

ARCH 2024 Grant Application

Executive Summary

New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM), now in its 16th year of collaboration with Friends Foundation for the Aging, seeks continued funding support from FFA for our Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) Program. In 2024 ARCH will continue its mission to create opportunities for mutual care for older Friends, caregivers, and those with disabilities in NYYM. We accomplish this by offering empowering and enriching programming, by creating relational and intergenerational networks of mutual care, by providing direct support to aging Quaker individuals and communities, and by serving as a vibrant pastoral care resource for the NYYM body as Friends accompany one another through the many joys, challenges, and changes potential in growing older. For 2024 we request \$64,000 from Friends Foundation For the Aging in support of our program budget of \$128,682.

History

NYYM serves 70+ Quaker meetings in New York State, Northern New Jersey and Western Connecticut, and has for over 328 years. Since 2007, the ARCH Program has functioned as a program of care and practical support for aging Friends and those with disabilities throughout NYYM. Beginning as the ministry of its two co-founders, ARCH has grown into a program of five part-time Regional ARCH Coordinators, one ARCH Coordinator for Prisons, a full time ARCH Director, and over 150 Friends who actively participate in the ARCH network of care. Through ARCH's history, the original model of training volunteer 'ARCH Visitors' has been thoughtfully reimagined to address issues of accessibility and sustainability. The 'ARCH Visitor Training' became the ARCH Foundations Workshop in 2020, responding to the changing environment brought by the pandemic and the increased accessibility of technology amongst Friends. A model of 'mutual accompaniment' became key, emphasizing peer support and collective care. In 2023, ARCH began a pilot collaboration with New England Yearly Meeting, to test the feasibility of expanding the ARCH Program, and to explore how an ARCH Coordinator might bring the ARCH model responsively to the needs of NEYM.

Project Details: What is the problem we have identified? How are we addressing this problem?

The NYYM population is aging, and aging is all about change. Theories of personal change hold that, depending on how an individual is supported, change can either become a rich opportunity for growth, or may be experienced as a crisis. Those who find opportunities for positive outcomes in the face of change are often well supported

by community and resources. An individual unsupported by community and resources might find change destabilizing, and experience worse outcomes to change, even crisis.

Yet change brought by aging is inevitable, and facing these changes is more difficult by a culture saturated with insidious ageism and ableism. These systemic prejudices are often internalized, and can manifest in isolation, stigma, and a negative view of aging. Racial, economic, and social inequity in health care in this country further exacerbate the many ways that older people suffer. We are aging within systems that are often unjust and uncaring.

This is the problem that ARCH seeks to address. ARCH aims to counteract these cultural problems by serving as a framework of community, resources, and mutuality for older Quakers and Friends with disabilities - so that when the changes brought by aging happen, Friends might be supported through mutual accompaniment. As Friends and peers, the wisdom and lived experience of Friends is potentially the greatest resource we have to face the changes of aging.

Invoking the model of 'mutual accompaniment' is an intentional move away from the models of individualism, expertism, and unidirectional helping, to one that takes into account 'our inherent interdependence and potential mutuality'.¹ With mutual accompaniment we strive to build peer-to-peer relationships through communication and contact. We look to grow and participate in horizontal networks of support and communities of care. We look to uplift the wisdom of Friends' lived experiences, grief and joy, so that we might simultaneously nurture and be nurtured. The ARCH model posits that by making this shift toward peer support and spiritual accompaniment around change and aging, the practical matters of aging can better be identified, named, and met in community.

As Friends help each other, participate in each other's care teams, and accompany each other through the multiple changes brought about by aging, ARCH is building a larger framework of programming and a community of practice for those Friends to turn to for support. The ARCH model offers deep and cohesive support for practical pastoral care without believing that we have all of the answers, and offers opportunities for Friends to connect with potentially the best resource there is - one another.

ARCH Program Objectives for 2024

1. **Building programmatic framework:** To continue to create and expand programming and resources that help Friends to think differently about, and find mutuality in, the spiritual, social, and material aspects of growing older.

¹ Watkins, Mary. *Mutual Accompaniment and the Creation of the Commons*. Yale University Press, 2019.

2. **Developing networks of care:** To continue building spiritually grounded networks of mutual accompaniment to enrich community support across the Yearly Meeting, including monthly meet-up groups and support groups around issues of aging.
3. **Responding to local needs:** To support the six NYYM ARCH Local Coordinators across the Yearly Meeting as they responsively engage with the needs of their regions, provide workshops for monthly meetings, and connect Friends with local resources and one another.
4. **Supporting aging incarcerated Friends:** To support the ARCH Prison program, which seeks to engage outside Friends and older incarcerated Friends in mutual accompaniment, bring ARCH workshops to incarcerated Friends, including those who attend Prison Worship Groups and others who express interest, and help paroled Friends in their transition home.
5. **Partnering and Replicability:** To mutually grow alongside NEYM's ARCH Program, providing a cohort of support, guidance, and reflection for the NEYM Coordinator as the ARCH program in that Yearly Meeting enters its second year.

