



**QUAKER  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE**

Dear Friends,

It has been a pleasure to finish two years of partnership with Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA). Funding from FFA has enabled QVS to expand our site placement offerings to include organizations working with aging adults. Although we hope to tackle a wide range of issues through the Fellows' site placement partners, not all potential site placements can afford the fee that we request. Working with FFA has been extremely meaningful for our work to introduce young adult Fellows to working with aging adults.

Stewarding the QVS program during a global health and economic crisis has taught the QVS team a lot about our organizational leadership and structure, expenses and revenue stream, our mission to empower young adults, and helped sharpen QVS's equity lens in a moment of deep scarcity and inequity. It reminded QVS staff that we cannot continuously add responsibilities to our plate, and that our priority is the physical and spiritual wellbeing of our Fellows.

The report below reflects the first half of the 2020-2021 program year, with reflections on objectives, Fellow experiences, barriers, and the budget.

As you will see, funding from QVS has directly impacted young adults working with aging adults, and has changed life trajectories already. We look forward to continuing our relationship with FFA.

Thank you for your continued support.

With gratitude,

Hilary Burgin, Executive Director

Claire Hannapel, Development Director

## Quaker Voluntary Service FFA Report - March 2021

### Objectives & Outcomes

In year two of this project, we anticipated this partnership would a) offer Fellows an immersive service experience with aging adults, b) grow the capacity of current aging adult site placements, and c) develop *new* connections with aging adult site placements.

Across our program, one metric we use to determine the 'success' of the year is what percentage of QVS Fellows report that they grew in the three main arenas of QVS: Spirituality, Community, and Social Justice. Compared to the 2018-2019 program year, fewer Fellows reported *deep growth* in 2019-2020. The biggest drop was in the area of **Spiritual Exploration** (from 63% to 43%). While this difference is sobering, it remains noteworthy that 75% of Fellows experienced deep growth in the area of **Community** and 66% of Fellows experienced deep growth in the area of **Social Justice**. In the last two program years, Fellows' experiences have been altered enormously from the norm because of COVID-19. We believe the pandemic's effects on QVS' model played a major role in this.

The 2019-2020 Fellows working with site placements focused on aging adults both reported experiencing growth in their service and justice work. One Fellow shared that she "Totally Agreed" that her "site placement provided a model for engaging in social justice work." We see through stories that Fellows have, indeed, had immersive service experiences with aging adult site placements. (See Testimonials of Transformation section below.)

Our second objective, of expanding capacity at nonprofits working with aging adults, is also being satisfied. At the close of the 2019-2020 year, FriendshipWorks shared the following reflection: "The lessons we've learned from this first fellowship will influence the scope of work, pace and overall success of this coming year. The QVS Fellow plays an important role in moving our work forward."

Lastly, we stated an objective of expanding the number of organizations we partner with that focus on aging adults. We are disappointed to report that we have been unable to develop new connections and formalize partnerships with additional aging adult site placements, which we share later on in the *Unanticipated Barriers* section of this report.

### Testimonials of Transformation

This program year we continued partnering with FriendshipWorks in Boston. Each year, Fellows engage in three-way check-ins with their site supervisor and the City Coordinator to support mutual commitments, identify any challenges or problems, and jointly come to clarity about how to address them. We are excited to share some quotes from these meetings.

Olivia, the Fellow at FriendshipWorks, in speaking about her experience, says: “It has been really awesome to come into my own projects, have space to make suggestions, to push on things that are close to my heart and feel exciting to me. It is something that I did not expect to get. *I feel trusted a lot of the time. I feel like I learn so much every day. The opportunity to spark one on one [conversations] with Elders feels unique and not something I would have been able to do otherwise.*” Olivia is thinking about her vocation and where she is called to grow and learn. It is possible that a position at FriendshipWorks may open up, and she’d be interested in applying if it does. She also says: “At some point I want to go to grad school for social work - it is not going to happen in the next year..... *[I] feel so much more excited about working with elders than I thought that I would. It is an area I would like to stay in for the foreseeable future.*”

Meanwhile, FriendshipWorks staff show enthusiasm for working with Olivia. In the mid-year evaluation, her supervisor spoke about her interest in supporting Olivia as she considers what’s next, including working with Olivia to update her resume and network within the field.

If you’re interested in hearing a little about the work of FriendshipWorks, and hearing Olivia’s voice for just a moment, you can listen to [this public radio piece from late-December](#).

