

I. Executive Summary – Support for Quaker Aging Resources.

Proposed Budget: \$28,275

There are over 4,000 members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) retirement-age and older, between the ages of 61 to over 90. PYM has a commitment to sharing resources and support for this population, and a vital part of this is the website for Quaker Aging Resources (**QAR**) <http://www.quakeragingresources.org/>. However, the site needs to be updated with a more current and accessible design, the content needs to be revised and refreshed for a 2020's audience, and fresh promotion is then required to draw people to it. **QAR** is a source of great information and resources which could be enhanced through collaboration with yearly meetings throughout the United States as well as worldwide.

Through an intense collaborative project developed over ten years ago, 30 pamphlets and multiple articles were written and placed on **QAR**. During a Virtual Conversation with the new PYM Aging Support Coordinator on May 25, 2022, it was identified that Friends had not accessed **QAR** and were not aware of how to conduct searches on **QAR**. Its original intent was to serve as a source of materials for discussions, and resources for meetings. It was meant to be a lens on Quaker spirituality during aging. Through funding by the Friends Foundation on the Aging and Thomas Scattergood Foundation, this original intent will be enhanced to enable Friends, their families, local and quarterly meetings to gain knowledge and resources to serve aging Friends.

Due to COVID-19, many local meeting communities moved their worship into online spaces and worship for those aging in place was through Zoom. Aging concerns were identified by a close Friend or family member, rather than face to face fellowship or outreach. Concerns about health, resources, and planning long term care often were delayed during the pandemic due to aged Friends inability to access information available on **QAR**. The pandemic brought into sharper focus the needs of the aging community, and how **QAR** might serve them.

In today's world, the visual message is accessed with greater speed and understanding. Accessibility of web-based information is dependent on vision, cognition, ability to navigate on the website, font size, and overall ability to negotiate technology. The challenges these dependent factors present to the elderly, in addition to the core reason for searches on **QAR** – emotional support, ill health, and financial struggles – demonstrate the need to provide information in a broader, more accessible manner, which would include visual content and sound. In his July 2002 PYM Annual Sessions keynote, Dr. Jonathan Lazar [[Jonathan Lazar | MAVRIC \(umd.edu\)](#); [Jonathan Lazar - UMD College of Information Studies](#)] laid out accessibility concerns for the Quaker community. PYM staff met with Dr. Lazar following Annual Sessions to seek his input about **QAR** and he strongly recommended making the website accessibility compliant as outlined here: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/glance/>. Dr. Lazar was impressed by the caring concern of PYM about its aged members. He asked if the Aging Support Coordinator and Interim Communications Director would share some thoughts on a recording which he intended to use for his classes at UMD College of Information Studies. (See addendum for video recording.)

ii. Project Details.

We will contract technical specialists to ensure the video and web development are of professional quality.

Update the website design:

We will engage a web designer to update the site, so it is inviting and user-friendly, prioritizing current best practices and accessibility.

Develop fresh, engaging content:

It is PYM's intent to maintain the existing 30 pamphlets written by gerontologists, spiritual and direct care providers from PYM and New York Yearly Meeting, Aging Resources, Consultation and Help (ARCH). The updated design will include the addition of video content to address some of the needs in the seven areas of **QAR** (emotional and behavioral care, meaningful retirement, death and dying, physical health, housing/aging in place, spiritual/pastoral support, and financial matters).

The content will be generated in two ways:

- **Life Stories:** Record and edit videos from interviews with four PYM aged Friends in their own communities and meetings. Through highlighting the QAR pamphlet, <http://www.quakeragingresources.org/2013/05/celebrating-lives-and-life-stories/>, these Friends life stories will evoke emotions, provide powerful messages of connection as Quakers who share their faith and witness within their meetings, quarters, the yearly meeting and wider communities. The videos will serve as a model for their meetings to do life stories archiving projects.
- **Workshops:** Recorded and edited videos from three workshops held on Zoom. This approach was piloted in January 2023 with a workshop presented by ARCH, planned in collaboration and supported by PYM, on "Spirituality and Aging." Both the workshop itself and the recording have been effective and warmly received. The [recording is posted](#) on **QAR**. Comments from attendees included:
 - "The information I gained from the workshop is useful in helping me address challenges of my own aging process. Also, the importation gained might be useful in some of the essays I might write."
 - "Share with others in my Meeting."
 - "I will enthusiastically join a group to share the joys and challenges inherent in aging."
 - "It helped me to see that other Friends are experiencing similar events in their aging process."
 - "There was just enough time to notice how rich a conversation with these folks could be and how much I long for it. Thanks"
 - "I will share this with my Meeting, especially those who were not able to attend and also with Friends not members of my meeting."

Additionally, Worship groups and others in aging communities – both Quaker and non-denominational – have expressed interest after the Aging Support Coordinator sent a link to the video on **QAR**.

- "Thanks for this extra link, Sheila! I'm so glad we didn't miss this program – it was very well-done and thought-provoking. I'm looking forward to our group's discussion this week on the ideas presented. It really hit me just right!"
- "Our general message would be "MORE! MORE!"
- "Thanks for this Sheila. Haven't finished the video yet, but it's giving me ideas about programming – not necessarily with Quakers but with our residents and wider community...."
- "This is amazing! I will share it in my Education Class. Please keep them coming."

