

ARCH Report to FFA 2021-2022

1. What problem were you addressing? What solution did you propose to address it?

Many Friends in NYYM do not have adequate access to the support we all need to thrive (or even survive) as older and differently abled people. Our part of the solution is to facilitate access to support through our Quaker communities, which themselves need support to thrive. We focus on four areas: **Advocacy** with the larger world and with those we are in community with, **Love** - Deepening supportive intergenerational relationships, **Vulnerability** - Growing in our capacity to trust each other and to be worthy of trust and, **Joy** - Transforming what too often is experienced as diminishment, burdensome, shameful, less than, or undesirable about growing old into an embrace of the gifts and opportunities of being an older person.

2. What actions did you take? What worked and didn't work toward your objectives? Please share any unanticipated benefits or barriers encountered.

We offered workshops and ongoing support to volunteers and Quaker communities. Since revising our core offering, the ARCH Foundations Workshop in early 2021, we have offered it once more in the Fall/Winter of 2021 with a group of 15 Friends participating. Plans to offer the Foundations Workshop in the Spring of 2022 were canceled due to lack of enrollment. With the additional time not spent presenting the workshop the group of facilitators has taken time to continue to refine and revise the curriculum. We also brought in an additional facilitator, collaborating and bringing them into the workshop design process with the intention to have the ARCH Director take a more administrative role, and expand our staff capacity for facilitation and workshop design.

Since our last report in September of 2021, we offered an additional seven topical workshops including one which was offered for a group outside of NYYM (Durham Friends) and five of which were facilitated by ARCH Coordinators or outside presenters. 104 Friends participated in these additional workshops. These workshops were on Exploring Spirituality and Dementia, End of Life Planning, Aging in Place in Community, Life Transitions, Change as Opportunity: Coping and Adapting, Healing from Loss: Grief and Love, and Aging Gracefully From the 2/3 to the 3/3 of Life.

Attendance at online workshops and gatherings can be erratic, sometimes events are well attended and sometimes few come. This may be due in part to pervasive "Zoom fatigue". We are hearing from Friends a deep longing to be in community, and simultaneously a sense of isolation and disconnection. The difficulty of connecting deeply with spirit in an online format may be in part to blame. We look forward to learning more about how this is affecting Friends generally, and the ARCH Network in particular.

3. How did you measure success--both quantitative and qualitative? Please include numbers and demographics of people touched by the work.

In addition to the numbers indicated above, our workshops received uniformly above-average to excellent evaluations from participants. Some participant comments include: "This expanded my horizons and helped me see, yet again, that the present moments with my

ARCH Report to FFA 2021-2022

mom are precious. And they are all we have.” “I didn't fully understand why I was feeling apprehensive about returning to in-person Meeting - this helped a lot!” “It opened my eyes to biases, including my own, and made me ponder ideas of human worth and rights.”

We achieved our goal of maintaining our current number of Friends active in the ARCH Network in NYYM, approximately 130.

We are continuing in our intention to adapt our ARCH workshop to new modalities as a multi-year undertaking. In July of 2021 we offered a workshop called “ARCH Into Housing: Where Will I Live as I Grow Older” that was entirely online and asynchronous utilizing the Google Classroom platform. Participants accessed daily readings and queries over the course of a week, but could engage the readings and prompts whenever suited their schedule. Participants could also respond and see one another’s responses. 28 Friends asked to participate, 26 accessed the online classroom and about 14 engaged with the platform and the prompts themselves. Some unknown number read the materials but didn’t respond on the platform. Some participants would have liked using this modality in conjunction with a live video component.

4. How did partnerships/collaborations enhance or challenge the project?

In collaboration with Powell House Retreat Center we developed a series of [workshops and gatherings](#) designed for those [Friends in the 2/3rd](#) or “middle age” of life. While meeting this goal related to a multi-generational approach, we also learned a great deal about the particular needs and interests of this age group. We learned about their capacity to access Quaker meetings and the relationships in those meetings, and their hopes and concerns about their own future as older Friends and for our Quaker communities. We anticipate developing a fuller report on the learnings of this experiment, and some of the participants’ thoughts on the future of Quakerism can be found [here](#).

Our experiment in cross-yearly meeting collaboration is finally launching this summer with New England Yearly Meeting. While NEYM has begun the search process for their Coordinator position, NYYM is developing a written agreement between yearly meetings that will articulate the details of responsibilities and expectations for the collaboration. We anticipate providing a fuller report on this collaboration next year.

5. Include a budget and actual for the project during the reporting period.

	2021 Budget	2021 Actual
Funding Source		
Grants (FFA + Private Foundation)	64,000.00	74,000.00
Contributions Designated to Aging Concerns	20,000.00	25,457.42
Other Sources (Products and Services Contributions)	1,000.00	1,688.00
Total	85,000.00	101,145.42
Expense		

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Staff Salary and Hourly Wages	89,259.00	88,768.61
Payroll Taxes	9,354.00	5,799.21
Health Insurance	18,876.00	16,554.53
Pension	3,247.00	3,379.85
Travel and Administration	3,500.00	2,525.64
Program Expenses	200.00	500.00
Total	124,436.00	117,527.84
Funds		
Margaret Dietrich Fund (Aging Concerns Invested Trust)	5,000.00	4,573.00
Balance From NYYM Operations	34,436.00	11,809.42

6. What conversations have you had on how to sustain the project after the grant, and do you have plans to share your results with other organizations?

While the ARCH Program is now deeply integrated into the life of NYYM, our organization continues to live with an uncertain financial future, dependent on the giving patterns of meeting communities and individual Friends. Without the support of FFA, the ARCH Program would face significant cut-backs, but would likely remain in some diminished fashion. However, Friends continue to give generously to the ARCH Program's designated fund, indicating a good level of support among individual Friends.

We are optimistic that our collaboration with NEYM will be a model for sharing our learnings with other yearly meetings and Friends more broadly. At this point our online offerings are available to Friends anywhere, and Friends often contribute to participate in these online offerings, particularly if they belong to other Friends communities outside of NYYM.

7. Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful. How have we helped? Made it harder? What else can we do to facilitate your work?

Our mid-year call and other periodic communication always helps to focus and clarify our big picture plans and projects, and help us to feel more connected. This year the "Convening" of Friends from other organizations serving older Quakers was particularly inspiring, and helped to make what we hope will be some valuable connections. We would welcome more gatherings like this.

8. Additional comments:

Thank you!