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From the Head of School's Office

Dear Friends,

April 20, 2023

Scattergood Friends School challenges students with a college-preparatory curriculum, farm experience, shared work program, and community living in the spirit of Quaker Faith.

This simple mission is the task to which I, as Head of School, and our staff have been set. Each year we welcome students to our serene campus with the hope that their time in our care will be one of growth, discovery, and connection. Over the past 130 years, the Quaker testimonies have guided the school as we adapted to shifting norms and trends, allowing us to continually improve our program and our ability to meet the needs of current and future students.

Recently, external efforts have been made to limit the rights and freedoms of some individuals within our community, specifically those who identify as transgender. While Scattergood operates within the confines of all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, we are not blind to the negative impact these edicts will undoubtedly have on individuals and our community as a whole. To this end, we will continue to operate in a manner that makes clear to all that they are welcomed, respected, and loved at Scattergood.

Our mission compels us to create a strong academic program and “community living in the spirit of Quaker Faith.” My understanding of the Quaker testimony of Equality sets no limits or parameters around who qualifies as being “equal.” Rather, we are called to embrace and appreciate our differences while working together to make a more equitable world for all. To engage in practices that would create divisions and sub-classes within our community by limiting the freedom of open expression or ability to utilize campus facilities and resources based on gender, race, religion, or any other protected class violates the Quaker values central to our mission.

In recent decades, we have taken great strides to make our campus more inclusive and welcoming to students, specifically members of the LGBTQ community, many of whom experienced othering, exclusion, and in some cases even more aggressive consequences for the perceived offense of simply existing. For many students, Scattergood has been an island of acceptance in a sea of fear and suspicion. We cannot allow ourselves to be pushed backwards at a time when children face a national mental health crisis. The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health emphasizes the gravity of the situation.

Their study found that more than half of the transgender and nonbinary youth surveyed had seriously considered suicide in the past year. Additionally, the study found that LGBTQ-affirming schools and communities led to significantly lower rates of attempted suicide when compared to unwelcoming environments. This issue is a matter of life and death for some, and it is clear that schools like Scattergood can save young lives. We have a moral obligation to support our students in which we will not waver.

Creating an inclusive environment is also an academic concern: students are unable to learn when in a hostile environment. We at Scattergood get the unique privilege of watching LGBTQ students join our community, find themselves in a welcoming environment—possibly for the first time in their lives—and thrive as a student, community member, and f/Friend. Diverse communities deepen the learning experience and create a more robust program, in which ideas are explored through multiple lenses.

We write to you today to share our current stance regarding this divisive topic and to thank you for your continued support of our mission and our efforts this fiscal year. Many of the students who seek acceptance at Scattergood come from more rural areas and find the financial weight of an independent school education prohibitive. Contributions to the annual fund help keep our program more affordable and thus accessible to more families. Please know that all gifts to Scattergood are deeply appreciated and essential to our continued ability to make our mission as inclusive as possible. As always, we are grateful for assistance in every form it takes, be that financial contributions, connecting prospective students to the school, or volunteering of time and expertise.

In Peace,



John Zimmerman

Head of School

COMMUNITY *peace* EQUALITY
integrity PEACE STEWARDSHIP
PEACE *equality* INTEGRITY *simplicity*
SIMPLICITY *stewardship* INTEGRITY
COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP
community EQUALITY SIMPLICITY