

Executive Director's Report to the New York Quarterly Meeting

January 2025

Dear F/friends,

As we welcome 2025, I'm excited to share reflections on our work together over the past year and what lies ahead. While as Friends we view every day as sacred, the start of a new year provides a natural moment to take stock of where we've been and where we're headed.

Our Community in Motion

One of the most exciting developments of 2024 was building out our staff team to better serve our community. nova sturup joined us as Community Organizer, bringing energy and vision to our outreach and programming efforts. Jose Ng came aboard as Senior Operations Manager, strengthening our administrative infrastructure and improving our day-to-day operations. Erin Hughes has been instrumental in supporting our events and office operations, helping ensure our spaces remain vibrant and welcoming. More recently we welcomed Steve Petry into an expanded role as Senior Director of Facilities and Finance. Steve's expertise has already transformed our approach to facilities management, turning detailed assessments into concrete improvements in our spaces. We now have a strong team in place to support our community's growth and aspirations.

2024 was also a year of meaningful transitions. We bid a fond farewell to our beloved colleague Miriam Perez, who retired after 31 years of dedicated service at 15 Rutherford. Her warm smile and steadfast presence are deeply missed, and we look forward to celebrating her contributions properly in the coming months. We also are saying goodbye to Friends Shelter after over 40 years of vital service. We are over the moon grateful to the 15th Street Shelter Committee, the circle of dedicated volunteers and Katy Homans who was our key point of contact over the last couple years. Almost all shelter guests have transitioned to permanent housing, a testament to the program's success.



While the shelter's closing marks the end of an era, we remain open to new leadings as we address the challenges facing our city's most vulnerable residents.

Stewarding Our Sacred Spaces

A major focus in 2024 was caring for our historic properties. The 15th Street façade project is nearly complete, with scaffolding coming down to reveal fresh mortar, new lintels, and crisp white trim. Beyond aesthetics, this work ensures our building is properly sealed and protected. In 2024, We invested about \$900,000 in strategic capital improvements, including:

- 15th Street Façade
- Interior renovations of Room 1 and the second-floor kitchen at 15 Rutherford Place
- Window and bench repairs
- Critical systems assessments for future upgrades



We also partnered with the Concern for Quaker Living to conduct a housing feasibility study for properties near our 15th Street and Brooklyn Meeting Houses. We'll be sharing an update on that later this year.

Looking ahead, we're working with WB Melvin, our historical architect, and NYC's Landmarks Preservation Committee on plans for new roofs at both 15th Street and 110 Schermerhorn.

Building Connections

Thanks to nova sturup, our community organizer, our ministry and counsel committee, and pastoral care team, a highlight of 2024 was our first-ever New York Quarterly Meeting retreat at Powell House. It was truly joyful to gather as an intergenerational community to explore our rich history and imagine our future together. Friends considered the query, "How might we use our spaces to grow into our future?"-- generating inspiring ideas around outreach, sanctuary, activism, spiritual nurture, and creative collaboration.



We've also expanded our community engagement through:

- Growing the Friendly Coworking experiment
- Partnering with the Concern for Quaker Living and University Settlement to launch a new community wellness program.
- Piloting a youth culinary program with Brooklyn Frontiers
- Strengthening our witness activities through expanded grant programs

Under Sarah Way's leadership, our efforts to keep the community informed and connected have grown significantly. We launched a weekly newsletter that shares upcoming events, meeting news, and opportunities for engagement across our Quarter. Our social media channels now provide regular updates on community activities, and our calendar is consistently full with worship, witness activities, and social gatherings. Work has begun on a new website that will better serve both our existing community and those seeking to learn more about NYC Quakers.

These improved communications channels have helped strengthen connections between our meetings and made our activities more visible and accessible to the broader community. Learn more at nycquakers.org/events or follow us on social media <https://linktr.ee/nycquakers>

Financial Stewardship

Our financial position remains stable as we balance operational needs with long-term sustainability. The 2025 operating budget reflects our commitment to responsible growth, with projected revenue of \$3.1 million primarily from property use and investments. We've planned strategic increases in staff compensation and benefits while maintaining robust support for our programmatic activities. Our community spending—about ~\$470,000 or 15% of our total operating budget includes our committees, Witness, the Education and relief funds as well as our community wellness program.



We plan for major capital investments totaling \$2.35 million in 2025, focusing on long delayed critical infrastructure projects at both properties, including roof replacements, fence restoration, and planning mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems upgrades. 15 Rutherford improvements will be funded from existing reserves.

While we have developed a conservative budget forecasting a small operating deficit, our strong balance sheet with over \$35 million in investments provides capacity for these essential improvements. The Trustees and our combined Budget Investment and Finance Committee continue their careful oversight as we implement improved financial controls and reporting practices.

Looking Ahead

As we enter 2025, we're focusing on:

1. Nurturing our spiritual community through improved communications, volunteer support, and careful examination of our structures
2. Fostering a culture of experimentation and continuous learning
3. Responsible stewardship of our resources - both financial and physical
4. Expanding our digital infrastructure to better connect our community—in other words a new website and Quarterly meeting database of our members and attenders.

Our spaces continue to be places where we worship, seek the Light in one another, and work to create a community where everyone's potential may be fulfilled. I'm deeply grateful to serve this vibrant community and excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.

In friendship and possibility, Ted Bongiovanni, for the NYC Quaker Team