

Religious Education Committee Annual Report for 2017

Main Ways in Which We Spent Our Time in 2017:

The Religious Education (RE) Committee plans, coordinates, supports, and provides oversight for First Day School, Nursery Child Care, and Summer Activities. First Day School programs and activities are provided from the third Sunday in September through the second Sunday in June. Nursery Child Care is provided every First Day of the year plus special occasions. Summer activities are provided for school aged children during Meeting for Worship from the third Sunday in June through the second Sunday in September.

Highlights in 2017:

- Trip to the Reginald Lewis Museum of African American History (January)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Family Program coordinated by Rory Kennison (January)
- BYM Camp Exploration Day coordinated by Chris and Rose Rutkowski and Beatrice Kennison (January)
- Easter Day Program including pansies and Easter Egg Hunt coordinated by Megan Shook. We had a great turnout! (April)
- End of School Year Program in which the children enacted scenes from the life of Jesus and read an epistle from the apostle, Paul. Coordinated by Meri Robie-Craven. (June)
- Opening Day for First Day School. Coordinated by Giovanna and Susie. Sweet Potato Biscuits by Susie and Megan. YUM! (September)
- Five community service days coordinated by John have been received well by the children. Trash litter pickup in Wyman Park Dell in November was particularly enjoyable for the children.
- The Christmas Play and story of the birth of Jesus, directed by Susie (December).

Spiritual State of the Committee:

The RE Committee members are very committed to and engaged with the children of the Meeting and the paid staff of three people who work in Nursery Child Care and First Day School programs. We meet regularly, although we have had to be flexible and adaptable with our committee meeting times. Although we have not been able this year to establish a consistent meeting time, our meetings consistently begin and end with worship, and are characterized by cheerfulness and optimism that religious education is making a positive difference in the lives of the children and in support of their families.

The Committee of three people takes on a lot of work and sometimes feels the burden of that commitment.. We miss the contributions of Beatrice Kennison who

graduated from high school in June, 2017 and went on to Haverford College in the fall. But we are grateful for the contributions of Chris Stadler, the child care specialist, Giovanna Selvaggio, the First Day School Instructor, and Henry Kennison, who joined us in September as a child care assistant. We are also grateful for the regular contributions of Chris Rutkowski, who teaches art every fourth Sunday of the month and for assistance from about six other adults who served as assistants in First Day School during the year.

Challenges Faced by Committee:

- We have a small group of children who are regular attenders and would love to have more children and more of those children who attend regularly.
- First Day School is really a “one room schoolhouse” which is both a challenge for the teachers and a strength for the group.
- Committee has just three members and could really benefit from 2 or 3 more members.
- Recruiting Second Adults.
- Recruiting Summer Program Leaders.
- Transitioning from a Christmas Play director, Sarah Szanton, who had directed the play for a dozen years to a new director. Fortunately, Susie stepped in and did a terrific job.

Strengths of the Committee:

- Adaptability, for example, how Susie stepped into the role of play director.
- Commitment to the children and to the Meeting.
- Experience and common sense from being parents ourselves.
- Support from the Homewood community in the form of adult volunteers as Second Adults or program coordinators.

Our Hopes for the Future:

- More children in the programs, in particular, the Nursery
- More committee members.
- A second First Day School teacher to reduce burden on other adults and provide for a smoother succession in the future.
- A revamped summer program

Current Committee Members: Susie Higgins, John McKusick, and Megan Shook.
Committee Member Whose Service Finished 6/30/17: Beatrice Kennison