



QUAKERS

Canadian Friends
Service Committee

Annual Accountability Report 2022

“Most, if not all, people admit the transcendent excellency of peace.”—London Yearly Meeting, 1804



Members and staff pose for a picture during our first in-person planning meeting in two years, Sep 24, 2022.

“We have an urgent situation here”

Those were words I spoke while trying to keep a camp fire going during our Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) retreat in September.

We were at the beautiful Camp NeeKauNis, 120 kilometres north of Toronto. For the first time since 2019 we came together in person to plan the Service Committee’s peace and social justice work. It was a **refreshing and revitalizing time** in the cool fall air.

In thinking about my words, I see that they were about more than just the fire that needed kindling quickly so it wouldn’t go out.

They reflect **all of our work at this precarious moment** of wars, a climate crisis, and urgent opportunities to shape human rights legislation in Canada. You’ll read more about that in the report to come.

As you read on, please remember that **you**, whose commitment to social justice makes this work possible, **were there with our small team** of volunteers and staff all along.

What you’ll read about are **your achievements**. Thank you for them! **Please [donate](#) again now to help the fire of hope, justice, and peace stay lit.**



CFSC staff telling stories and singing around the camp fire after a long day of planning meetings.

CFSC is the national peace and social justice agency of Quakers in Canada. It's hard to believe, but we've been around for 91 years.

Each year brings new joys and challenges. This was my first one as Clerk, taking over from Lana Robinson, who remains an active member of our Executive Committee.

Our small but energetic staff team was mostly stable this year with one major change: we said goodbye to Keira Mann and welcomed Jeremy Vander Hoek as our new Assistant for CFSC events and Indigenous rights. Soon we will also be hiring a Peace Program Coordinator as Matt Legge moves into doing more communications and support for the work of our General Secretary Jennifer Preston.

Approximately half of our revenue continues to come from donations by individuals. A reserve fund in the form of socially responsible investments and [gifts that generous donors leave in their wills](#) contributes to the remainder of our budget.

While our funding is sustainable for now, we cannot take future donations for granted. Unfortunately, we continue to rely on just a small number of individual supporters to make all of this justice and peace work happen.

The report to follow only covers highlights from the past year. There are many channels to find out more about CFSC.

Our main website is QuakerService.ca. This year, after more than a decade with the old look, it underwent a major redesign to make it easier for you to find and enjoy the content you're looking for. We also run QuakerConcern.ca, which is our newsletter (it's also available in print—contact us to subscribe).

On either of those sites you can sign up to get one or two emails from us each month with short news highlights and ways to take action. We're on social media (CFSCQuakers on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube). Finally we give many workshops and visits (virtual or in-person) to Meetings and community groups. You can contact us to request one.

In reflecting on all of this while we sat together around the camp fire, in conversation and in silence, I felt both how small we all are in the face of such major challenges, and **how much you and I can do together, thanks to your support.**

In Friendship,



Vince Zelazny,

Clerk, Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

The urgency of justice and peace

All of the efforts you will read about are funded by individuals like you. Please, **[donate now.](#)**

Peace



The main goal of CFSC's peace work is to identify, engage constructively with, and transform conflicts.

In Canada our work continues to be focused around bridgebuilding. It's based on evidence and practical tips from our award-winning book *Are We Done Fighting?*

This year we gave nine presentations (we were even able to do one in-person for a good-sized crowd in Newmarket, Ontario) to groups concerned with rising animosity and a shrinking space for dialogue and understanding.

We joined a major US-based network of bridge building organizations to share information and good practices.

We continued to facilitate online workshops to help people discuss peace skills in depth and practice for themselves how to listen and seek to understand each other. More than 200 people have now taken part in this six-week-long workshop series.

Respondents to our anonymous feedback surveys consistently tell us how much they got out of the workshops and how much they recommend taking them!

We continued to blog for *Psychology Today*, do podcast interviews, and develop simple and accessible resources to help spread peace ideas and the confidence that individuals have a role to play.

We again acted as a voice for Friends on a range of pressing peace issues like Ukraine, arms sales to Saudi Arabia, military carbon emissions, and much more.

In Toronto we helped provide free high quality services to refugees and other newcomers.

