



Friday, May 15

Dear Friends,

Traditions are an important part of community life at New Garden Friends School. We hold fast to the ways in which we honor our history, celebrate our present, and build memories for the future. Helping students understand their responsibilities as community members is a privilege that NGFS faculty and staff regard quite seriously. Their methods, though, may appear anything but serious. In addition to our school calendar, each grade or grade group has a calendar that is both steeped in ritual and appropriate to what students, need, value, and enjoy at that developmental stage. While many of these special times are a part of Meeting for Worship, others happen in classrooms, en route to spring and fall trips, around a campfire, or in the Upper School Commons. These traditions create strong bonds; through shared experiences students come to know that their presence matters and that each person is a valued member of their school community.

Many of our rites of passage at NGFS involve the gift of books. On Thursday night, our seniors, and those who stood by them as champions throughout their time with us, gathered (via Zoom) for Baccalaureate. This evening is a cherished tradition that seniors anticipated spending at the Meeting House, surrounded by teachers, staff, friends, and family. Each senior is presented with a book specifically chosen by their advisor, as a parting gift. Although a Zoom ceremony was not on anyone's graduation wish list, this fine group made it work. They are a courageous, diligent, resilient group of young men and women who have handled many interruptions to the celebrations they deserved with a rare maturity and grace. Some of our seniors began their NGFS experience at A Child's Garden, others joined us later. It was heartwarming to hear their teachers and others give a brief glimpse into the unique gifts each graduate has shared with our school community.

Last night, at the conclusion of Baccalaureate, Maura Way led the singing of a special New Garden Friends School song that has special meaning for many of our students. For the graduates who joined us as toddlers (and their parents, including my husband Don and I) it was particularly poignant:

*As we leave this friendly place, love gives Light to every face
May the kindness that we learn, fill our hearts 'till we return.*

Please join me in celebrating the young men and women of the class of 2020!

In peace,

Kim