

Center City Crime Victim's Services(CCCVS) and Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (CPMM) Organizational History



This program grows out of the concern of members of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, as Friends, that justice should be a healing process for all concerned, offenders and victims, their families and communities. The Oversight Committee, to which the program director reports, is made up of interested members of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (1998 CCCVS report to CPMM)

Center City Crime Victims Services came out of a request to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting from the Philadelphia district attorney's office in 1986 that the Quakers form a crime victim's services agency to serve central city Philadelphia. Several other crime victim's services agencies had existed for nearly a decade in other neighborhoods, with two sponsored by religious based social service agencies. The Yearly Meeting Criminal Justice committee referred the matter to the two central city Meetings, explaining to the district's attorney's office that "We have a policy, however, that it is rightly ordered to take on a new project only if Friends at a Monthly Meeting feel God's leading to work on such a project." Members of the Peace and Social Concerns committee of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (CPMM) and representatives of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Arch Street (Arch Street) met with government representatives in early 1987. CPMM's Peace and Social Concerns committee offered to explore the idea further.

CPMM is a large, active Meeting in center city Philadelphia, located in a historic meeting house attached to a modern complex that holds Philadelphia Yearly Meeting offices, the national offices of AFSC and houses a number of smaller national and local Quaker related organizations. The Meeting formed in 1827, one of the original Hicksite Meetings. When initially founded, CPMM membership included a number of anti-slavery and other social movement activists, with women's rights leader, abolitionist and peace activist Lucretia Mott a well known member. CPMM served as the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for the Hicksite branch until it merged with the Orthodox in the mid 20th century.

In addition to supporting many activist members since its inception, CPMM had supported two homeless shelters and provided oversight to members involved in an array of peace and justice initiatives over the years. It also had joint oversight of a large Quaker school located in the next block and, as part of Philadelphia Quarter, appointed board members to the Quaker settlement house. At the time that it initially considered the crime victim's services project, it was also supporting a non-violence training institute run by one long term members and the leadings of several others engaged in international peace and justice work. With a large endowment and contributions from its members, it also provided small grants, usually under \$500 each to a number of Quaker and other organizations associated with Friends and members of the Meeting.

Jennie Borgerhoff, who was both a member of CPMM's Peace as Social Concerns Committee as well as serving on the Yearly Meeting Criminal Justice committee, expressed an interest in investigating the project. Along with several others from CPMM and Arch street Meeting, she researched other crime victim's services organizations and developed a proposal for CCCVS. By spring 1988, the idea had become a leader for Jennie that was approved by the Peace and

Social Committee before presenting it to the full Meeting.

The proposal was presented to Meeting for Business in May 1988, with Jennie stating in her report that "As a member of peace and social concerns, I became excited about the possibilities of such a program." As is customary for this Meeting, reports are held over for discussion the following month. The Meeting quickly approved providing oversight for the project, with the understanding that funds would come from government and other sources. Jennie initially volunteered as director for several months, hiring a part time staff person once the first city government grant of \$14,300 came through.

CCCVS formally started operations in November 1988 in borrowed office space in city hall. For its first 10 years, it remained a project of the Meeting, with the Meeting handling its payroll and books, as well as serving as fiscal sponsor for any fundraising. As such, the Meeting was an unincorporated religious body receiving federal and local funds. The project was overseen by an oversight committee appointed by the Meeting, with its members coming from a combination of the Peace and Social Concerns committee and other Meeting members interested in its mission. The project reported to the full Meeting for Business once a year with a written and oral report. Its first full year budget was for \$56,000, none of which came from the Meeting. Over the years, it garnered few volunteers from the Meeting other than the oversight committee and neither asked for nor received funding from the Meeting or the several family foundations under its care.

Over the next ten years, the organization grew modestly to 2 ½ employees. In 1989, it moved into space rented from FGC, remaining in these offices for the entire time period. By 1997, its budget had grown to slightly over 100,000 with funds coming from a combination of government grants and a fundraising event that regularly brought in over \$20,000. This event was not actively advertised through the Meeting, with contributors coming from a wider array of Philadelphians interested in peace and justice work.

