**Considering service at Pendle Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania?**

Every year two British Friends or Attenders are supported to spend a term at Pendle Hill, a retreat and educational centre near Philadelphia. Central Nominations Committee has the responsibility of finding the Friends to go. For the present, the Spring Term from 1 March to 10 May 2024 is only one at which there are students at Pendle Hill.

This document may help you decide if service at Pendle Hill is something you are interested in and able to do in 2024.

The Friends in Residence are funded by a generous grant from the William P Bancroft and Jenepher Gillet Trusts. The grant covers the cost of flights to and from the US and any expenses incurred as part of this service. Accommodation and food at Pendle Hill is covered within the service itself. Health insurance is covered by Britain Yearly Meeting’s overseas travel cover. You would be free to travel afterwards elsewhere in the US, provided your visa allowed this. Were you to travel onwards outside of this opportunity, you would have to fund the other travel expenses and ‘pocket money’ yourself.

**BYM Central Nominations Committee is looking for**:

A couple, or close friends, well grounded in their Quakerism and who can support each other and are free from other responsibilities between end of February and mid May 2024.

|  |
| --- |
| If you want to put your name(s) forward to CNC for consideration please email nominations@quaker.org.uk with ‘Pendle Hill’ in the title of your email.  |

**Qualities** **a Friend in Residence (FIR) might need:**

* in your spiritual life, perhaps wanting some time off and be ready for a retreat where one also able to give service;
* likes people, outgoing, confident, can approach strangers in a friendly fashion;
* flexible – prepared to go with the flow when asked to perform a variety of tasks, some quite menial;
* open to new experiences, ready to explore: to get on with what comes and also to initiate your own ideas;
* prepared to join in programmes (i.e. courses, seminars) and to participate in Meetings, sometimes Eldering;
* a ‘teachable spirit’, prepared to listen and receive new, even strange, ideas
* tolerant of a communal life with its own rules and compromises (don’t expect puddings!);
* accepting of American forthrightness (‘shooting from the hip’), not taking offence. This is a different country and a different culture;
* grounded and confident in their Faith, but not needy: searching but not vulnerable. About half the permanent residents were going through some kind of healing process and the Friends in Residence need to be prepared to be supportive
* able to self-care: although it is a supportive environment.

To some extent, your work at Pendle Hill is determined by yourself. There is flexibility about days off and long weekends but no firm rules. You would share a house with others. Staff were not all resident and not all Quakers. They numbered around 30 and were bolstered by in term time by outside lecturers and facilitators. In all there was a diverse group in terms of age, sex, gender and race. Nim and Liz were the last couple to go and below is an extract from their report to Quaker World Relations Committee.

**Extracts from Nim Njuguna and Liz Njuguna-Wyatt’s report on their 2023 visit**

The daily rhythm of our time as Friends in Residence was shaped around daily meeting for worship, practical activities, monthly work morning, and participating as students in learning opportunities. We gradually became aware that our role involved various structured and unstructured tasks and activities:

* Welcoming and actively listening to guests, mainly at mealtimes, learning of their joys and needs and responding with compassion.
* Supporting community activities, for example, facilitating the Spring Term weekly community meeting, eldering workshops, participating and assuming a given task at the daily meeting for worship and generally being available to students and staff.
* Supporting in physical work mainly in the vegetable garden and the kitchen.
* Nim was also invited to give the April 2023 1st Monday Lecture and spoke on The River of Life: We Are What We Have Been Becoming.

We found the term a Friend in Residence (taken from Woodbrooke, UK) was unfamiliar to some visiting the community and in sharing what we were doing we clarified our role to them and also to ourselves.

We had countless opportunities to share and compare experiences of being Quakers in Britain and what we were experiencing of Quakerism in America. Though we had much in common in seeking inner experience to engage that of God and in our reliance on conscience as the basis for morality, when it came to the notion of the theology of the priesthood of all believers, we found that some Friends we met came from Programmed Meetings led by a pastor.

The daily rhythm of the half-hour meeting for worship after breakfast was a grounding experience in the life of our time at Pendle Hill. Sitting in the Barn, witness to many gatherings and weighty names – not only in Quaker circles - for almost a century, was a source of quiet wonder. We witnessed a loving community entering the space through Zoom and appreciated how Pendle Hill had initiated and tended this community through the pandemic and was continuing to hold the physical and virtual gathering in the Barn. We were able to attend six Meetings (Monthly Meetings), experiencing small and large meetings for worship, including 15th Street Meeting in New York, Friends Meeting of Washington, West Chester and Chambersburg Meetings in Pennsylvania.

**Working**

Our experience of participating in the ‘daily rhythm of work’ offered opportunities for nourishment and learning: working alongside different members of the community, contributing to the needs of the community and sharing in responsibilities for the working out of its mission. A particular work focus was the garden: sowing, planting, weeding, composting and harvesting, and preparing produce for use by the kitchen for meals.

**Learning**

The experience of Pendle Hill offered us varied opportunities for learning, some more formal than others. We participated in workshops: Exploring a Quaker Commitment to Reparative Justice, which included input of experience from Philadelphia Green Street Meeting (US) and Lancaster Meeting (UK), and eldered Hope Leans Forward led by Valerie Brown (both courses offered online through Pendle Hill and Woodbrooke). We attended George Lakey’s memoir launch Dancing with History at Swarthmore College, adding more detail to the history we knew of activism for justice in the US. We had the joy of studying alongside the Spring Term students on part of their programme: Discerning Our Calls led by Marcelle Martin, where we experienced Faithfulness Groups and were the focus of a Clearness Committee, and Sacred Creativity led by Jesse White, giving the freedom to creatively express our spirituality through different medium.

Apart from enjoying their company, we had time to hear about the focus of their writing, listen to presentations, engage in dialogue, be led in Bible Study (Exodus) and be participatory audiences of skits on Friends. The Spring term students were also working on different projects, and we have been invited to watch their presentations via Zoom towards the end of their 10-week programme.

Do you have a seed to cultivate or a leading to follow? Are you seeking a community in which to share the daily rhythm of worship, learning, and work?’ These were the invitations for the Spring Term. Our time at Pendle Hill gave us an amazing opportunity to dwell in such a community with daily awareness of the Divine and to nourish and nurture others while finding we received nourishment and the seeds and leadings we carried were nurtured. At the end of each meeting for worship we were asked to share joys, sorrows, prayers and gratitudes (a new experience for us). Our gratitude is to Pendle Hill for providing us with such welcoming and generous hospitality and a space in which to give and to receive of the Spirit. Our thanks to Britain Yearly Meeting for nominating us and enabling us to travel to be Friends in Residence at Pendle Hill.