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**i. Executive Summary -include amount requested, brief summary of problem, objectives and plan (theory of change). Maximum 100 words.**

YSOP seeks a grant of \$30,000 for support of our **Connex** program, an intergenerational service program that creates meaningful, virtual group conversations between young people and seniors living in their homes and residents of senior living communities. The grant will enable us to engage seniors and youth from underserved communities in the NY/PA/NJ area in virtual conversations and consider bringing some participants together for in-person service projects. We will encourage duplication of **Connex** and other intergenerational programs. YSOP is uniquely situated to promote intergenerational service programs because of our 38-year history engaging young people in service and our wide contacts.

**ii. Brief statement of the organization's history and competence for this effort. In order to advance equity, please include a description of the diversity of your organization's leadership staff, board and people served. Maximum 100 words.**

Started in 1983 by AFSC, YSOP has engaged over 80,000 youth serving over 6 million people in need, overwhelmingly people of color. We have a wide network of schools and youth groups that have participated in YSOP Workcamps. In response to the pandemic, in October 2020 we started an intergenerational project connecting students and senior citizens over zoom. This past school year, we hosted 150 students and 120 seniors in 90 hours of virtual conversations. Our board is composed of 8 people, 50% women and 20% people of color. Our staff is 9 people, 66% women, 10% people of color and 33% LBGTQ+.

### iii. Project details- Maximum 5 pages.

#### 1. What problem are you addressing? Evidence of needs, why this solution chosen/evidence, description of community and people to be served.

Before the pandemic, YSOP introduced youth to volunteer service by using young people to serve in soup kitchens, food pantries and other agencies serving people neglected by society. Our focus was on helping youth put a human face to a serious problem through direct, hands-on service. Now with COVID such work is not possible. However, YSOP has found a way to continue this vital work safely to show young people that they can still personally improve things in their community. YSOP launched a new program called YSOP **Connex** that facilitates virtual group conversations between young people and seniors. Both groups have been hit hard by the isolation that came with the pandemic, and we believe these programs are mutually beneficial to both the seniors and youth participants looking to engage in their community.

YSOP **Connex** has two goals: Youth, now with limited options for service activities, can participate in outreach to a community that is one of the most affected by COVID-19; Seniors, with reduced connections for much of the last year, can socialize and help young people cope with the challenges from the pandemic.

According to the National Council on Aging, the effects of COVID isolation may be particularly acute among older adults in long-term care facilities, as outlined in an AARP report that suggests feelings of loneliness, abandonment, despair, and fear among residents. Seniors are urged to stay connected with their families and communities as much as possible and try to set a regular time on a weekly basis to connect with people via phone, email or video chat. While restrictions are being lifted, in person activities in senior living facilities still have restrictions in place. **Connex** can help fill this void as a virtual program. When it is safe to do so, **Connex** will also provide opportunities for small groups of senior and students to participate in in-person service projects together, taking the intergenerational connection one step further.

YSOP **Connex** will operate largely in the NY, PA and NJ areas although with internet capabilities we can draw participants from almost any location. Since many of our senior contacts are in Westchester County NY here is some information about seniors in the County:

*Some 193,000 people age 60 and over live in Westchester County, or about one in five residents. This number will rise dramatically as the baby boomers age. People age 85 and older are the county's fastest growing sector of the senior population. Study after study shows that more than 90 percent of older adults want to continue to live in their homes as they age. Between 1990 and 2000, there was a jump of almost 25 percent in the 85 and older population – the group who most needs services to remain in their home communities. More than a quarter of seniors, mostly women, live alone. And, about 9,000 seniors live below the poverty level, with over 37,000 senior households having less than the income needed to afford the median rent.*

With a grant from FFA we intend to reach out to underserved communities in Westchester. We will welcome **Connex** student participants from a diverse group of middle and high schools,

colleges, community youth organizations and religious groups in the NY/PA/NJ area. Many of these student groups have participated in YSOP programs over the years and are eager to continue with the **Connex** program.

