

YSOP REPORT ON FFA GRANT

These questions should echo the ones asked in the Letter of Intent and grant proposal, so you can be brief.

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

We created the Connex program in direct response to the pandemic. Seniors and youth had been hit hard by the isolation that came with the pandemic. We felt Connex could provide opportunities for both seniors and youth to transcend their isolation and engage in their communities.

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

Through our virtual and in-person programs youth reached out to people deeply affected by COVID-19. Seniors, isolated for much of the year, welcomed interaction with students and built new connections. Crossing generational lines provided access to new perspectives and knowledge that we have seen can change lives in unexpected ways.

We have been very successful at being flexible in dealing with the pandemic. Connex works with two groups that had a lot of restrictions during this pandemic. We had to put our in-person programs on hold in the winter as people were starting to isolate once again. We offered more virtual programs during this time. We then saw a greater interest in our in-person programs this summer while our virtual programming was not as popular. Also access to student groups over the summer was very difficult, causing us to suspend our virtual sessions.

With our two strong program models, we feel we can adapt very quickly to offer what works best for our participants at any given time.

The FFA grant enabled us to engage seniors and youth from underserved communities in the NY/PA/NJ area in virtual conversations. As people felt comfortable, we were able to offer in-person service projects for small groups of young people and seniors. Participants came together to engage in a service project benefiting their community such as making no-sew blankets for youth residing in shelters.

Based on feedback from both seniors and youth we were able to shift the focus of our virtual conversations to move beyond pandemic related topics. Groups discussed a wide range of subjects including career choices, the meaning of service, communication, definition of community and generational stereotypes. We continue to check in with our participants to ensure our programming is relevant and beneficial to both groups.

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

We evaluated our success by measuring both quantitative and qualitative activities. Quantitatively, YSOP measured the effectiveness of its programs by tracking the number of participants and their hours of participation. For qualitative evaluations the YSOP staff filed written reports on each program and provided anecdotal feedback. We also held a zoom session for senior participants to get their reactions to their participation and suggestions for future work. This fall we are planning to seek feedback through a program evaluation form from both the youth and seniors involved in the programs. Both seniors and students consistently share positive reactions to both the virtual and in-person programs. We have many seniors and youth return for another program.

So far in the FFA grant cycle we have engaged 90 students and 72 seniors in 36 hours of virtual conversations , and 18 hours in 6 programs of in-person service projects. We also held our annual feedback workshop with Connex senior participants and staff. For the rest of the FFA grant cycle we expect to engage 150 students and 120 seniors in 48 hours of virtual conversations and 42 hours in 14 programs of in person service projects.

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

Partnerships have been crucial to the project. The youth partnerships were challenging because of school schedules needing to coordinate with seniors' availability and student participation at exam period or school vacation times. The senior participants were more reliable in attendance although illness sometimes led to absences. The biggest challenge for seniors in our virtual sessions was their need to have access to computers.

For youth groups we have worked with Pelham NY High School, White Plains High School, Pelham Together (a large youth group), Loyola School in Manhattan, Iona Prep in New Rochelle, Mary McDowell Friends School in Brooklyn (a school for students with learning disabilities), The Greenmount School in Baltimore MD, Sandy Spring School in MD, Poly Prep in Brooklyn. Before the close of the grant period, we expect to work with a home school group in Northern Westchester County NY, George School, Amni Public Charter School in Mt, Vernon NY (a school with mostly low-income African American students) and the Yonkers Youth Bureau.

For senior citizens we have greatly aided by the Westchester County Department of Senior Services staff who have opened doors to senior centers across the county. By the close of the grant period, we will have worked with centers in Pelham, New Rochelle, Lewisboro, Ardsley, White Plains and Yonkers. The Pelham Seniors Club has been very active in our in-person intergenerational service projects. We have drawn participants for our virtual Connex sessions from senior residences including Gouverneur Skilled Nursing Facility in NYC (part of the NY public hospitals serving low income Hispanic and Chinese Americans), Kendal on Hudson, Medford Leas, Foulkways, and Baltimore Friends Home. By the end of the grant period, we expect to contact Friends Home and Village and Chandler Hall in Newtown PA. We also had participating seniors living independently in Vermont, NY, Mass, NJ and PA. The NYYM Meetings, especially Purchase Friends Meeting have been great partners.

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

See attached

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?

In addition to our plans to continue soliciting contributions from our base of 700 donors, we expect to have our contract for Connex renewed by Westchester County. We are meeting with various County legislators and officials to report on our progress. We are also discussing with NY State Senators and Assembly members about including Connex in the NY state budget. Such requests are made in January with the state budget finalized in March. If we are included in the budget the funds will come next summer. A second grant from FFA will help us wait for these funds. Finally, we are approaching some local foundations, civic organizations and Friends Meetings that have supported us in the past to seek their current support.

We plan to share our project results with the Westchester Council for Seniors, the Next Stage Aging Network, the Quaker Youth network and the NYYM ARCH program. We also share information on Connex on our website and through posting on various social media platforms.

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?