In 1997, a new Meeting clerk began to express concerns about the Meeting's sponsorship of the project. At that time, several Meeting members asked the Meeting to support projects at the same time. These included an initiative to create a settlement house in an impoverished neighborhood in North Philadelphia where a poorly cared for historic Quaker cemetery was located, an intergroup relations project, and several other peace initiatives. This clerk felt that this project and another long-term activity should become independent to make room for other projects. The press of new requests led the Meeting to develop a formal policy for approving leadings under its care which became one of the first of its kind in the nation.

The Meeting administrative staff and leadership also had another concern with CCCVS' sponsorship by the Meeting. While receiving no funds from the Meeting, government payments that provided the bulk of its expenses often arrived months late. As a result, the Meeting continually covered payroll for the project until funds arrived. Processing payroll and waiting for late funds created a burden for administrative staff. CCCVS and the other project were both asked to form separate 501c3s.

While the other project quickly incorporated, CCCVS incorporation moved along slowly, in large part because of limited staff and lack of advisory committee members who could provide guidance on developing by-laws and other necessary steps to become an independent organization. The executive director also expressed concern over the need for a financial cushion or regular bridge loan to cover payroll when government payments failed to arrive on time. The primary volunteer for the advisory committee was someone who had attended the

Meeting for a few years and was the chief organizer for the annual fundraiser. He developed an independent advisory committee with strong membership from the law and business community in center city, but with no Quaker members.

By early spring 1998, the Meeting was growing increasingly concerned about the slow pace of CCCVS movement toward incorporation. The oversight committee receives increasing pressure to move the process forward, and in April, after the annual report, issues a minute approving hosting the project until the end of the next fiscal year, June 31, 1999, "with understanding that oversight will discontinue at that time" (April Meeting Minutes). The project oversight committee and executive director continued to research secular umbrella organizations that could provide administrative support for the project and bridge funds. Around this time, the Meeting also appoints several new members to the advisory committee with significant non-profit and business experience who begin to work more closely with the executive director to encourage incorporation. But help comes chiefly in the form of suggestions, not offers to help the executive director with these tasks.

Fearing that CCCVS would not meet the Meeting deadline to become independent, the project again was a topic of discussion at Meeting for Business in September 1998. Based on that discussion, the in October, the meeting issued a letter to CCCVS that "reaffirmed...that the work of CCCVS, and your contribution to that work, is deeply valued by the Meeting" but reiterates that the project needs to make other arrangements for administrative, payroll and other supports and incorporate separately by July 1999. The contents of the letter had been discussed with the executive director before it was written in a conversation with the Meeting clerk. This was a new clerk much more sympathetic to the project, but the letter was cc'd to the former clerk who had initially urged the project to become independent. The letter ended with a note that it was intended as "an expression of our concern that CCCVS be under the weight of carrying out these concerns" and offers to help in moving the steps to incorporation forward if necessary.

Relying on suggestions for lawyers to assist in the incorporation process pro-bono or at a low rate, the organization quickly moved toward incorporation, filing a request for a 501c3 in November 1998. An advisory committee of three members used boiler plate by-laws template to develop its by-laws. The mission included an emphasis on restorative justice, but the by-laws make no mention of the Religious Society of Friends or use of Quaker process in the organization. Concerned about how it will cover payroll without the Meeting as backup, the project requests a gift of \$5,000 from the Meeting as a cushion to cover payroll. The Meeting provides these funds as a "parting gift."

CCCVS received formal 501c3 status in March 1999 and became completely independent by the Meeting's deadline. Reflecting back on this time, the executive director commented that the organization had always intended to incorporate separately, but the pressure of day to day operation with a small staff prohibited moving forward. Feeling pushed out at the time, the executive director made little effort to keep the Meeting informed of organization activities and does not request any form of aid from this point on. However, still an active member of the Meeting, she continues to receive ongoing spiritual support from an ad-hoc group of Meeting members.