We will discuss partnering with New York Yearly Meeting/ARCH and other members of the Convening Group on Aging led by FFA, to collaborate on developing the workshops. In addition, PYM will seek alternative sources for workshop facilitators in PYM meetings.

Staff Capacity: The grant will support an increase in the hours of the Aging Resources Coordinator to manage these content projects and to add to and review the **QAR** links/resources to ensure they are all up to date and pertinent to today's aging needs. It is the focus of PYM Aging Support Coordinator to bring a greater source of

Quaker aging knowledge and resources to PYM members and other Friends on **QAR**. This may include connecting with yearly meetings in the United States and with meetings attended by PYM members internationally,

Promote and Share QAR: PYM Community Engagement and Communications staff will develop a mini-marketing campaign to renew Friends awareness of the website and its resources. The workshops themselves will be a way of publicizing the existence of the website. In addition, the marketing effort would reach out to monthly and quarterly meetings, worship groups in Quaker retirement communities, and Naturally Occurring Retirement Groups in meetings and long-term care communities. PYM's website and social media would be used as well.

iii. DEI and FFA Values

PYM is committed to a diverse, equitable, inclusive workplace where everyone has an opportunity to thrive. This Staff Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy commits PYM to:

1. improving equity & inclusivity systemically,
2. enhancing inclusion and equity for everyone in the workplace,
3. and strengthening accountability for sustaining a diverse workforce and an inclusive and anti-racist work culture.

This project will honor the PYM and FFA values of diversity, equity, and inclusion – and belonging. Acknowledging the PYM strategies for improving programs, practices and systems, all efforts will be made to allow for inclusion of participants, collaborators, and vendors. PYM efforts to promote DEI will be informed by its Quaker values, workforce data, and principles of transparency.

iv. Actions Impact

- Web traffic and YouTube views will increase
- Referrals for aging support will increase

PYM's website manager tracks usage statistics. (Please see Addendum.) Frequency, identified pages, and location of search initiation will be tracked. PYM's Aging Support Coordinator will report to the PYM Community Engagement Team and Friends Foundation for the Aging the number of new inquiries and contacts initiated following placement of these new videos and updated resources on **QAR**. PYM Quarter Coordinators and Quaker aging communities' staff will provide feedback from their aged members to the PYM Aging Support Coordinator through surveys. Friends who participate in the meaningful workshops will be asked to respond to surveys to learn the impact of their experience and expectation for the use of the new videos.

At three scheduled points during implementation/development of the revised, improved website, we will hold user tests with a selection of five users from the aging Quaker demographic.

The new website design, once implemented, will include a link to a survey soliciting feedback responses from the user base. We will also separately send this survey out to members of the aging Quaker community to solicit use of the website and further feedback.



The Aging Support Coordinator will track all new referrals for support through PYM and report this information to the PYM Director of Programs. A reflection of this information will be shared with FFA.

v. **Organization History.**

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting connects Friends across the geography of PYM to carry our concerns together. We do this in a manner that allows everyone to participate in the life of the community. The work is supported by staff with expertise in aging concerns, program development, and communications. The purpose of the organization and the existing staffing structure position us to help many older Friends, and those who support them, to appropriately seek additional support and connections.

Following the experience of Covid which caused great isolation among aged Friends, this initiative of revitalizing the **QAR** with improved accessibility, design and video content will help many to appropriately seek additional support and connections through PYM. **Quaker Aging Resources (QAR)** was designed to assist meetings, quarters and individuals in responding to the needs of aging Friends including age related changes, chronic illness or disability. The resources are intended to uphold a culture of care for the body, mind, spirit and community of the individual, which is consistent with Quaker faith, and address the following needs: Emotional /Behavioral Care; Death and Dying; Financial Matters; Housing/Aging in Place; Meaningful Retirement; Physical Health; Spiritual/Pastoral Support

Since the initiation of **Quaker Aging Resources**, much has changed in how the aged seek and receive information. It has been recognized that the PYM Mission word "engage" can be energized through this revision, facilitation, and videotape project. "Friends will *receive information*; Friends will *interact and actively contribute* and Friends will *play a role in guiding what we do for those aged as a community.*"

iv. **Program Budget.** \$28,275

PYM Staff - increase hours of Aging Support Coordinator to manage website redesign and improve content through the proposed video recordings, review and enhancing **QAR** resources and links.
\$10,000

Video Production of 3 workshops and 4 interviews
\$8,075

Program Development and Facilitation
\$4,200

Website Redesign
\$6,000

PYM Contribution:

- Community Engagement Associate for Special Projects to lead 4 interviews
- Community Engagement Team - Tech Support
- Communications Director
- Overhead



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

Quaker

Addendum

Brief video of University of Maryland, College of Information Studies class presentation on QAR.

[Quaker AgingResources.mp4](#)

QAR Analytics

[Analytics_Quaker Aging Resources.zip](#)