

Adults Attending – names in **bold** attended business/others helped with Young Friends program:

Dawn Crimson, Carbondale	Brittany Koresch, Urbana-Champaign	<b>Christina Schulz</b> , Bloomington
Brennan Daw, St. Louis	<b>Jean Marie Marron-Beebe</b> , U-C	<b>Denice Smith</b> , St. Louis
<b>Warwick Daw</b> , St. Louis	<b>Grayce Mesner</b> , Clear Creek	Barbara Stanford, St. Louis
Dale Gardner, Urbana-Champaign	<b>Neil Mesner</b> , Clear Creek	<b>Sandra Tamari</b> , St. Louis
Mason George, Evanston	<b>Farina Murray</b> , Urbana-Champaign	<b>Steve Tamari</b> , St. Louis
<b>Mariellen Gilpin</b> , U-C	Rollie Perkins, Carbondale	<b>Erin Taylor</b> , Macomb WG
<b>Barbara Harroun</b> , Macomb WG	Abigail Pollack, Evanston	<b>Bobbi Trist</b> , Urbana-Champaign
<b>Tim Hetrick</b> , St. Louis	<b>Maurine Pyle</b> , Carbondale	<b>Sean West</b> , Macomb WG
Rose Johnson, Clear Creek	<b>Mike Ruberton</b> , St. Louis	David Wixom, St. Louis
<b>Andrea Kintree</b> , St. Louis	<b>Dawn Rubbert</b> , St. Louis	<b>Judith Wolicki</b> , ILYM Field Secretary

Young Friends Attending

Marlena Amos-16, Carbondale	Annaleigh Harroun-11, Macomb WG	Collin Suess-6, Bloomington
Kit Perkins-18, Carbondale	Jack Harroun-7, Macomb WG	Gwen Suess-9, Bloomington
Liam Gardner-15, Urbana-Champaign	Ellie Hetrick-11, St. Louis	Amal Tamari-15, St. Louis
Quinn Gardner-12, U-C	Nathan Lasersohn- 13, U-C	Jad Tamari-13, St. Louis
Anya Gardner-10, Urbana-Champaign	Jackson Meyer-Lee-16, South Bend	Lorelei Taylor-West-9, Macomb WG
Laure Goode – 17, Downers Grove	Ava Rockafeld-17, Evanston	

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**1) Waiting Worship**

**2) Welcome – Participants Report**

- A total of 50 persons are attending with 4 adults & 2 children arriving Sat after breakfast and 2 adults arriving after lunch
- Including 4 AYFs staying in Roadside Cottage and holding their own Meeting for Business.
- 7 HS Friends (plus Rose Johnson) are present and staying in Lakeside Cottage and organizing their own program.
- 10 Young Friends ages 6 to 13 - No Wee Friends

**3) Call for agenda items:** Minute Six below was included after the original draft. Items following were renumbered. No further items were requested.

**4) Treasurer's Report:** The report was approved, and is attached.

**5) Working Group Follow-Up:**

The following was minuted at Spring 2015 sessions: "Blue River Quarterly Meeting encourages Friends to return home and report to their meetings with as much enthusiasm as possible their experiences at quarterly meeting, thus encouraging wider participation in future sessions. Reporting by younger Friends is especially recommended."

"Additionally, we appoint a working group including Dawn Rubbert, Michael Ruberton, Bobbi Trist, Mariellen Gilpin, and other Friends as opportunity arises, to support this process, and to develop job

descriptions for the offices of Blue River Quarterly Meeting, including Clerk, Recording Clerk, Treasurer, and Website Manager.”

Members of the working group agreed to renew and continue their efforts to complete these tasks. Mariellen Gilpin volunteered to coordinate the working group to help facilitate progress.

#### **6) BRQ Website**

Peter requested permission to remove the outdated material from the front page of the BRQ website, and Friends approved. He also requested assistance maintaining the site, which is a “wiki” that can be modified by Friends who are so inclined. Steve Tamari agreed to work with Peter on the contents of the front page. Peter shared that he has continued to transcribe old minutes and has posted them to the site; they now extend back to 1937. The Site also contains information on BRQ planning, a discussion board, and other resources that Friends might find useful.

#### **7) Gender Acceptance – Minute for consideration from Southern IL Friends**

Marlena Amos and Maurine Pyle shared the following 9/13/2015 Minute of Southern Illinois Quaker Meeting. This minute came about following two years of conversation among SIQ’s which included much listening to young Friends who shared their experiences.

*Recognizing the inner Light in each individual, we come together to commit and affirm that we are welcoming to members of the GLBTQ community. We acknowledge that we are learning how to be accepting to members of this community, and seek guidance and information from the younger members of our community who may be more comfortable with non-binary gender identity than some of the rest of us. We commit to being inclusive and to learning how to be affirming to all, and accepting of all regardless of their gender identity.*

*We have long minuted our acceptance of gay marriage and continue to recognize our openness to same sex marriage. We recognize though that this is only a small part of the issues surrounding sexuality and gender, and commit to being accepting, being open, learning more and recognizing the inner Light of each individual however it may be expressed through their own gender identity.*

Friends expressed deep gratitude and support to Southern Illinois Quaker Meeting, with consideration that BRQ will continue to labor with how to craft its own similar minute. There was an informative discussion with the young Friends who were present. It was suggested that other ILYM meetings encourage young friends to pursue a similar dialogue. Barbara Haroun agreed to lead a program on this topic at Spring Quarterly 2016 in collaboration with young Friends.

Maurine Pyle, Maryellen Gilpin, Christina Schulz, Dawn Crimson and Judy Wolicki agreed to act as an ad hoc committee to create queries regarding gender acceptance to be shared with Illinois Yearly Meeting and its monthly meetings. The committee will begin its work this weekend and will continue as needed, with a report to be presented at spring 2016 Quarterly sessions.