With the pandemic still very much with us, this kind of intergenerational connection will be even more important. We believe these interactions broaden youth perspectives and can inspire them to continue participating in service activities as they become adults. For seniors it is an opportunity to pass on to young people their experiences and advice.

## **2. What action(s) will you do?**

In YSOP **Connex** we make connections between senior citizens and students. Our highly skilled staff members facilitate meaningful, intergenerational connections between youth, residents of senior living communities and seniors in their homes.

A FFA grant will enable us to engage seniors and youth from underserved communities in the NY/PA/NJ area in virtual conversations and in person service projects when it is safe to do so.

Our series of **Connex** virtual conversations involve 4 seniors, 5 students and a YSOP facilitator meeting once a week for one hour for 3 consecutive weeks over Zoom. The conversations are guided by trained staff members who guide the group with a series of questions and topics that progress with each week. Our carefully developed program allows space for the conversations to move in a direction that feels comfortable and of interest to the participants. This fluid program model allows the group to cover a wide scope of topics, ranging in interests from historical perspectives to current events.

Here are two reactions from participants:

*“It was great to have conversations with groups of young people! Using Zoom during this pandemic, we were still able to communicate our experiences as adults and they were able to tell us how they, as young people, envision their future. YSOP has been able, even in these trying times, to keep the door open to communication and conversations that are needed. As elders it was interesting and fun to share our experiences and show younger people examples of their future possibilities.”* – adult **Connex** participant

*“It was really nice talking to people outside of school and my family. It was really great hearing their side of the story about what they have been going through during this difficult time. I was there, and others, to talk to them, and keep them company. It was really so nice to just get to have a conversation with someone I didn't know, and get to hear their story, and along the way also become friends.”* – high school **Connex** participant

Our in-person service projects will host 4 seniors and 5 youth together for 3 hours at a senior living facility for a hands-on activity benefiting the community. Activities may include assembling food donations for pantries and making birthday celebration boxes for children living in shelters, elderly residents of nursing homes, and single mothers. Participants for these one-day projects may have recently finished a **Connex** virtual session and would like to strengthen the

intergenerational connection through a shared service experience. In-person service projects will be open to seniors and youth who may not be able to participate in a **Connex** virtual experience as well.

Effective service for young people still requires time for orientation, supervision, and reflection. YSOP **Connex** virtual and in-person programs will provide participants with orientation to promote safety, clarify expectations and deepen understanding. Reflection is critical to the overall meaning of the immersion experience and its relation to students' everyday lives. After their service work, youth and senior participants will share impressions of their experience with their peers.

A FFA grant will allow us to hold 48 virtual (144 sessions) and 15 in person programs over the course of the grant cycle. Staff time will also be used for program planning – participant outreach and recruitment, marketing, and program evaluation. We will also spend significant amount of time promoting **Connex** to our network of schools and youth groups.

We will also hold a series of virtual conversations with **Connex** senior citizen participants to gain valuable feedback, helping to strengthen the program moving forward. Based on our first feedback session, we were able to hear about successes and challenges, and establish new program topics for the next series of sessions.

### **3. What other organizations will you partner with on this project?**

Throughout YSOP's 30-year history, our programs have been successful because of the value we place on community partnerships. We have a strong background in identifying, securing, nurturing, and maintaining over 35 active partners a year in both our Washington, DC and New York locations.

For the **Connex** program we will have the following partners in the NY/PA/NJ area:

Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, Council of Seniors in Westchester, Senior residences such as Kendal on Hudson, Medford Leas, Foulkways, the Bristol, the Wartburg Residences in Mt. Vernon NY, senior programs such as SPRY in Rye, New York, Council for Aging on Martha's Vineyard, Pelham NY Seniors Club.

Youth groups: Youth Bureaus in Yonkers and Ossining NY, Schools such as Pelham High School, Loyola School, Iona Prep, Mary McDowell Friends School in Brooklyn, Friends Academy on Long Island, Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, George School in Newtown PA, Sandy Spring Friends School in MD, and many former YSOP participant school, college, religious and community groups.

Friends Groups: Purchase Friends Meeting, NYYM ARCH Program, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Youth programs, FGC Quaker Youth programs.

