The Religious Education Committee would like to request that the Meeting for Business approve a Minute of Appreciation for Rory Kennison for his work as the Meeting’s First Day School teacher, during the 2018-19 school year.

Rory grew up in Homewood Friends Meeting and it was a joy when he agreed to serve as First Day School teacher for our elementary and middle school aged children for the 2018-19 school year. Rory graduated from Haverford College in 2018 and decided that he wanted to pursue a career in education. While still early in his career as an educator, Rory brought with him a wealth of experience in working with and for Quaker youth within Baltimore Yearly Meeting, across the country, and abroad through the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage. During the recent school year, Rory also taught theatre arts to students in the Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson Charter School and developed skills and competencies in urban education. Beginning this summer, he will further hone these skills in the Urban Teachers program at the Johns Hopkins School of Education, which is a residency in the Baltimore schools plus a Master’s degree and certification over four years.

During the year, Rory built a community of care among our children through his encouragement of honest and supportive conversations. The Old Testament was the theme for the year. Rory was very effective in helping the students to see that the Old Testament stories had relevance to questions and issues that we wrestle with in modern life. We had eight to ten regular to occasional attenders among the children in First Day School. However, they represent a wide range of ages and Rory was very effective at helping all of the students feel valued as participants. Both of the year’s presentations to the Meeting (the Nativity Story in December and the Story of Joseph in Egypt in June) were largely written by the children, a tribute to Rory’s belief in and commitment to nurturing the children’s abilities. And we would be remiss not to acknowledge Rory’s work with and facilitation of the annual family program for the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday in January, which engaged not only parents and children but other adults from the Meeting.

For all of Rory’s work with our children and service to the Homewood Friends Meeting community, we express our gratitude and extend our best wishes to Rory as he begins a new chapter in his life.