

# Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

## December 2024



***Consider which of the ways to happiness offered by society are truly fulfilling and which are potentially corrupting and destructive. Be discriminating when choosing means of entertainment and information. Resist the desire to acquire possessions or income through unethical investment, speculation, or games of chance.***

*Advices and Queries #39*

## Upcoming Events and Announcements

The First Day School Christmas presentation will take place after the regular Meeting for Worship on Sunday, December 15. The children have been working diligently on this, and look forward to seeing you! We invite you to bring sweet and savoury treats to share after the presentation.

The CYM office will be closed from December 16 to January 6 to allow for year end work and holidays.

PSAC will meet online at 7:45 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17. Please use the regular Meeting for Worship Zoom link.

The next Meeting for Worship for Business will be held in person at the Meeting House on Sunday, January 5 at 12:30 p.m. You can also join us online on our regular Meeting Zoom link.

The Reading Group is taking a hiatus in December, and so the next meeting will be on Sunday, January 26, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in our Zoom space. We are alternating between books from indigenous authors and books from Quaker authors. For our next selection, the reading group has chosen Deborah Haight's *Meeting* (23 pages). This pamphlet is available in our library and also online: [https://quaker.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Meeting\\_by\\_Deborah\\_Haight.pdf](https://quaker.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Meeting_by_Deborah_Haight.pdf). Deborah Haight is a member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting, and this booklet is the text of the 1987 Sunderland P. Gardner lecture, which she prepared and presented. Please contact Shirla (shirla766@gmail.com) to be added to the participant list.



# HMM Annual Appeal

*by Pete Cross*

It is that time of year again. To be eligible for a 2024 charity receipt I must have received your donation before the start of the new year. I can also issue receipts for mailed donations that are postmarked by Dec. 31. Given the postal strike that may be problematic. Donations may also be made by e-transfer to [peteracross@hotmail.ca](mailto:peteracross@hotmail.ca). Those transfers get deposited directly into our account.

I remind Friends that Meeting has a budget of roughly \$30,000 annually. From my personal perspective if you are participating in Meeting you should be doing your best to make some sort of contribution, even if it is only \$25. It is looking as if we will have a deficit of maybe \$13,000 this year. Remember the saying “We cannot live by love alone”. Neither can Quaker organizations.



# Retreat Reflections

*by Harriet Woodside  
(on behalf of Ministry and Counsel)*

A long time ago, when I was a 40 something, I got roped into sharing the responsibility for feeding everyone at a Hamilton Monthly Meeting retreat at Camp NeeKauNis. My partner-in-the-kitchen was Pat Miles, a name a few will still remember. I had never been to NeeKauNis but Pat was my guide. In these pre-Costco days, Pat and I loaded three shopping carts full of food at The Barn. Another part of my job (because I suggested it) was that I bravely helped the kids at the retreat make sticky buns. Not a one was left.

While I was planning menus, others enjoyed creating a pleasing intergenerational program. This was probably the first time I saw Betty Preston in action leading a game called Beetle Drive and I think that weekend was my first camp talent show. These memories have remained with me while so many others have faded. Our two kids remember that everyone pitched in to paint some of the camp cabins. It's interesting that we three all remember different things that happened that weekend, but we all remember it.



*Anyone recognize these two folks from our 1987 retreat at NeeKauNis?*

Ministry and Counsel is planning a spring 2025 retreat at Camp NeeKauNis. It will be a great way to deepen friendships and, who knows, 35 years from now you too may have a cherished memory about it!

Save the weekend: May 30 to June 1 2025.

**We need your help.** Would you volunteer to be on the planning group? If you might step up to the plate, contact Harriet Woodside ([woodsideh@gmail.com](mailto:woodsideh@gmail.com)) by December 15, 2024.

# Report on Finland's Housing First Policy to Combat Homelessness

*by Dan McNeill*

On a recent visit to Finland, I was astonished to find NO homeless people living on the streets around the urban area where I was staying in Helsinki. This was remarkable considering the recent media reports of increasing homelessness all around the Western world and my own personal observations in Toronto and Hamilton. I discovered that Finland has made reducing homelessness a national priority and devised and followed a strategy called Housing First to combat this problem.

“Thousands of people used to live on the streets in Finland. The depression of the 1990s left a large section of Finnish society unemployed and excluded from working life. Income inequality and poverty grew as distributive policies were weakened.”

