

Conference Assembly Report
The Mennonite Heritage Center
565 Yoder Road, Harleysville, PA 19438
mhcp.org

Our vision: To be a vibrant center of learning rooted in the Anabaptist/Mennonite Faith.

Our mission: To educate, inspire, and witness to the church and community by collecting, preserving, and sharing the Mennonite story.

The Center celebrated the 45th Annual Apple Butter Frolic on October 6th. This wholesome, educational event highlights life, food, farming, and crafts common to Mennonites and local culture in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Twenty-five nonprofits took part in the 10th Annual Whack and Roll Croquet Tournament in June. The event is the Center's largest fundraiser, and provides over \$10,000 in prize money to the competing nonprofits. Youth groups enjoyed the raucous *Survivor* version of game, competing for prize money for mission trips.

The highly attended exhibit *Opportunity and Conscience: Mennonite Immigration to PA*, closed in the spring. A highlight of that exhibit was a feature on recent immigrants to southeastern PA. Two majority-immigrant congregations from South Philadelphia brought entire congregations and received an introduction to our work, the story we tell, and a welcome into that story.

Since then, the rotating exhibit space has displayed *Heroes of Peace and Justice*, comprised of panels produced some years ago along with new features. One panel features Michael J. Sharpe's life, work, and recent martyrdom in the Congo while seeking to persuade rebels to lay down their arms. A travelling exhibit from the Kauffman Museum, *Voices of Conscience*, opens in November. This professionally designed, partially immersive display will allow visitors to experience the decisions and suffering of conscientious objectors in WWI.

The Center maintains visiting hours five days/week. The permanent exhibit *Work and Hope*, along with the introductory video, remains an excellent way for people to get an orientation to Mennonite origins and life in PA. We converted our gift shop into a visitor center that offers our guests a comfortable place to sit, visit, research, enjoy a cup of coffee, and peruse Mennonite periodicals and book offerings. Children have a place to sit and play checkers or tic-tac-toe. We continue to sell some items.

In October of 2017, a lead gift toward our endowment inspired additional gifts that will double our endowment over the next few years. The story behind this growth is even better than the growth itself—look for it in our upcoming mailings and emails.

In May, Steve Diehl, who had been serving as Director of Advancement, was named Executive Director. Sarah Heffner has become Program Director. Steve will maintain all fundraising responsibilities and Sarah will oversee all programming and volunteer recruiting and coordination. Following Sarah's recommendation, the board felt this was an appropriate time to shift roles as the Center embarks on implementing a new strategic plan.

Please visit us in person soon, or browse our collections and blogs online at mhcp.org!