



March 14, 2022

Ms. Susan W. Hoskins, LCSW  
Executive Director  
Friends Foundation for the Aging  
PO Box 1081  
Langhorne, PA 19047

Via email: [info@friendsfoundationaging.org](mailto:info@friendsfoundationaging.org)

Dear Susan,

Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey (LSMNJ) requests a grant in the amount of \$7,300 to purchase supplies for a fully functioning garden and outdoor gathering area at Lutheran Senior Residence at Pennsauken (LSP).

There are multiple problems that can be addressed through this community garden including alleviating social isolation, addressing food insecurity, and presenting opportunities for intergenerational interactions and community involvement through volunteerism.

During the COVID pandemic, the residents of LSP were confined to their apartments with little, if any, in-person interactions with others. Although LSMNJ continued to stay in touch with our residents, insuring they had food and assistance when necessary, this time period highlighted the stresses of social isolation.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, loneliness and social isolation in older adults are serious public health risks affecting a significant number of people leaving them at risk for dementia and other serious medical conditions. A community garden, inviting residents, family members and community members to gather, would provide an avenue to address social isolation. And having seen the success of our gardens in Mt. Olive, we recognize the benefits a community garden in Pennsauken can provide.

LSMNJ has established a partnership with Temple Lutheran Church, also in Pennsauken, that has a food pantry that the greater community can access. Our goal is to share the fresh herbs and vegetables with the food pantry which would enable us to reach a larger number of people. Our partnership includes inviting the congregants and youth group of Temple Lutheran to take part in the prepping, planting and maintenance of the gardens. We envision the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and skills that are mutually beneficial and foster positive long-term relationships with different generations.

LSP offers 70 units to those 62 and older whose financial capacity falls below government guidelines to qualify for HUD housing. The vast majority of our residents are Latinex with English as a second

language. There are also several African-American residents. LSMNJ does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin or sexual orientation.

LSMNJ prides itself on offering affordable homes rather than simply housing. We strive to provide opportunities to expand the social opportunities of our residents. A food pantry was established in 2020 to help insure the LSP residents have access to non-perishable food. This garden will expand those offerings to include fresh herbs and vegetables.

The pandemic has magnified many already existing social problems. In order to adequately address these problems, the opportunity to help must present itself. This garden provides exactly that opportunity. With the initial prepping and planting of the gardens and beds, we will invite the Temple Lutheran youth group and other church members to take part. We will continue that relationship through our contact at the food pantry to allow for a deeper, long-term connection.

If fully funded, LSMNJ will use this grant to purchase raised beds which will be accessible to those with mobility issues. Tools, seeds and plants, along with furniture to create an outdoor gathering space for residents and guests will be purchased.

We will prepare the beds and the grounds for planting and organize community days when others can come to tend the gardens and reap the benefits. Along with employees of LSMNJ, Temple Lutheran, residents and their families, we are certain we will be able to prepare the gardens for great success. These opportunities will remain in place throughout the growing season, allowing for long-term interactions.

This outdoor area will address each physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual purpose. Gardening can be wonderful exercise and provides nutritional food. That gathering of all ages provides a phenomenal social opportunity and learning about gardening and the many ways to utilize the produce.

FFA has helped LSM in the past with our Mt. Olive property, for which we remain very grateful. This project is a bit different in that we intend to add community, intergenerational and food pantry aspects. Once the initial investment is made, future years of gardening will be incorporated into the activities budget of LSMNJ and LSP.

Based on the interest expressed by our residents and the success of similar programs in other LSMNJ properties, we are confident it will encourage participation by residents and increase a general sense of accomplishment and social opportunities so important for this population.

Success will be measured by the number of residents and volunteers who take part, as well as the number of herbs and vegetables given out. We would appreciate and welcome a visit from representatives of Friends Foundation for the Aging at any stage of the process.

BUDGET:

Raised beds, stabilizers, tools	\$3,550
Soil, seeds / plants	\$1,500
Patio furniture	\$2,000
Administrative	\$250

Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey has several affordable housing properties that have active gardening groups. The enjoyment residents gain from these programs grows each year. The initial cost of this project cannot be covered within this year's budget, however; once the program has been properly established, the upkeep and ongoing costs have been incorporated into the activity's budgets, as with other properties, making this project sustainable into the future.

We believe our garden project aligns with FFA's values and thank you for the consideration of this very worthy project. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Alison Lauck  
Vice President, Philanthropy

\*signed electronically