Overseas we supported women's empowerment and rights work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. And we helped young Israelis access information and support networks after choosing to follow their conscience and refuse conscription into the military.

Criminal justice



The main goal of CFSC's criminal justice work is to eliminate the punitive mindset that pervades society and justice systems by transforming harmful approaches to ones that are healing.

In 2018 we commissioned a review of sample case laws in Canada. The result was a disturbing revelation that got us coverage on a major CBC radio program with millions of listeners. When parents come into contact with the criminal justice system, the impacts on their children are mostly just *ignored*. Ignored by police, judges, and prisons. This unacceptable fact continues to drive much of our criminal justice work.

One direction this took our 2022 work was to get involved with a review of Canada by the United Nations. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child asked Canada questions that we'd raised! Specifically they wanted to know: How many children with incarcerated parents are living in Canada? How does Canada ensure the rights of these children?

We believe that these questions got the government of Canada's attention. We've had follow up meetings and made submissions to the government as part of a national coalition we belong to. We'll continue this work and use the momentum to seek real changes.

We also continue to collaborate with the Canadian Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents. CFSC hosts the Coalition's website and has been instrumental in helping members to work together toward respect for children's rights in Canada.

We provided financial support for multiple initiatives helping families and incarcerated persons: support for safe and affordable accommodation for those who've just been released, production of a yoga and meditation video for incarcerated persons, and more.

All of this work was done to advance our vision of a justice system that is healing rather than causing further harms.

Your values at work in the world

All of these efforts toward justice and peace are yours. Please, [donate now](#).

Indigenous peoples' human rights



The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development: Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights and Ecological Knowledge expert symposium, University of British Columbia, Apr 6-7 2022. Credit Katsi'tsakwas Ellen Gabriel.

The main goals of CFSC's Indigenous rights work are the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and greater engagement by Canadians in activities recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is an internationally agreed upon set of minimum standards for the “dignity, survival and well-being” of Indigenous peoples.

Last year we saw a *major* milestone achieved. After decades of collaborative work with Indigenous partners, we helped get the government of Canada to adopt a new law to implement the *UN Declaration*.

This year we continued to work to make full implementation a reality. From briefing senior bureaucrats and cabinet ministers to facilitating educational presentations, we kept the pressure on for Canada to do more than just talk about respecting Indigenous peoples.

We partnered with the University of British Columbia to host a major symposium on sustainable development and Indigenous peoples' human rights. Long-time CFSC partner Katsi'tsakwas Ellen Gabriel was on hand to create multiple short videos. The series features Indigenous experts answering questions and telling stories to explain their understandings of sustainability. For many speakers, what


sustainability means to them is closely linked to Indigenous practices and to human rights.



Pat Bruderer, an artist from Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, received a grant from CFSC's Reconciliation Fund to support her incredible art exhibit "Biting Back our Cultural Resilience." Pat is a self-taught birch bark biter.

Birch bark biting has been present in her community as an artform for many generations but was slowly starting to be lost due to residential schools and colonization. Forty years ago, Pat saw it being done for the first time. Although at first she believed she couldn't do it, kids in her community asked if she would try and so she began.

We've also continued to make grants through our Reconciliation Fund to support grassroots cultural revitalization efforts. This has included support for a Kanien'kéha (Mohawk) language book for kids, an event celebrating the reestablishment of a Tseshaht First Nation ceremony last performed over 100 years ago, and an exhibit showcasing birch bark biting pieces that explore colonization and Indigenous resilience.



We practice true
listening when
we are willing to
be changed by
what we hear

Gleaning, 2000
Faith and Practice,
Canadian Yearly Meeting

In Closing

At CFSC we're serious about listening. We always seek to discern the truth and be moved by it to do the right work at the right times. This takes continued humility and flexibility.

It also means that much of what's accomplished doesn't happen in the public eye. It's not something that can be readily conveyed in a few words or images. It involves cultivating relationships of trust and respect, listening deeply, and creating opportunities for change.

We hope this *Annual Accountability Report* has given you a taste of just a few of the many accomplishments that donors like you have helped realize in the past year.

As a supporter of Canadian Friends Service Committee, you make a difference every single day. Please [donate now](#) to continue this urgent work.