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## Friends Foundation for the Aging – Lutheran Settlement House LOI

Lutheran Settlement House’s (LSH) Senior Community Center is one of our core programs, which all aim to support the whole person and their family at times of transition, and provide them with the tools they need to not only survive, but thrive. We are respectfully requesting a grant of \$35,000 from the Friends Foundation for the Aging to support our Senior Community Center programming.

Our Senior Community Center focuses on the health and wellbeing of low-income older adults from the Fishtown, Kensington, Port Richmond, and Frankford neighborhoods, areas that are at once rapidly gentrifying and deeply working class. Our members have lived in these neighborhoods their whole lives, and have seen the city change around them—growing more expensive and less accessible. LSH’s Senior Community Center is an oasis of support for older adults in the area, providing them with meals and groceries, daily activities including bingo, movies, arts and crafts, and exercise classes, as well as technology tutoring, counseling, and workshops on pain and illness management. These services all aim to promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our Community Center members, so that they can age safely at home for as long as possible.

As our program continues to expand and develop, we have realized that many members of the “Baby Boomer Generation,” those born between 1946 and 1964, view themselves differently than their older counterparts. Many Baby Boomers have retained more active lifestyles, and do not consider themselves “senior citizens,”—maintaining different interests, desires, and abilities in retirement. In order to engage more Baby Boomers in our programming, we are looking toward the next phase of what a “Senior Community Center” can look like. In recent conversations with some of these “younger older adults,” they have expressed interest in active classes and volunteer opportunities at LSH so that they can give back to their communities. We strive for the Senior Community Center to be a welcoming, engaging environment for all aging adults, where they can focus on mental self-care and activities, develop strategies for healthy aging at home, and maintain social ties and community to combat isolation.

We are currently re-branding the Senior Community Center as part of our organization-wide strategic plan, in an effort to engage older adults of all ages. This process, funded through a partnership with the NextFifty Initiative, incorporates the voices and opinions of our current Senior Community Center members, staff, and potential future members, so that we can create an inclusive space. As we continue this process, we are seeking funding so that our program offerings can keep pace with our engagement of new members and volunteers. In this expansion, we hope to create a bi-weekly support group for our members to discuss their concerns, challenges, and successes in a collaborative environment, and also bring in more external instructors for a broader range of activities including music and art therapy workshops, cooking and nutrition classes, and exercise classes. LSH Senior Services programming is evaluated through post-activity surveys, and we collect and evaluate demographic data for all programs.

The Senior Community Center budget is \$464,211, which is broken down into staff salaries, program costs such as supplies, printing, and technology, and administrative and building costs. We look forward to building a relationship with the Foundation, so that together we can create a healthier, more equitable world for older adults of all backgrounds.

