

February 2, 2021

Dear Trustees of the Friends Foundation for the Aging,

We are writing to inquire about the possibility of Woolman Hill submitting an application for \$30,000 to help us increase the magic that happens across generations at our Quaker retreat center.

At the heart of Woolman Hill's mission is the in-person programming and events. Our elder Friends make possible the transformation that happens when younger and older generations spend time together for both structured content and informal interactions at our site. What happens around the edges of overnight retreats (conversations over dishwashing or meal preparation, heart-to-heart sharing in pajamas around the woodstove, evening talent shows that reveal hidden depths and generate joy-filled laughter...) are critical opportunities for older and younger to learn about each other's Quaker lives. These aspects of forming and reinforcing a sense of multi-age community and whole-person presence contribute to lasting spiritual friendships and to profound discernment of ministry and call. Time and again we have witnessed and experienced the amazing gifts that come from long-lived Friends sharing their lives and listening to ours. This kind of spiritual transformation is such a gift to the Religious Society of Friends. In fact, we would say these interactions with our elders are essential.

Woolman Hill's physical facilities—the buildings, land, and their accessibility—are the indispensable component that makes the cross-generation magic possible here. Currently, seniors age 65 and above make up a significant percentage of our program participants and guests. At the same time, we know of many groups and individuals who have been unable or have chosen not to visit or participate because our main building has many characteristics that make navigating it with limited mobility next to impossible. These Friends wrestle with narrow doorways, uneven thresholds, inadequate ramps and entryways, and multiple steps or long distances between bedrooms and bathrooms. Older guests also struggle with limited privacy. While we are aware that FFA does not typically support physical infrastructure projects, given how integral our facilities are as a means to providing the full experience of multi-generation programming at Woolman Hill, we are inquiring whether your board would be open to receiving an application for some critical accessibility improvements to our main building.

As part of a deeply discerned multi-year strategic plan, Woolman Hill is in the process of renovating the 1800s farmhouse that serves as our conference center building. We are completely redesigning the main entrance and foyer, as well as adding ground-floor bedrooms and bathrooms as part of a two-story addition. The result of the first floor improvements will be a fully accessible, unified, level area that provides a welcoming arrival space, small gathering and conversation nooks, along with sleeping quarters, all contiguous with the existing core area of sitting room, dining/meeting room and kitchen. The cost of these ground floor accessibility improvements is \$380,000. (The construction cost for the total building project is \$760,000.) Once completed, we believe we will see a marked increase in senior participation, possibly by as much as 20-25%, as well as increased use by monthly meetings and other groups, and oh, what a joy that will be!

Our inquiry to you concerns the ground floor improvements estimated at \$380,000. Would the Foundation be open to our submitting an application for \$30,000 to help make those improvements possible? Woolman Hill has not submitted any requests to the Friends Foundation for the Aging before. We feel that our requested application would fit well with the values articulated for your grant making process.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this request. Regardless of your decision, thank you for your work in supporting the robust integration of and attention to the needs of older adults, whose spiritual experience and continuing explorations have much benefit for us all.

With appreciation,

Margaret Cooley  
Executive Director

**WOOLMAN HILL MAIN BUILDING  
ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS BUDGET**

<b>EXPENSES</b>	
<b>Ground floor portion of improvements</b>	<b>\$380,000</b>
<i>Building and renovation costs - total</i>	<i>\$760,000</i>

<b>INCOME (portion for ground floor)</b>	
Individual donations	\$240,000
Monthly meeting donations	\$70,000
Grant funding	\$70,000
<b>Total budgeted income</b>	<b>\$380,000</b>

We are thrilled to have raised all but \$83,000 of the ground floor portion of our project cost from individuals, monthly meetings, and one New England Yearly Meeting fund so far.