Possible in person service sites for intergenerational service projects: The Wartburg, Brooklyn soup kitchens, HOPE soup kitchen and social service program in New Rochelle.

#### **4. What outputs (measurable, specific) do you expect?**

During the grant period, we will engage 252 seniors and 315 youth participants in 48 virtual **Connex** programs and 15 in person **Connex** programs, totaling 189 hours of service.

We expect four significant outcomes as a result of our **Connex** programs. First, 80% of the senior citizens participating will report on a survey that they take satisfaction with their experience. Second, as determined by student surveys, 70 % of youth participants will increase their knowledge of the challenges and joys of aging and senior citizens and increase their commitment to service work in their own communities. Third, we expect 90% of senior and youth participants will feel more connected to people outside of their home. Fourth, we anticipate 85 % of seniors and 75% of students will want to participate in the program again.

We expect to make 25 presentations to schools and youth groups to encourage them to try intergenerational programs with mutual benefits to youth and seniors.

#### **5. What outcomes do you expect? What change will occur, what impact will it have?**

We are encouraged by the overwhelming level of interest from both seniors and students to participate in our **Connex** virtual program. Through program evaluations conducted this past year, we have discovered the program is mutually beneficial to seniors and youth. Participants made meaningful and enjoyable intergenerational connections at a time of isolation and uncertainty. Youth talked to people with a range of experience and interests beyond their immediate communities. Seniors provided much needed perspective, insight, sense of comfort and calm to youth participants trying to navigate so many new and unknown situations. We expect the same results as we continue with the program.

YSOP believes this type of intergenerational connection is the new landscape for youth volunteer engagement for the foreseeable future. **Connex** virtual programs will be important over the next year as many seniors and students will still feel uncomfortable engaging in in-person activities.

There are few intergenerational programs like **Connex** where seniors and youth can contribute equally to the program. Both participant groups share in the experience as a service provider and a program recipient.

#### **6. How will you measure outputs and outcomes? Both quantitative and qualitative.**

Immediately following each **Connex** set of sessions, YSOP receives evaluations measuring both qualitative and quantitative outcomes from several sources. YSOP asks each youth and senior participant to evaluate his or her experience through a 10-question evaluation form. Our staff also speak with seniors and the adult coordinator of the student groups at the conclusion of each program. In addition, the YSOP Facilitators file written reports on their programs and provide anecdotal feedback.

Statistically, YSOP measures the effectiveness of **Connex** programs by tracking the number of students, their schools and church groups and the number of senior citizens participating. YSOP prepares a statistical report at the end of each **Connex** set of sessions.

For in person service projects, in addition to getting participant feedback, staff will also contact the partnering service site staff to get their evaluations of the service work performed.

For outreach to replicate intergenerational projects we will tabulate the contacts we have with groups and follow up to see what projects they consider.

## **7. How will you sustain the project after the grant period?**

YSOP expects to continue the **Connex** program after the FFA grant seeking multiple sources of support. First, we have a base of over 700 financial donors who have contributed to our programs over the 38 years we have existed. They include 50 people who have made significant gifts. We will continue to ask for their support and have recently appointed a volunteer Development Coordinator to facilitate these contacts. Second, we have had some foundation support and will seek other groups to solicit their grants. Third, we have received contracts from the government of Westchester County for our **Connex** program which we believe will be renewed. We will also seek support from New York state and New York City agencies. Fourth, as we demonstrate the value of the **Connex** program we expect our program participation fees will increase.

We will suggest a fee to school and religious groups as well as retirement communities where these institutions can afford it. With our previous Workcamp program such fees accounted for about a third of our income.

## **8. How will your results be shared and replicated?**

YSOP staff and Facilitators meet monthly to discuss the program and the evaluations by different sources. This information is used to make appropriate changes to the program, if needed. YSOP's Board of Directors also evaluates YSOP programs five times per year.

To share and possibly replicate **Connex**, we will use the Quaker Youth worker network, NYYM ARCH program, Westchester County Youth bureau and Next stage Aging Network as well as our network of contacts with schools and youth groups.