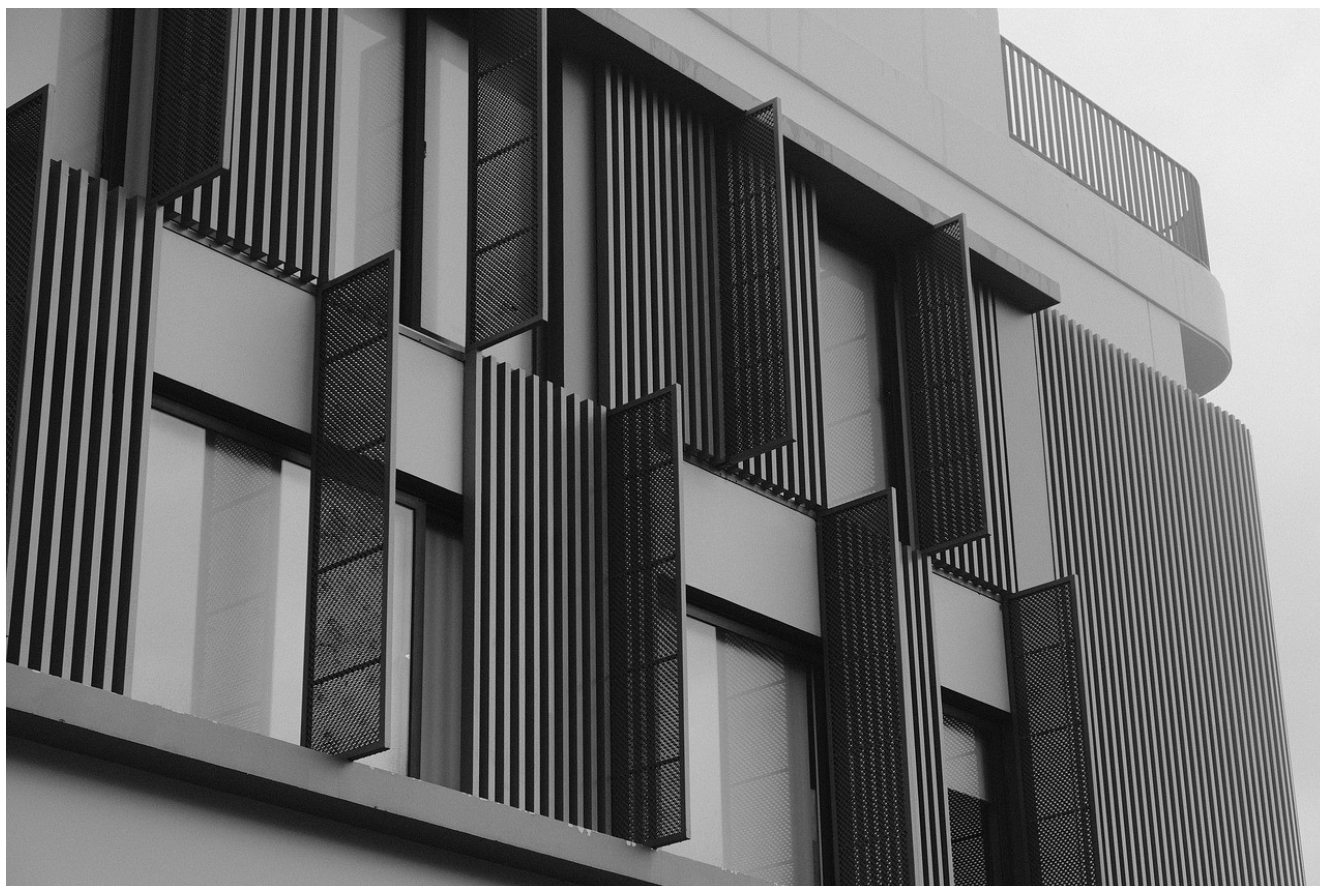
**Before:** “In the 1980s, the homeless were only given social housing and allowed to keep it after they had proved that they were rehabilitated, either by stopping drug or alcohol abuse, or ceasing to display violent behaviour. NGO’s...bought apartments specifically for homeless people and the state supported the development of new housing units for that purpose.”

**After:** “Finland’s Housing First initiative was introduced in 2008, and is based on the principle that housing is a basic human right.” “The Housing First policy deliberately reverses the order in which homeless people’s needs are addressed: first giving them somewhere to live, and then providing support services to help with their often complex needs (including mental health, addiction and disabilities) that resulted in them ending up on the street in the first place. The program has shown that providing housing for the homeless can save as much as €15,000 [C\$22,000] per person. Resources that would otherwise be used to provide a place to sleep overnight can be better utilized for rehabilitation and support. Housing First’s aim is to develop societal integration and a long-term way out of homelessness and poverty. Tenants must pay for their housing, and it

is their responsibility to arrange their own affairs. Importantly, they receive not only financial support, but other practical support and advice, to allow them to do so.”

This information is quoted from *Finntopia: What We Can Learn from the World’s Happiest Country*, by Dorling, D., Koljonen, A., (2022), pp. 141-142.

*Editor’s Note:* I thought this would be of interest to those in and around our Meeting, given that Hamilton Monthly Meeting has recently invested in a community bond offering from Indwell, an organization whose goal is to provide affordable, supportive housing in our community and in the surrounding region. Indwell’s approach to non-market housing has been informed by Housing First programs elsewhere in the world.



# About this Newsletter / Submission Guidelines

This Newsletter is a monthly publication of news and announcements relevant to Hamilton Quakers.

It is also a venue for members and attenders to share creative works or articles they have written on subjects that may be of interest to our Quaker community. As a general guideline we are looking for submissions that are inspirational and related to Quaker concerns, as well as announcements and news. Members and Attenders are encouraged to submit works for the newsletter.

Requests for newsletter items are announced after Meeting for Worship and/or via email during the week before Meeting for Worship for Business. They are due by the Friday before Business Meeting. Submission of materials implies permission to publish. Copyright for original material resides with the author.

If the person submitting the article is unknown to the editor or if there are questions as to whether the article will be appropriate for the Quaker newsletter, the editor will consult with the clerk(s) who will together discern what will be included. Written permission to publish must be obtained from the copyright holder if a submission is not the original work of the submitter, unless the works are in the public domain, or are covered under the creative commons license.

Hamilton Meeting reserves the right to edit submissions for length or content in consultation with the authors. Please limit submissions to a maximum of 750 words. When opinion pieces are included a line will be added indicating "Submissions reflect the opinions of their authors, and not necessarily of Hamilton Monthly Meeting".

Submissions should be directed to the current editor, Síân Reid, [daywitch@gmail.com](mailto:daywitch@gmail.com).

*We acknowledge the land upon which Hamilton Friends Meeting House is located as the shared traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg, protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt covenant. This historic peace agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibwe, and allied nations represents a commitment to share and protect the land, water, plants, and animals, with respect. It is the privilege of Hamilton Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) to share in the tradition of stewardship of this land, which has been the environment of human beings in this territory for thousands of years. We honour the original Peoples of this land and express a commitment to and gratitude for the opportunity to work together toward restorative justice and reconciliation.*