

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Toward a Stronger Program

The BYM Development Committee was directed at last Annual Session to have an outside evaluation of our program. The result of this evaluation was an insightful report by Helen Colson of Development Associates. She is the author of papers and a book on philanthropy, and has performed evaluations of Friends schools. She interviewed 17 persons, including people who had been openly critical of the development program or the Development Director. This report was presented to Third Month Interim Meeting, and it is [posted on the BYM website with the minutes from that meeting for any who are interested in it.](#)

The gist of this report was that the development program is clearly in its beginning stages, and while it needs to continue to grow, on the whole, it is headed in the right direction. In addition, some specific recommendations were made: BYM needs at least a full-time Development Director; the Development Director should be focused on major donors and planned giving; other fundraising work such as mail and email campaigns should be handled primarily by other staff or volunteers if staff are not available; and, BYM needs to develop a case statement, that is, a concise document that communicates the Yearly Meeting's programs, current needs and plans, and why BYM both needs and merits contributions from individual Friends.

The Development Committee seeks to strengthen the development program through our ongoing efforts to implement recommended practices and techniques and to improve the ways we measure program effectiveness.

BYM Gift History

The BYM development program was created in 2008 as a response to the interest of BYM in exploring options other than relying solely on the apportionment system in the face of economic stress and several years of painful cuts to the operating budget. A basic goal of the program is to make personal giving a routine for BYM members so that BYM can make a reliable estimate of what its income will be in any given year. It is challenging to interpret BYM's historic gift data at this point because gift income has varied considerably year to year. In some years, unanticipated bequests or large gifts increased gift income substantially. It is also important to note that the effort put forth to solicit funds has been uneven; in some years prior to this program not a single direct mail appeal was sent.

Overall gift revenue for BYM did decline by \$72,000 from 2009 to 2010, primarily due to the \$50,000 challenge grant received in 2009 not being repeated in 2010; however, we are pleased to note the increases in key giving areas and in comparative giving for 2011 and 2012.

Recession Giving: There is no question that the nonprofit sector has been hit in the recent economic recession; however, the experience of individual organizations, including faith groups, varies so widely that it can be difficult to draw useful conclusions or comparisons. We do know that within the “Quaker sector” many organizations laid off staff and cut programs, sometimes dramatically; several did not make their annual or campaign goals. Other Yearly Meetings still appear to be planning for reduced contributions.

The Development Committee takes the view that there is a silver lining to having started the BYM development program in a challenging economic climate: we are able to grow our program intentionally and steadily, with expectations right-sized to our organizational capacity.

Capital Giving: It is important to include capital giving when assessing BYM’s development efforts. On the Development Committee we view capital gifts as customary, ongoing, and a substantial piece of the formal development program. In our efforts to make sure we are comparing “apples to apples”, we exclude capital gifts when we are projecting goals for the next year’s budget. But when we are looking at what was raised over the years, it makes sense to include capital giving. This is especially true for Camp Properties. BYM needs to become more skilled at balancing fundraising for operating expenses with planning and raising money for critical capital expenses. In 2010-11, over \$90,000 in gift support for the Shiloh Pond project was raised in an effort coordinated through the Development Committee and staff. It included writing proposals for support from Monthly Meetings and a Virginia-based foundation, organizing a phonathon, and creating special mail appeals. In 2012 there was no intensive capital campaign. We have looked at that process and realized that one of the things most needed is a longer vision of BYM’s capital needs. Because the capital budget (mostly for Camp Properties, but also for the BYM office building) does not appear in the operating budget, even though it is a fundamental part of the overall fundraising efforts of the Committee and staff, we have begun discussing with the Stewardship and Finance Committee how to ensure that this aspect of our work is consistently visible to the BYM community in the future.

Upward Trends: Recognizing the uneven nature of BYM development efforts before the formal development program began, we have taken a “start where we are” approach, focusing our attention on building the program from the ground up. Only when we know each year’s development activities as well as the annual gift results can we make an “apples to apples” comparison; this comparison is not possible using pre-2008 gift data. (The BYM gift database begins in 2007, and early gift recording was inconsistent; 2008 was a partial program year, with the Development Director coming on staff in September).

Gift metrics from the program’s first four full years, however, show encouraging, if uneven, trends, as can be seen in the tables below: an increase in total donor households and organizations; growing donor renewal; increases in donors from the beginning of the program; an increase in average gift size; and a number of larger gifts.

