

YSOP Mid-year conversation 4.5.22

Ed Doty, John Cooley, Susan

Project: CONNEX Intergenerational programs to increase awareness and connection.

After several decades of supporting teen service projects with a goal of intergenerational connectedness, YSOP had to pivot during the pandemic. They focused on intergenerational connections over zoom, with a few in-person sessions. They were surprised how much both the seniors and students enjoyed these, as evidenced by them signing up for additional sessions (blocks of 3 conversations). They are excited to have their first Chinese-language session next week in NYC and eager to return to in-person sessions. One advantage of virtual was being able to connect people living far from each other. Challenges include students and seniors missing sessions and inaccessibility for those without zoom skills.

The structure of this organization is somewhat puzzling. Dmitri find students through schools or youth groups. Ed finds seniors through personal contacts and some senior communities in PA, NY, MD, VA, NB, VT, MA. Many participating groups are not Quaker. They rely on government funding, donors and grants. While they used to charge fees for the service, Ed feels that service learning is fading from fashion. Ed plans to retire in 2023 and they need new facilitators and board members. There is no solid sustainability plan.

Ed asked again for contacts to expand the program, and we again gave him Friends Home & Village. It is not clear that schools with service learning objective would outsource this opportunity.