

I found the following article from Spark (New York Yearly Meeting News), March 2009 by Jim Whitely. It does address FFA commitment to aging programs at NYYM.

A Spirit-Led Journey: McCutchen to FFA

Jim Whitely, board president, Friends Foundation for the Aging

In 1950, an aging Margaret McCutchen of North Plainfield, N.J., wrote, "It has become necessary for me to leave my home at 21 Rockview Avenue and move to smaller quarters. As it has been for over 60 years a home where love and faith and peace have been the ideals, I would like it to serve some helpful purpose. Although not a member of the Society of Friends, I have such admiration for their ideals and much confidence in their administrative ability, that I have offered the property to them as a gift, to be used for such purpose as they may deem best." And so was born the Yearly Meeting Friends Home, or McCutchen Friends Home, as it came to be called. Originally licensed as a boarding home, the home grew over the years with the addition of a nursing wing in the '60s and apartment units in the '70s. A dedicated all-Quaker board of trustees and loving administrators and staff assured that it continued for another nearly 60 years to be "a home where love and faith and peace" were the ideals—a community for the aging that reflected deepest Quaker values of care, that enhanced quality of life, that fostered independence, respect, dignity, and security within a framework of mutual caring and concern.

Times change. The spirit was willing, but, the body was aging—and ailing. It became increasingly evident to the Board that, in spite of our many efforts to expand, to renovate, to create new programs, our future as a viable operation was in doubt. Why? Because of the burdens and constraints imposed by being in a historic district (even minor repairs to the building could cost us as much as three times what they would have had we not been labeled "historic"); the changing demographics of the area; the perception that the area was less safe; the increasing availability of newer and intentionally designed facilities; an onerous per-bed tax imposed by the state of New Jersey; the inefficiencies inherent in our size. Our annual deficits, which had risen beyond \$500,000, were clearly telling us that continuing to operate this aging facility was simply not sustainable. Oh, perhaps we could have existed for another ten years or so by depleting our endowment, but to what end? And then what? It became evident that there were better ways we could serve the aging in general, as well as the Quaker community in particular, than by operating this aging facility. We reached consensus to close.

In retrospect, it now seems as if the decision to close was obvious, an easy one to make. It was not. Most Trustees had been part of the McCutchen family longer than nearly all the residents. Many longer than most of the staff. In a sense it was our home as well. It is difficult indeed to give up one's home. And how were we going to care for the residents, most of whom had never expected to have to move again? For the staff? When the final, painful decision was made, we were determined that no one would be "put out in the cold." The McCutchen did not cease operations until every resident had been safely placed in another facility, approved by both their family and our staff. Yes, staff, because they had come to think of themselves as part of each resident's family as well. Though not entirely unexpected, their continuing care for residents was extremely gratifying to us, wonderful to witness. Our continuing care of the staff involved generous severance benefits as well as all possible assistance in finding new employment.

The time had come to redirect our assets and efforts to other ways of serving: to find new opportunities; to explore more efficient and meaningful ways to support the elderly, both individually and through innovative programs and services we can help support. Thus was born Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA). Our mission: "...to promote innovative, value-based options for seniors, collaborating with other institutions in identifying, developing and funding promising undertakings. Its work is grounded in the faith, practices and values of the Religious Society of Friends and is informed by Friends experience in providing high quality programs and services that enhance the lives of seniors, foster independence and respect the dignity of all." The Foundation collaborates closely with other Quaker senior service providers, with institutions of higher learning, and with other not-for-profit and faith-based organizations. Our primary geographic focus is New

York and the Middle Atlantic states. In recognition of our long-standing relationship with New York Yearly Meeting, FFA is committed to allocating a portion of its resources to the Yearly Meeting in support of senior-focused programs. The nature of these programs will be determined over time by NYYM. The initial venture, described elsewhere in these pages, is the ARCH program. That initiative's spirit-led journey has just begun—as has ours. We look forward to traveling with you.