Actions and Outcomes

1. Programmatic framework

ARCH begins framing the potential for models of mutual accompaniment through programming. ARCH workshops serve the purpose of education and interest as well as the purpose of deepening relationships and growing a community of practice. The ARCH Foundations Workshop, a four-session program offered twice a year, gives Friends an empowering introduction to the model of mutual accompaniment and aging in community. In the Foundations Workshop, Friends have the opportunity to practice the tools of active listening and vulnerability, identifying and articulating needs, creating care teams, exploring ageism, identifying healthy boundaries in helping relationships, exploring self care and sustainable caregiving, and normalizing talking about aging in community.

One Friend said this about the Spring Foundations Workshop:

The concept of mutual accompaniment reiterates the potential for working together as a community and peers who can ease the way for a process we will all experience.

Viewing it as a shared experience rather than as separate individuals can make it less

daunting and potentially bring light and joy into what is often viewed as something to be merely accepted.

In 2024 we plan to offer the Foundations Workshop for all NYYM and NEYM Friends in the Spring and the Fall. Forty two Friends across NYYM and NEYM registered for the Spring 2023 Workshop, and we expect these numbers to be similar in 2024. The program includes social activities and worship sharing outside of the sessions, along with regular monthly drop-in opportunities for workshop participants to help sustain connection and reflect about ARCH related issues in their lives and their meetings.

2. Networks of care:

In 2023 we began a pilot program of ARCH Groups. Eight ARCH Groups met monthly online via Zoom, allowing for meaningful connection on topics across physical distance. These groups were:

- Caregiving and Caregivers
- Grief and Loss
- Adult Children of Aging Parents
- Death and Dying
- Aging Topics Reading Group
- Spirituality and Cognitive Difference
- Seasons of Life 60-80
- Seasons of Life 80+.

Groups ranged in size from 4-10 Friends, followed a 'closed group' model, and were facilitated by 5 ARCH Coordinators and the Children, Youth, and Young Adult Community Director, based on their personal areas of interest.

One Friend said this of the Grief and Loss Group:

'Using a Quaker lens to process grief in community is the most comfort and personal growth around the topic that I've found in years. It took me from a place of acute pain and often panic by using specific techniques and by building a more community centered vision which allows you to step out of yourself. I would do it again and recommend to others'

In 2024 we plan to run ARCH Groups again, with some retaining the 'closed group' model for intimacy, and some using a 'drop in' model. The groups will continue to run on Zoom. 2024 Groups will incorporate a developing '**Tiny Meetings Meetup Group**', space for mutual support for monthly meetings and worship groups that may be

experiencing isolation or transition. Other possible ARCH Groups proposed by Coordinators have been a **Menopause Support Group**, an **Undoing Ageism Group**, and an **Aging Without Children Group**. All groups are open to intergenerational and inter-region participation.

3. Responding to local needs:

Six Local Coordinators across NYYM, and one Local Coordinator in NEYM, offer regional support and connect Meetings and individual Friends to local resources through phone calls, emails, and visits. These Local Coordinators are Friends with skills as chaplains, therapists, teachers, caregivers, death doulas, and activists. Some local issues that have been brought to ARCH in 2023 are questions from a Quaker pastor about suspected elder abuse, questions about local co-housing models, direction toward local hoarding-cleanup resources, regional mediated circle processes for aging Quaker siblings in conflict about family property, individual grief support and hospital visits, and advice on bridging the divide with shut-in Friends. The ARCH Program needs to be nimble and responsive to whatever issues present, and in 2024 Coordinators will continue to connect with meetings, pastoral care committees, and individual Friends in their regions.

A result of ARCH local care is clear in this note from a Friend who had been walked through a loved one's end of life by a Local Coordinator:

You have made the journey possible and easier for me. Thank you so much for your insight and love.

Local workshops are open to all Friends, regardless of whether they have taken the Foundations Workshop. Developed topical workshops include advanced directives and end of life planning, trauma & resilience, pastoral care & dementia, and aging in prison. Zoom allowed for creativity in format and for a variety of facilitators. These topical ARCH Workshops can be requested by Monthly Meetings or joined by individual Friends when offered online, broadening the program's reach. Friends might take the concepts back to their meetings and worship groups.

In 2023, ARCH facilitated an **End Of Life Decision Making and Planning Workshop** requested by Rochester MM and a Spirituality and Aging Workshop requested by Concord Quarter (see Partnerships and Replicability). In Fall of 2023, ARCH will facilitate an **intergenerational Advance Directive Workshop** at Brooklyn MM and an **Aging Resources Introduction** at Old Chatham MM. In 2024 we plan to continue to creatively respond to needs and generate meaningful supportive programming We

anticipate offering at least five stand-alone workshops, either in-person or on Zoom, throughout the year.

