

## YM21 Junior Young Friends Epistle

*“Stepping out”* was our theme and on the first day of Yearly Meeting one JYF overcame nervousness and shared an extract from their climate change movie in the earthcare epilogue. The key question is *“how can we joyfully do our job of reducing climate change”*? Thoughts on getting an electric vehicle were inspired by 93-year-old Derek, who demonstrated in the movie that it was worthwhile at any age.

Instead of playing chasey with torches, in the dark at camp, we played chasey between rooms in the inter-room-space at our online gathering. The Alternatives to Violence (AVP) workshop had us look at how we communicate and connect. We made drawings together, both with and without group selected themes and limitations, providing opportunities to consider the difference and what we may do differently next time. It was interesting to hear the link between the introductory games and the meaning behind the AVP approach.

We learned from two Young Friends what *“Stepping out”* looks like when you have Quaker values in your pocket. It looks like: having a sense of purpose; expanding and going beyond; living simply, having inspiring friendships, and taking time outside of the workplace at lunchtime. It was useful to hear of ways we can represent ourselves outside, as Quakers. JYFs shared what it looked like for them which included wanting to look after the earth, being a peacemaker in arguments, not playing violent games with friends, and not joining the army cadets.

One JYF was happy to share with the Quaker Panel the questions they are asked: What is a Quaker? What do they do? What are their beliefs? What is it like to be a Quaker? A panel of three adult Friends gave a range of responses. A lot of knowledge about Quakerism was gained. A Quaker is someone who invites difference in order to grow; recognises that of God in everyone; and follows a certain way of life. Quakers make patterns of their lives; listen inside; and commit themselves to service. They focus on the next step, are open to changing beliefs; and are upheld by a fabric of support.

The final activity was playing Jackbox games, which was a different way to have fun and get to know each other. JYFs recognise how hard it is to stay connected when not seeing each other. Nine JYFs attended over the week with at most five in a session, and sometimes one. While numbers were low, engagement was high. JYF's in Australia, and beyond are being stretched. This week they have also been strengthened. As we learnt in the AVP workshop, limitations can bring us together, and make it easier. Let's keep alight our inner light, until we meet again.