

## Central Friends epistle NPYM 2012

To all Friends Everywhere,

Greetings from the middle school friends of North Pacific Yearly Meeting.

We gathered in Tacoma WA, on the Pacific Lutheran University campus, on July 18<sup>th</sup>- 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012. Some of us were returning to see old friends and meet new faces.

Thursday morning we spent developing a code of conduct to follow during our time at Yearly. It was much easier this time than last, as we could use last year's to support us. When we looked it over we saw that most of our guidelines were based on respect. Next we created a flag for capture the flag. In the afternoon, we played a big game of volleyball, basketball, sand wrestling, and ultimate Frisbee.

On Friday, we were scheduled to go to an outdoor water park, but it was raining and there was a lot of thunder and lightning. So.... we decided to go to the zoo!!! It turned out that the zoo was only open half the day, so we decided to go bowling! The bowling alley was closed to the public because of a tournament, so some of us ended up going back to the zoo. But the zoo was half closed for a fundraising event so the aquarium half was closed. The part of our group that didn't go to the zoo went to the park and on a hike to the beach where some friends learned how to skip rocks.

That night we had a REALLY CRAZY game of capture the flag in the dark. It was fun, but nobody got a flag.

Saturday morning we had the Friend in Residence, Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, speak to us about not jumping to conclusions when you first meet or see someone. He then talked to us about the recent tragedy in the movie theatre in Colorado. We looked at it from different perspectives; compassion for the victims, compassion for the perpetrator's friends & family, compassion for guns misused,

compassion for the people who are scared and think that guns will solve their problems, and compassion for the guy who did it. We realized that people from each perspective would be affected including the gunman himself. One friend said that she feels especially open at Yearly, so things like this hit harder. Benigno helped us understand how to deal with events like this, instead of fear and carrying pepper spray, to feel compassion.

We struggled to find a perfect skit. The Junior Friends suggested that we use something from our own experiences at Yearly. Having parents sign us in and out of every session has been really inconvenient, so we decided to make a joke about it, in our skit. As we planned our skit we practiced having a 20-person conversation. We only had an hour and a half to plan and practice, but the skit was fun, and came out well.

One of the changes this year was that the children's activities in the evenings that were open to all ages. Most of us enjoyed hanging out with the younger kids, and playing outside.

About half of us will follow Yearly meeting with Central Friends camp. This year camp is on Lopez and Waldron Islands in the Puget Sound area.

This year we have worked on including new Central Friends and it has been an important experience.

Epistle Committee

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