A Friend at Brooklyn Monthly Meeting had this to say about ARCH:

“Brooklyn Meeting talks about aging in a completely different way now than it did 15 years ago. This is entirely because of ARCH”

4. Supporting aging incarcerated friends

ARCH continues to focus on issues of aging for incarcerated Friends. The Inside Outside Letter Writing Collective pairs older incarcerated Friends with Friends on the outside, for communication and accompaniment. A pilot program called the Query Cohort Project is underway, allowing opportunity for deeper mutuality for Friends on the inside through a growing collective response to a spiritually grounded query. In May of 2023 an **ARCH Workshop on Grief and Loss** was offered inside of Elmira Correctional Facility. Eleven men attended the 3.5 hour Grief and Loss Workshop, and the facility chaplains requested a repeat of the workshop for those on the waiting list. We plan to have at least one workshop on the inside in 2024. Also, in 2024, the ARCH Prison Program will expand intergenerationally to a group of 8 ‘Quaker curious young men in Otisville Correctional facility who wish for spiritual communication with Quakers in the community. There is close collaboration with the NYYM Prisons Committee in re-entry and offering assistance to those who are incarcerated.

One Incarcerated Friend wrote this reflection about his experience with mutual accompaniment:

I'm committed to helping everyone I can however I can. That's how I strive for redemption & forgiveness for my many past transgressions when I was younger. It isn't always easy b/c not everyone wants help, & many people who do need/want it often don't know how, or are unwilling, to accept it--plus, I'm frequently incapable of providing the kind of help people need. In addition to giving my life purpose, it gives me perspective & builds humility. There is great joy in the accomplishments & success of others, especially when you are able to contribute to them in some way. It took me a long time to realize that.

5. Partnerships and Replicability

ARCH continues to cultivate relationships and partnerships with other Yearly Meetings. In 2023 ARCH partnered with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) on a **Spirituality and**

Aging Workshop on Zoom. Sixty eight PYM Friends registered, and an edited video of the workshop is available to stream on PYM's Quaker Aging Resources Page. Northern Yearly Meeting has requested to **join the Tiny Meetings Meetup Group** to support that Yearly Meeting shrinking worship groups. A revision **Quaker Values and End of Life Decision Making Workbook** is slated for printing and distribution at the beginning of 2024. Quaker Values and End of Life Decision Making is regularly requested by Friends across the country, as far as Pasadena California. ARCH asks for contributions for this resource.

In 2024, ARCH will consider modes of replicability for ARCH Groups. We see the potential for developing simple guidelines for these support groups that might be similar to 12 Step meeting frameworks, to create an easily replicable guide to structure peer support meeting groups around issues that matter to aging Friends, across geography.

NYYM is eight months into a planned two-year collaboration with NEYM, focused on developing an ARCH Program within that Yearly Meeting. The NEYM ARCH Coordinator (employed part-time by NEYM through a grant from FFA) joins NYYM ARCH staff meetings, participates in ARCH programming, and has time with NYYM Coordinators and Director for reflection and support. We are learning from one another, using the model of mutual accompaniment to find our way forward in partnership, and exploring the ARCH model as replicable and responsive to the specialties of the Coordinator and the needs of another yearly meeting.

NEYM ARCH Coordinator Patti Muldoon wrote this about her experience:

In my ARCH role I collaborate with others to develop a vision and program for NE Quakers. I have attended worship at monthly meetings and led discussions at our yearly meeting listening sessions. I invite Friends to share stories, gifts and needs to deepen our support of one another in our journeys.

*One thing I especially love about how ARCH is developing is the growing commitment to **mutual spiritual accompaniment**. Quakers (and we are not alone in this) seem to have a cultural norm of "being the helper": setting up a helper/recipient power dynamic. Many of us feel much more comfortable helping others, which can make it feel selfish to need help ourselves. That dynamic is challenged as in ARCH we are all giving and receiving.*

Budget

In 2023, the six ARCH Local Coordinators received an 8% increase to their pay in response to inflation. The Interim ARCH Director Position did not receive this adjustment. Despite this increase in staff pay and the resulting increase in budgetary costs, NYYM requests the same amount from FFA for the ARCH Program it has been

granted for the last several years: \$64,000.

	2024 Budget	2023 Budget	2022 Actual	2021 Actual	2020 Actual	
Funding Source						
Grants (FFA, Other)	64,000	64,000	66,475	74,000	64,000	
Contributions Aging Concerns	20,000	20,000	29,770	25,457	20,043	
Products and Services Contributions	2,500	2,500	100	1,688	160	
Total	86,500	86,500	96,345	101,145	84,203	
Expense						
Staff Salary and Hourly Wages	98,748	94,058	98,416	88,769	87,625	
Other Wage Expenses	9,875	9,406	7,982	5,799	7,131	
Health Benefit	11,111	11,111	17,157	16,555	14,544	
Pension	4,937	4,703	3,448	3,380	3,311	
Travel and Administration	6,525	6,525	2,576	2,526	1,452	
Workshops & Network Support	500	500		500	153	
Total	131,696	126,303	129,579	117,528	114,216	
Funds						
Aging Concerns Invested Trust	5,600	5,600	5,202	4,573	4,573	
Balance From NYYM Operations	39,596	34,203	28,032	11,809	25,440	