### **Unanticipated Outcomes & Barriers**

This year, the pandemic introduced major challenges: halting all cross-city travel, needing to move to virtual programming, supporting Fellows in negotiating new norms regarding health and safety (both within their house communities and site placement settings), etc. One of these challenges included onboarding Fellows at their site placements in the fall. The FriendshipWorks supervisor surfaced these challenges in their fall evaluation, sharing: “I want to give Olivia a sense of what FriendshipWorks is like and this is \*what\* FriendshipWorks is like right now [in a pandemic]!! It is a matter of all of us at FriendshipWorks all being patient with each other. There are all kinds of wrenches.” She went on to name the opportunity that QVS has to “*make sure [Fellows] are exploring their vocation and what it means to work in a time of COVID... to identify the transferable skills that they are developing.*”

We feel fortunate to partner with FriendshipWorks staff who bring such thoughtfulness to their supervisory role. Last year, we heard [similar feedback from Alumni](#) that they wished for a stronger ‘off-ramp’ from the QVS year, including support around vocational discernment. With this in mind, QVS hired an Alumni Engagement Coordinator to better prioritize this work.

More generally, since the beginning of our partnership with FFA, we have imagined working with multiple site placements that work with aging adults. By cost sharing the site placement fees between site placements and FFA, we address a barrier for site placements entering into a partnership with QVS, allowing them the ability to “try out” hosting a QVS Fellow. So far we have only successfully worked with one site placement in Boston. We see the barriers as related to not having connections within the field of aging adults in each of our cities. City Coordinators are expected to solicit applications from local nonprofits to become site placements. Our most successful and longest-participating site placements are nonprofits where someone within the

QVS network has a connection. There is a shared understanding of hosting a Fellow (not an employee, not an intern) and of partnering with a spiritual organization. We have found that very few nonprofits respond to being 'cold-called' to apply to host a Fellow -- they are busy in other ways and don't yet know the impact that a QVS Fellow could have on their work.

Because of this, and the overall challenges of securing site placements, City Coordinators are not expected to find site placements in specified nonprofit fields. This means that, although we have an opportunity to decrease the financial investment of nonprofits serving aging adults, we do not have the connections that can help us start the conversations. Looking forward, we are eager to better utilize the connections FFA staff and board have to the aging adult service community. We are excited that these connections could result in more site placement partners servicing aging adults in our program cities.

### **Financial Variances, Sustainability, and Identifying a New Funding Model**

While this partnership allowed QVS to experiment with a new funding model and offer young adults an opening into the aging field, we learned a major lesson: ***subsidizing the cost of the site placement fee was only serving the immediate needs of our site partner*** and leaving out the long term needs and mission of QVS and FFA. Our model has been such that site placements contribute half the cost of a Fellowship position. Introducing this new revenue source without the *complimentary* contribution to support the *whole* Fellowship position decreases our financial efficiency by adding on a new project for QVS development staff to manage.

We are conscious of the need to function as a sustainable, financially responsible organization. We want to be able to offer site placements and Fellowships for many years to come -- which means asking for financial resources to enable us to do this. This year, we need to restructure the site placement subsidy. Instead of subsidizing the cost of a site placement fee, we request that FFA considers our proposal to support the entire cost of fellowship *position* at an aging site minus the investment made by the site placement. We believe that this new funding model will provide QVS with financial security to be able to focus on our fellowship experience, and in doing so widen the pool of potential site placements.

The following chart outlines a more complete picture of the costs of a QVS Fellowship position, FriendshipWorks investment over the last three years, and FFA's financial support. This year, we request funding for the Remainder Costs per Fellow and the Site Subsidy, in the total amount of \$18,000.

	Cost / Fellow	Site Placement Fee	Remainder Costs / Fellow	FriendshipWorks Investment	Site Subsidy from FFA	Total FFA Grant
<b>FY20</b>	\$29,700	\$17,000	\$12,700	\$10,000	\$7,000	\$22,000 (for two site placements)
<b>FY21</b>	\$29,100*	\$17,500	\$11,600	\$10,000	\$7,500	\$0 (used rollover funds)
<b>FY22</b>	\$29,500*	\$18,000	\$11,500	\$11,500	\$6,500	\$18,000

*\* In non-COVID program years, the cost per Fellow would typically increase each year. However, due to the lack of in-person programming and travel our expenses were lower.*

### **Sharing & Replicating Results**

We have been very impressed by this partnership, and have considered reaching out to other foundations to test the idea of similar subsidies for other nonprofit fields. QVS works with organizations providing healthcare to young adults experiencing homelessness; environmental justice agencies; after school and educational programs; groups combating oppression; organizations supporting immigrants; and so many more types of organizations. We would love to have the opportunity to partner with smaller, “scrappier” organizations for whom the \$18,000 site placement fee is impossible. This means administrative (development) staff investing time to *shift* a revenue stream. This shift involves moving from a simple contract and fee with site placements to conversations with funders, foundations, nonprofits, and City Coordinators will take time and energy, but we are very interested in replicating our relationship with FFA elsewhere.

We imagine Friends across the country would be curious to learn about this intersection of young adult vocation and services for aging adults. We would be delighted to collaborate with FFA in writing a piece for Friends Journal to share about this partnership. Furthermore, we would be happy to be introduced to individuals or grantmakers that you would recommend we meet.