The application with its specific questions helped us clarify our objectives and plans. Susan Hoskins' initial comments were very helpful. We also sent materials to her as we progressed in the year and found her comments on the mid-year review very useful. She also suggested contacts for us to pursue. the FFA staff in no way made our project harder to realize. We could use suggestions about ways to share our results with a wider audience.

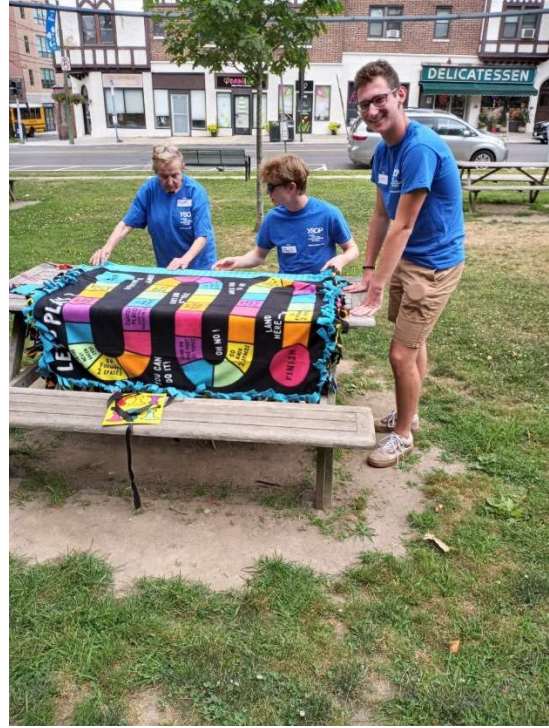
8. Additional comments:

With Connex we have learned a great deal about seniors living independently and what they can offer to young people in terms of life experiences. Also, we have found that young people and seniors enjoy working together on projects to benefit their communities. We have found that in many areas the fastest growing population of seniors is in folks over 80. Senior centers are having difficulty attracting people in their 60's and 70's. We want to try holding intergenerational service projects that target younger seniors and students to see if we can reach this important group.

Friends Foundation for the Aging Budget
YSOP January 2022 - December 2022

Item	Budget	Actual as of 9.15.2022	Project to end of grant
Program participant outreach, recruitment, coordination, planning and evaluation	7000	6500	10600
Connex in person program staff Facilitators	3750	1800	5000
Connex Virtual program staff Facilitators	7200	1800	4200
Staff Development	1800	375	950
Supplies for in person service programs	5000	1500	4500
YSOP T shirts for participants in person programs	1200	600	600
Travel	500	100	500
Copying, printing	500	500	500
Office supplies	100	100	100
Postage	150	100	200
Zoom service	600	600	600
Insurance	2000	2000	2000
Misc	200	250	250
Total	30000	16225	30000

Creating meaningful, intergenerational connections



YSOP Connex Testimonials

"YSOP has been able, even in these trying times, to keep the door open to communication and conversations that are needed." -Connex Senior Participant

"During the past many months we have been living very quietly "safer at home." This YSOP program gave us a chance to communicate with some thoughtful students and talk with them about their experiences going to school online and their living through this very disruptive time of Covid 19. Our zoom calls were rewarding, full of vitality and we appreciated the students' leadership and our many positive interactions!"— Connex senior participant

"YSOP provides a unique opportunity for seniors and teens to build a community based on trust, openness, curiosity, and empathy. During the past two years, we often found ourselves becoming more inwardly focused. YSOP is very much outwardly-focused and fosters a cross-generational dialogue that is both meaningful and enriching." - Connex senior 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." – Connex high school participant

"The Connex program was truly one of the highlights of my weeks from last year. Interacting and talking with the seniors was always fun and educational. I would love to be a part of any group that is held. Thank you!" - Connex student participant

"I learned about the couples situations with covid and how their lives has changed, both negative and positive. Overall, I can't wait for my next session, where we share an item that is significant to us, either representing the past, present, or future!" - Connex high school participant

"For our final session, we really connected with the elderly couple on the call, since we've known them by now. We asked what service meant to each of us and what we want to be when we all get older / what they did in their lives career wise. Overall, I had an amazing time, as usual, and really made a relationship with this couple. I hope I can do much more service for YSOP in the future!!!" - Connex high school participant

"I really enjoyed my three sessions getting to know them and hear their different opinions and interests. I believe it to be Christian service because I was able to have direct contact with the seniors who have not been able to get out much with the pandemic. I really enjoyed the experience and the conversations we had. I would love to participate in the program again and look into other programs where I can directly chat with people because it is hard during these times." - Connex high school participant

"I was introduced to this organization and community at the start of the school year, and since then I have been a part of several different groups. They have each been amazingly fun and meaningful but I have to say, my favorite thing about the sessions has been meeting all the new people and hearing their stories. Overall, it has been an unforgettable experience and I'm glad I could be a part of it." - Connex high school participant

"A unique opportunity to connect with teens and discuss outlooks and perceptions. Other than our grandchildren, this is a group we don't ordinarily interact with. We enjoyed this enriching experience." -Connex senior participant