For the next 10 years of its existence, the project continues on, with staff growing to six with funds from a special project, then returning to three for most of its time. The advisory committee continued to be less than 6 people, meeting occasionally as needed. The original advisory committee member left Philadelphia a few years after the agency became independent, but

stopped attending the Meeting shortly after the separation was completed. When FGC grew to the point that it needs CCCVS office space in 1998, the organization moved to space with no connections to Quakers. While it is understood as a Quaker organization among the network of crime victim services organizations in the state, this designation comes from the leadership style and commitment of the executive director rather than any formal ties to the Society of Friends.

By the late 2000's, the executive director felt ready to move on and took a sabbatical to explore her next leading. By the end of her time away, she decided to return to the organization, but began to develop a succession plan. By fall 2008 she decided to retire in 2009, with the staff person who had been with the organization for a long time agreeing to serve as interim executive director for a period of time. This staff person shares similar values to Friends, but is not a Quaker. After one year, she will work with the board to decide if she wants to continue as executive director or the agency should search for a permanent new head. While the founding executive director hopes Quakers would be considered for the organization, she does not feel she has any right to stipulate the future executive directors have any ties to the Society of Friends.

Time Line

- 1986 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Criminal Justice Committee receives letter in October from the Philadelphia District Attorney asking if the Meeting would like to create a crime victim's services agency in center city, Yearly Meeting refers this to the two Philadelphia Monthly Meetings for consideration
- 1987 Central City Monthly Meeting and Arch Street Meeting meet with representatives of the District Attorney's office. Jennie Borgerhoff expresses interest in exploring the project and, with the support of the CPMM Peace and Social Concerns committee and others researches similar programs and develops a proposal.
- 1988 May 15th, Jennie presents a proposal to CPMM Meeting for Business to start CCVS under the Meeting's care, noting that no funds would come from the Meeting. Meeting approves project in June and appoints and steering committee. Request 11/88-6/89 grant of \$14,300 from city, which it receives at the end of November. Program starts with Jennie as a volunteer in office space provided by the city.
- 1989 CCCVS receives first federal grant of 20,000. Moves into rented space owned by FGC.
- 1997 Project still under care of CPMM, with 2 ½ staff people. Clerk expresses concern that the project move toward independence. Meeting oversight committee 5 members, one member independent advisory committee who is Meeting attender
- 1998 Agency exploring incorporation, but is having trouble given cash flow problems and steps needed to become a separate 501c3. Agency moves to new office in non-Quaker space. Meeting approves hosting project for until June 31,1999 only. Agency incorporates in December 1998 as separate 501c3.
- 1999 CCCVS receives "parting gift" from CPMM of \$5,000 meant to use as a cushion to cover payroll while waiting for government reimbursements.
- 2009 Initial executive director retires, long term staff person takes on position as interim executive director.

Financial History

The organization started out as a volunteer effort of the executive direction, with an Initial budget to Meeting 10,000. Initial funding in was 1988 \$14,300. By FY 1989-90, the budget had grown to \$56,214. Over the remaining time, the project is funded primarily through government grants, with an annual fundraising bringing in significant income. For example, in 1997 fundraiser brought in 23,000.

Relationship History

For the first half of its history, the project maintains a positive, but low key relationship with its sponsoring Meeting. This involves providing an oversight committee that offers primarily spiritual guidance to the executive director as well as fiscal sponsorship and administrative support. The project director does not regularly publicize the organization's activities in the Meeting and it is understood as her leading. It garners limited volunteer and financial support from the meeting.

When Meeting leadership decided that the project should be come independent, its director received increasingly strong messages to move toward incorporation through the oversight committee and Meeting clerk. While this process was not confrontational, it gave the director a feeling that the Meeting did want any further relationship with the project. It also cemented an earlier expectation that the project would eventually spin off as a secular organization. As a result, it does not include any relationship with its founding Meeting or the Society of Friends in its by-laws. Once independent, the organization per se has no ongoing relationship with the Meeting. Its executive director continues to receive spiritual and emotional support, but as a member of the Meeting, not due to the organizations former relationship with the Meeting.



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