Outside of this grant, we are positioned to replicate the **Connex** program in DC metro area given our extensive list of partnerships made during the last 18 years leading service programs in the DC/VA/MD area.

## **9. How does this project fit with Friends Foundation values?**

Our project aligns with the Foundation's goals in the following areas:

- Aging adults in underserved communities in PA/NJ/NY
- Address equity, justice and inclusion
- Intergenerational learning
- Mutual benefit for both groups of participants
- Collaboration with other nonprofits for hybrid program model

**10. Attach project budget and timeline, including other sources of support, budget narrative.**

**Budget Narrative**

The funds requested will cover staffing, staff trainings, participant recruitment, marketing, and evaluation, COVID safety measures and administrative costs.

**A. Personnel**

**Executive Director Salary for Connex time \$4000**

**Executive Director** oversees the program and spends 45% of time hiring, recruiting, training and supervising staff, conducting participant outreach, and building and maintaining community partnerships.

**Community Engagement Director for Conex time Salary \$3000**

**Community Engagement Director** coordinates the program and spends 80% of time coordinating youth participants, managing Facilitators, compiling statistics and permission forms and evaluation forms, conducting youth participant outreach and program set up.

**In- person program Facilitators Salaries \$3750**

Trained YSOP staff facilitators will lead the group of seniors and youth for in-person service programs. 2 staff per program @125 each, 15 programs total.

**Virtual program Facilitators Salaries \$7200**

Trained YSOP staff facilitator will lead the virtual programs. 1 staff per program @150 each, 48 programs total.

**Staff Development \$1800**

Monthly staff meetings and trainings

**B. OTPS (Other than personnel salaries)**

**Supplies \$6200**

Supplies for in person service programs will include a YSOP t-shirt for every participant, food and bags for pantry bundles, and supplies for celebration boxes which may contain: box, art and craft materials, all food and equipment supplies to bake cake/cupcakes, small toy, slippers/socks, coloring books, wellness items for women, candles, tea and mug, blanket.

**Travel \$500**

YSOP will cover the cost of Facilitator travel to and from in-person service projects. Estimated \$35/program for 15 programs.

**Copying/Printing \$500**

Program follow up during in person programs consists of participants completing an evaluation at the conclusion of the program.

**Office Supplies \$100**

Printer ink, paper, etc. as needed.

**Postage \$150**

Postage to mail questionnaires, notices etc.

**Zoom Service \$600**

Yearly license subscription

**Insurance \$2000**

**Miscellaneous \$200**

### **Other sources of funds**

To support YSOP operations and **Connex** programming, we expect to receive grants again this year from the following: \$60,000 from the County of Westchester, \$10,000 each from the Harding Foundation and the Rosenthal Foundation, \$2,000 from the Lindley Murray Fund, \$5,000 from New York Yearly Meeting and \$1,000 each from Summit Rock Advisors and the Sybil Berkman Foundation.

YSOP also estimates we will raise \$31,000 in individual donations as we did last year.

### **Timeline**

The timeline for this grant is our fiscal year, October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022. We plan to hold 48 virtual Connex programs and 15 in person programs over the course of the grant period. Virtual programs will begin in October and run every month. If it is safe to do so, we will hold in-person programs beginning in late October and run every month.



**Friends Foundation for the Aging Funding Proposal**  
**YSOP October 2021-September 2022**

Item	Description	Amount
Program participant outreach, recruitment, coordination, planning and evaluation	senior staff @ \$50/hr. staff @ \$30/hr.	7000
Connex in person program staff Facilitators	2 staff/program @ \$125/program, 15 programs	3750
Connex Virtual program staff Facilitators	1 staff/program @ \$150 x 48 programs (144 virtual sessions)	7200
Staff Development	Staff trainings and monthly meetings, \$25/staff x 6 staff	1800
Supplies for in person service programs	materials for celebration boxes for children, seniors and single mothers	5000
YSOP T shirts for participants in person programs		1200
Travel		500
Copying, printing		500
Office supplies		100
Postage		150
Zoom service		600
Insurance		2000
Misc		200
<b>Total</b>		<b>30000</b>