

To all friends everywhere,

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2019, 53 young people from all across the UK and abroad came together with staff members for a week of fun and learning around the theme of modern equality.

We valued our times in worship together in the mornings and evenings. There was some lovely ministry throughout the week, some of which highlighted our focus on the theme and our awareness of our privilege. We found music very helpful as a focal point during some meetings, as well as guided meditation and small objects, such as pebbles and Lego pieces, to help focus attention. Epilogue outdoors was a particularly spiritual, quiet and calming experience for all involved.

There were lots of fun activities throughout the week. Some of our personal favourites included the barn dance (which was tiring but very fun) and the rainbow carnival themed disco (which was incredibly colourful). There were novelty activities which we enjoyed playing in teams such as solving the giant live action Cluedo and creating Mega Marble Runs. We enjoyed working in teams and bonding with each other. Lifelines was very emotional as we learnt about staff members' lives, the hardships they have overcome and the amazing people they are today. The fete was very glittery! \*thumbs up emoji\*.

Speakers helped us to explore our theme of modern equality by talking about their life, work and other experiences. Svenn (one of our own staff members) spoke about his time as an ecumenical accompanier in Palestine and the injustices he saw there. Angharad from Fairtrade Foundation talked about the inequalities in global trade and how we can take actions to ensure that trading benefits all those in the supply chain. Liam, from Extinction Rebellion, spoke to us about the power of non-violent protests and the urgent need to combat the climate emergency, inspiring much discussion and motivating action amongst many of those present. Suzanne (from QPSW) helped us learn more about economic inequality within the UK and the huge and unfair disparity between those who have the most and those who have the least wealth, facts that many of us found shocking. Tatiana, also from QPSW, spoke about issues to do with the climate and refugees.

On Tuesday we visited the Harris Gardens in Reading and enjoyed the splendid scenery as we played games and music, chatted and made friendship bracelets. On Wednesday we took a day trip to Oxford where we enjoyed meeting up with Senior Conference and worshipping together, although it was a bit of a squeeze! We then went out into Oxford and enjoyed the beautiful city, picking up things for our disco costumes and for our Secret Friends.

The things we have learnt and experienced this week have inspired us to take action and to learn more about inequalities both at home and

abroad. We feel that the relationships we have formed during the week have enabled us to explore difficult topics. We hope the event and these friendships continue for many years to come.

We decided in Business Meeting that the theme next year will be Mental Health

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Gathering 2019,

Rosamund and Rowan, Clerks

Bonnie and Owen, Elders