



Greetings in the Light:

I write in regards for Briana Halliwell's application to the Legacy Grant from New England Yearly Meeting. It seemed appropriate to write to you, given that she is seeking to learn from Sequoia Samanvaya to both deepen her own ministry and to support New England Yearly Meeting's growing concern around ReMembering, including the intersections of eco-justice, racial justice, and letting oneself be broken open and turned around through engagement with the Spirit.

Briana first reached out to me in late July. It was clear in our first conversation that she carries powerful spiritual gifts and a heart of service. There were many connections between her story and my own, and I could easily see how not only taking our courses but actually finding ways to work with us would be an invaluable contribution to the practical and spiritual development of her vocation. As our conversation continued over emails, it became clear that she has had enough experience and her clearly proven capacity as a leader within the Young Adult Friends community are strong enough that she needs a level of education, guidance and leadership development that would be beyond the normal scope of an "intern" or "assistant". She is looking for (and deserves) something more akin to an Apprenticeship. She is the first young person (and I've had many young people work with me) whom I have felt has the capacity to be an Apprentice to the work of ReMembering, ReEnchanting, and Anticipating: the work of growing anticipatory communities in the midst of a changing climate.

Inspired by this possibility, I am, thus, looking to create an Apprenticeship Program, in the belief that, given all that is happening in the world, that there will be others who are also being stirred by Spirit to go deeper into this work, and whom we are uniquely situated to support. As someone who grew up in and still is a member of the Quaker community, I am particularly honored that a Young Friend would find such powerful and practical resonance with our work. We are in the very early stages of understanding what an Apprenticeship should look like. Our original vision, prior to her learning of the Legacy Grant, was that she would trade a concrete, well-defined number of hours working for us in exchange for participating in our courses. I remain open to that as a fair trade, especially given that we are in the early stages of what I hope will be a strong growth phase.

I want to assure the Committee of the Legacy Grant that we understand that this Grant is not to go to Sequoia Samanvaya: it is in support of Briana's ministry and service to NEYM. As we read it, the grant cannot even be used to support her financially while she is Apprenticing with us, as we are an organization outside of NEYM. Even while I might be spending some time in Boston in 2020 and 2021 to care for my godson, I remain a member of Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting in Pacific Yearly Meeting, outside of NEYM. Sequoia Samanvaya has always served the eco-



theology capacity development needs of a more-than Quaker community: while it has certain core Quaker values baked within it, it is not a Quaker organization.

I understand the Fund can be used for educational programming, which we offer to a wide spectrum of cultural change makers. Several Friends have taken our courses and find them and our community immensely useful in significantly deepening their spiritual journey and their creative capacity to engage with anti-racism, eco-justice and stronger relationships with the land. References from respected Friends could be made available upon request.

Perhaps obviously, finding the best ways for the learning opportunities that Sequoia Samanvaya provides to support NEYM as a whole is a significant and long-term conversation. It is, in many ways, far beyond the scope of a grant to any individual – especially since that person is very much at the relatively early stages of her own learning journey. I would hope that with both Sequoia Samanvaya and NEYM finding different ways to support Briana’s ministry and, through her, the growing concerns within NEYM, there would also arise opportunities for greater communication between myself and NEYM, and see what naturally emerges in terms of a partnership that is fair to the time, energy, needs, and effort put forward by everyone. But I carry such hopes lightly.

For what it is worth, I, as someone who teaches and supports leaders from multiple traditions in their spiritual discernment processes at the beginning of the Anthropocene Age, hear a very strong leading emerging in Briana’s life right now. As someone who has myself struggled (mightily) to intersect livelihood with my own ministry, I hope that her request for a basic stipend to grow and develop her ministry over a period of time (9 months) will find resonance, given the depth of the work needed, and the fact that this *is* work, and work that deserves to be supported. Her leading clearly has led her to us. Yet her leading is also independent of us: I suspect that even without Sequoia Samanvaya, she would still seek to do something akin to this work, as best as she could. And that, of course, is itself a sign of a good leading.

I would be happy to serve on a support committee for her, and could ask my friend Cherice Bock to join us.

I wish you the best in your discernment process.

May we all walk in the Light,

Sara Jolena Wolcott, M.Div.  
Founding Director, Sequoia Samanvaya

