Indigenous Peoples Day, expanding fossil fuel infrastructure, and pollution of Mother Earth.

Decorah Friends Meeting is working to support an effort to realize a Meskwaki language workbook.

This past year our committee decided to reserve our budget for an opportunity that might present itself. Because of years of Friends' relationships with Sikowis (Christine) Nobiss, she asked if we could help support the screenings of the video "They Found Us", about finding remains of children at the residential school of her nation, George Gordon First Nation. Our committee was glad we could give our budget of \$1,100. We would like to reserve this year's budget for a similar Spirit led opportunity.

Jeff Kisling, clerk