Table 1: Donor Participation - Detail

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total # of Donors</i>	<i># Donor Households</i>	<i># MM Donors</i>	<i># Fndtn Donors</i>	<i>Retained (prev. FY)</i>	<i>First-Time Donors</i>	<i>Lapsed (LYBUNT)</i>	<i>Renewing Donors*</i>
2012	2516	495	17	4	141	85	290	431
2011	1615	589	23	3	309	212	162	403
2010	10477	463	14	0	227	154	145	323
2009	397	383	14	0	164	148	98	249

* Renewing donors = Total Donors – First Time donors

Table 2: Donor Participation - Summary

<i>Year</i>	<i>Average Gift</i>	<i>Largest Gift</i>	<i>Median (midpoint)</i>	<i>Mode (common)</i>
2012	\$326.07	\$7,533	\$100.00	\$50.00
2011	\$377.74	\$11,315	\$100.00	\$100.00
2010	\$262.41	\$5,027	\$100.00	\$100.00
2009	\$243.40	\$50,000	\$100.00	\$50.00

Table 3: Large Gift Distribution

<i>Year</i>	<i>\$250 - \$500</i>	<i>\$500.01 - \$1,000</i>	<i>\$1,000.01 - \$2,500</i>	<i>\$2,500.01 - \$5,000</i>	<i>\$5,000.01 - \$10,000</i>	<i>\$10,000.01 +</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
2012	264	32	16	6	5	0	123
2011	178	36	21	9	8	2	154
2010	1065	22	11	8	2	0	108
2009	49	15	7	4	5	2	82

The Role of Development within BYM

The most obvious role of development is to raise funds. As a committee we continue to perform activities to do just that. As a result of our continued work to paint a more accurate picture of the Yearly Meeting and its needs, the Development Committee plan submitted to Stewardship and Finance for 2014 identifies 19 fundraising activities and cash flows that contribute to the financial wellbeing of the Yearly Meeting, over and above what BYM receives through the more familiar funding sources of apportionment, program fees, camp fees, and the camp scholarships that monthly meetings provide for campers from their own meetings. We have focused on making sure that those who are in a position to support BYM in a substantial way are given that opportunity with personal solicitations. It is critical to increase our repeat donors, and we have been focusing on that. There is an axiom in fundraising: An initial gift is good, but if you get a second gift you have a giver for life. The phonathons this year focused on helping make givers for life by promoting the monthly donor program.

But our work is not just about money. In a faith community, relationships are everything: all parties need to feel informed, included, accepted, and respected. It follows that a yearly meeting is only as strong as its relationships: between individuals, among monthly meetings, between monthly meetings and the yearly meeting, and between the yearly meeting and the wider world of Friends. All of these elements are “insiders.”

Development is more than a synonym for fund raising; it is a means to articulate the value of an organization, *developing* relationships so as to obtain support in the immediate and long term. In the years before BYM began its development program, it became clear that our Yearly Meeting had an “image problem.” Most Friends and many Monthly Meetings had little or no concept of what the Yearly Meeting is and what it offers – or even that it exists. One signal that our relationships are still in need of tending is the continuing resistance BYM receives from some Monthly Meetings regarding their apportionment support. Many were asking some version of the question, “What is the value we receive as a result of the money we send to BYM every year?” These are questions that the development program continues to answer.

We believe that the development program—and Robinne Gray, our former Development Director, in particular—has played an important role in building a culture of giving among BYM Friends. We are doing this by helping Friends understand the Yearly Meeting better, and by addressing the silence and discomfort many Friends and Meetings have around money issues. As other

denominations have done, we seek to “sow seeds” for long-term support of BYM through helping Friends consider their personal finances and financial choices in the context of their faith. We anticipate this approach will result in improved finances for both the Yearly Meeting and its constituent Monthly Meetings. If our Monthly Meetings do better financially, BYM will do better financially. Recognizing how essential relationship-building is to our ongoing work, the Development Committee has supported a range of activities to help raise the profile of the Yearly Meeting: informational brochures, regular visitation, stewardship education workshops, more frequent financial reporting to the BYM body, and establishing sound policies and procedures. Such activities may not be subject to quantitative metrics, but we believe they are essential to generating trust and goodwill and they will bear fruit as part of a long-term development strategy.

Resignation of Development Director

Robinne Gray resigned effective June 15 as Development Director. The loss just prior to Annual Session of our hardworking Development Director has been a blow to the ambitious plans of the Development Committee. Nevertheless, the Development Committee is determined to move forward expeditiously to support the hiring of a new Director and, in the meantime, to try to fill some of the gaps created by the resignation. Riley Robinson was able to obtain the part-time services of the Youth Director, Alison Duncan, to keep the data updated—a critical piece of the work. But for now the committee must put on hold many of its plans, such as developing a case statement as recommended in the Colson report, in order to support efforts required to hire a new director and carry on some of the tasks that Robinne so ably did.

Conclusion

All in all, we are feeling reasonably pleased with the results of our work so far. We believe that our program has played an essential role in supporting our community of Friends and that is the most important work that we do.