#### **8) Update on Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund**

Note that this organization was formerly known as NUR (New Underground Railroad.) A handout was presented and is attached here.

**9) Friends Peace Teams-AGLI**

An update about the work of the African Great Lakes Initiative on Mt. Elgon in Kenya was presented in the form of an eight page report – complete with photos. It can be read here:  
<http://aglifpt.org/rfk/?p=615>.

**10) Possible BRQ Retreat**

Maurine Pyle and Maryellen Gilpin proposed that BRQ hold a retreat at Clear Creek House this fall, November 6-8, at Clear Creek House. The proposed topic is “Letting God Get a Word in Edgewise: A Weekend of Prayer-Experiments”. The retreat would be done on a shoestring with a fee of approximately \$20 per person. It would be open to a maximum of eighteen people; unless some Friends are willing to sleep “dormitory style”. This retreat would also be a feasibility study: what could BRQ do for minimal expense to maximize our spiritual community? Friends approved.

NOTE: At this point our allotted time ended. The business below was conducted Sunday morning following the conclusion of the extended ILYM Planning meeting.

**11) 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Blue River Quarterly Meeting**

This event will occur in 2019. The first actual meeting was in January of 1819 but all agreed that was not the month to hold an event. It was suggested that we consider holding an event at the original meetinghouse in Salem, Indiana which is a bit more than 4 hours from St Louis and 3 hours from Dubois Center. There is no running water or bathroom facilities so many logistics would be involved. Erin Taylor agreed to research possible retreat centers in that area.

Friends are earnestly hopeful that the celebration will include a presentation about BRQ history by Peter Lasersohn. A large birthday cake is also suggested. We can explore the concept of this being a homecoming event and reaching out to families who were part of BRQ; any who can be found. Another activity might be creating a time capsule which could make a terrific intergenerational event. There is also the possibility of creating a publication about BRQ via Arcadia Publishing. Steve Tamari has information through which we could explore this option and has shared such with Peter Lasersohn. Friends are encouraged to begin thinking about what might be included in such a publication and may submit articles and ideas to Mariellen Gilpin for shepherding. There is also the option of holding a symbolical event locally at Clear Creek MM.

**12) Bobbi Trist** recommended that Rose Johnson and Brittany Koresh be thanked for organizing the program, Friends agreed with enthusiasm.

**13) Adjournment** following a period of waiting worship.

Dawn L Rubbert, Clerk  
Mike Ruberton, Recording Clerk



# Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund

a project of Olympia Monthly Meeting  
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

## FAQs

Note: We changed our name from “Friends New Underground Railroad” to “Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund.” We realized that the last thing we wanted was for the name of this work we are doing to be offensive to people who otherwise supported what we were doing. And we didn’t want to endlessly process the idea of changing the name when there was such critical work to do.

**How many people have you assisted?** As of 08/28/2015, we have supported Ugandan conductors to help 1,121 individuals to escape from Uganda: 1,007 LGBTQ adults, six straight allies, and eight children.

We know that at least 116 adults assisted identify as transgender. Roughly an equal number of cis-male and cis-female (i.e. not transgender) people make up the rest of the passengers. At least 13 people identify as bisexual.

Of these, we can confirm at least 281 folks in countries of final destination including in part: 149 in Rwanda, 51 in South Africa, 30 in Sweden, six in the Netherlands, four in Norway, 16 in Ontario Canada, five in Denmark, eight in France, three in Germany, one in Turkey (on a working visa not refugee), four in Dubai (on a working visa and in closet), one decided to go back to Uganda and live in a different town, two in Tanzania, one in Southern Sudan, and one on a visitor’s visa in Australia. The rest are being processed in interim countries for asylum status in new home countries around the world. One of the activists in Uganda working with these passengers wrote: “I wish to also note that the US Embassy hasn’t been so helpful in this cause.”

**I am a [LGBTQ] person. Will you please help me to get out of Uganda?!** Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund doesn’t respond to individual requests for funding or assistance. We do not make decisions about who is helped, how and when. We – based here in Olympia, Washington – do nothing on the ground in Uganda; all the real work is being done by Africans for Africans – by the people we call the conductors.

LGBTQ people find them on their own by word of mouth. We can’t tell you how because we don’t know. They choose who goes, when they go and in what order, the routes utilized, the interim destination, the choice of way-stations, transportation, and lodging. . . Also, we cannot connect you with these leaders for their own security, as we know that there are people seeking them to do them harm because of this work they do. They are putting their own lives and welfare at great risk to help others and we will not disclose their identity. They work independently, so some of them do not know the others and that is for all their protection.

**Are you just relocating LGBTQ Ugandans out of Uganda with no provision being made for them once they arrive in their new home? What then? Homophobia and transphobia in Africa are not limited to Uganda. You leave them on their own? Shouldn’t you wait until you have a whole plan for them?** We share your concern. However, the people the Ugandan leaders are working with are ones who feel that the risk of staying there now — with this worsened dangerous situation — means they need to get out first and then work on the rest. We trust that the people they are assisting know what they need.

We are clear that our mission is to assist in the first step of getting LGBTQ people out of Uganda, and the limitations on what we and the leaders who work with us are able to provide. They have connections with folks in Kenya and other countries who are assisting with visas etc. We do not take on that role ourselves.

**We are a small project with a very specific focus on assisting those who feel in this situation that they must leave Uganda.** We don’t have the resources to also raise funds for other groups, but we may be able to share some of that information with others as we build our connection with people through <http://friendsugandansafetransport.org/faqs/> where you can subscribe to our eNews mailing list.