

NEW BUILDINGS AT ILLINOIS YEARLY MEETING – 2008

Our Vision

In these times of great peril and great promise, Friends from Illinois Yearly Meeting hold a vision for a place of deep spiritual grounding and witness, a vision which can welcome and renew us and will inspire us toward creation of a more peaceful and sustainable future. The Illinois Yearly Meetinghouse on Quaker Lane, McNabb, Illinois, is such a place. It is also an expression of the vision George Fox had atop Pendle Hill in England three hundred fifty years ago, when he saw "a great people to be gathered." We 21st Century Friends are among the direct heirs of the vital religious movement he and the early Friends of England began. Fox's vision included us, the people of the prairie.

In 1875, Quakers near McNabb built our beloved Meetinghouse, which still rises – stately and graceful – amidst fertile farmlands. Today, Friends must build again to meet the growing needs of Illinois Yearly Meeting and Clear Creek Meeting. At this time, we have a unique opportunity to develop our land with new buildings which will model our vision for the future alongside our vision from the past. Our new dining facilities and two dormitories with meeting space will include space for Clear Creek Meeting, which will again have a year-round place to meet. The buildings will express our Quaker values through their sustainable design and use and will serve as a living witness to the fundamental testimonies of Friends: Peace, Simplicity, Integrity, Equality, and Care for the Earth.

These new buildings will enhance the ministry and witness of Illinois Yearly Meeting in significant ways.

- We envision Illinois Yearly Meeting as a vital center of worship, fellowship, and Quaker outreach. Our new buildings will help us center in the Spirit surrounding us and express peaceful, simple living with integrity. In this space, we seek to deepen our ways of living simply and reverently, with peace and justice, which we can model for our communities and to the world.

- We see Illinois Yearly Meeting as a source for leadership development which will serve as a living witness to our love of the earth and our passion for peace and justice. Currently we have the possibility to design new facilities in which we can develop leaders of all ages to continue our historic Quaker vision and enlarge it to meet the challenges of times to come. We seek to enhance the future of dynamic participation by young Friends who have grown up in Illinois Yearly Meeting. As these Friends return here annually for fellowship, worship, and strengthening in their Quaker traditions and resolve, the Illinois Yearly Meetinghouse can become like Swarthmore Hall, Fox's home in England, where youth of old were equipped to begin their traveling ministries across the world.

- We seek to model ways to live in close harmony with the environment, showing respect and care for the earth and biosphere, our matrix of life. Our buildings will be built as sustainably as possible. We will build so that all resources used – all energy, water, materials – and all wastes released in construction and in continuing use do not diminish resource availability for future generations. Through both their design and use, our new buildings will serve as living witness to our Quaker values and testimonies.

Picture a peace house on the prairie, built sustainably with low environmental impact, expressing reverence for the earth. Think of a place that acknowledges and honors the land from which we came and the space to which we return time and again for spiritual sustenance, a place of retreat that offers nurture to all. Envision a place to which we invite fellow peacemakers to share in developing new paths to peace, where we explore ways to live more fully in peace and harmony with this land and place, and where we, in turn, show others these paths to peace. This place will uplift us spiritually and attract and inspire younger Quakers for generations to come. Please join us in this powerful, inspiring, and inviting vision for our new buildings.