

*From the Desk of the Head of School*  
by Gerri Faivre



### **The Global Society Needs Us**

We sit in the middle of Long Island. Our campus is pastoral and everyone comments on the peace and serenity they feel the moment they turn into our driveway, leaving the busy traffic of Post Ave and Jericho Turnpike behind. Our students arrive at school, appropriately dressed for the weather and spend the day in a nurturing and caring environment, safely playing on our fields, conversing openly with classmates and teachers on all topics and engaged in their educational pursuits. Lunch time is a social gathering, as students happily talk to each other while discovering the food packed for them with loving care, and even perhaps a note from Mom or Dad saying "Hi" or "I love you!" This is the norm for those of us at WFS, but not so for many who inhabit this globe, near or far away. And that is why the Global Society in which we exist needs those of us at WFS to help make a difference in their lives.

A question posed to us last year when our O Ambassadors commitment took us to Latin America and the Caribbean and we worked to raise funds for these areas was "Why not work to support the Long Island community and the US community, which has so much need?" A good and reasonable question, which deserved an answer. And we hear it again this year as we focus on Africa and the needs of many countries on that continent.

International education is important as we look to the future for our children. The world outside our bucolic community faces grave problems; war, hunger, global warming, pandemic disease, serious differences in wealth, etc. Our students, who will be the movers and shakers and leaders of tomorrow will need global competency to help solve problems of this magnitude. And like most things, awareness of situations outside their individual universe requires exposure and education at a young age in ways that are appropriate, relevant, and meaningful. Global factors and conditions of the future will be heavily influenced by what they see and hear and learn to care about now, while they are in the early childhood and elementary years.

In programs like O Ambassadors (Free The Children), Halloween for Hunger Campaign, Coats for Kids, Thanksgiving Food Drive, Pennies for Patients, Toy and Mitten Drive, Bears 4 Kids, and Stop World Hunger the learning process is emphasized through critical thinking, problem-solving, analysis and teamwork. The message is always the same...commitment to making the world a better place whether it be in Westbury or in Africa. And other programs at WFS such as Steer Clear of Bullies, Footprints for Life, Author Visits on Books about Different Cultures, the Peace Table, Daily Morning Moment of Silent Worship, and weekly Meeting for Worship all encourage the basic values of tolerance, respect for differences, a willingness to confront injustices and make a positive difference in the world. These, and the daily classroom focus on the Quaker Testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community and Equality all model for our students, from the youngest to the oldest, a desire to make a positive difference through a sense of kinship and responsibility for others.

This is the goal, the reason why we as a Quaker School constantly involve ourselves in the act of doing in the hope of bringing ourselves and those around us, either in our neighborhood right down the street from our school or in the global society across the ocean on a continent far away to a better place. The only gift is a portion of oneself and at Westbury Friends School, that is obvious each and every day...and we are grateful to be able to give it to those in need no matter where they are.