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FRIENDS FOUNDATION FOR THE AGING

Grant Application September 2023

Friends Foundation for the Aging Returning Grantee Proposal (less than 3 pages)

A one sentence summary of the project and amount requested. Montco SAAC is seeking a \$30,000 grant from the Friends Foundation for the Aging to continue our virtual peer-led caregiver support group.

Has the identified problem changed? While the risk of in-person meetings have lessened with the “normalization” of living with COVID, we are finding most participants wish to continue the group in a virtual format.

Have your solution or goals changed? Our goals remain the same for this group. Support groups for caregivers foster the setting for sharing information, insight, advice, and encouragement. They provide an opportunity to learn from others who face the same challenges and allow you to talk about your experiences. Caregiver support group meetings can lend support, resources and ideas for new approaches to caregiving, including ones that worked for others in a similar situation. Participants also gain perspective and caregiver stress management tools that come from hearing others talk about their experiences.

Will your efforts/actions to impact the problem change? The common experience among members of a support group often means they have similar feelings, worries, everyday problems, treatment decisions, or treatment side effects. Participating in a group allows access to support for members of our diverse community who might not otherwise find support.

In a diverse community with time constraints, limited access to transportation, and caregiving duties, our surveys reveal that our caregiver community may not be able to find time to, or be comfortable with, attending an in-person group. Benefits of online groups include:

- More frequent or flexible participation
- Opportunities for people who may not have local face-to-face support groups
- A degree of privacy or anonymity

Are there changes in funding or program implementation partners? We will continue to partner with organizations in Montgomery County to help promote our Caregiver Support Group to their constituency. One partner, ACLAMO, is a nonprofit community service organization that provides educational programs, social services, and access to health and wellness programs to Latinos. A significant percentage of ACLAMO’s clients are living in multi-generational households and face the caregiving challenges. In order to better serve this growing regional population and partner, we will offer the caregiver support group in Spanish. Likewise, we will partner with the Philip Jaisohn Memorial

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Foundation to reach members of the Korean community in Montgomery County. Other Montgomery County-based senior service partner organizations include: ElderNet of Lower Merion and Narberth, Project Hearth, and SAGE, which provides advocacy and services to the LGBT elder community. Local hospitals Einstein and Suburban will be included in our outreach efforts and we also plan to partner with our own Art Center at Ambler to provide a guided art therapy component to the support group.

How will you know if your actions are having an impact? We measure objective outcomes such as group participation, return rates and growth, in addition to subjective measures such as the testimonial below. Laura and Jill, a retired couple, live with Laura's 95-year-old mother, Bess, who requires care. They are the primary caregivers as there is no other family nearby. Bess, despite retaining her mental faculties and needing minimal medication, often battles depression due to past trauma. She also has limited mobility and occasionally displays a challenging temperament.

Laura is very protective of her mother and hesitant to seek external assistance, given past negative experiences. Initially, Laura and Jill relied solely on each other for caregiving. However, their situation improved when they joined a Caregiver Support group. They rarely missed meetings and greatly appreciated the support and information provided during these weekly sessions.

During these meetings, Laura and Jill opened up about the challenges they faced, including their own health issues and Jill's need to work outside the home for extra income. Previously, Jill had to care for Bess alone for extended periods while Laura traveled for business. Laura found the group's discussions encouraging and informative when she could attend during Jill's trips.

Their participation in the support group connected them with valuable resources, including finding a part-time caregiver who fit well with their family dynamics and accessing other community services. Jill also felt less pressure when traveling, knowing that Laura had the weekly support group to help with the challenges and feelings of isolation that often accompany caregiving.

Laura and Jill eagerly anticipate the group resuming in the fall and have reached out to express their enthusiasm. Additionally, Jill now visits the Montco SAAC Ambler Center for meals for Bess and consults with the Health and Wellness team to enhance her mother's care.

How are you measuring success? In addition to collecting standard demographic data on participants and the number of people attending, we believe it is important to encourage members to provide feedback to the group on a regular basis. Montco SAAC prepares surveys at regular intervals with questions such as:

- Is the environment welcoming?
- What works for you?
- What does not work and how can we improve it?
- What were your expectations coming into this group?

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- Were your expectations about the group met?

How will you sustain the program after the grant period? At Montco SAAC, we understand the importance of ensuring the longevity and impact of projects even after the initial grant funds have been utilized. Sustainability is a key pillar of our organizational strategy, and we are committed to maintaining and expanding the positive outcomes achieved through this project. To secure the project's sustainability, we have developed a comprehensive strategy that encompasses the following elements:

- **Diversified Funding Streams:** We actively seek additional sources of funding to complement the grant funds received. This includes exploring partnerships with other philanthropic organizations, engaging in community fundraising initiatives, and pursuing government grants and contracts where applicable.
- **Resource Optimization:** We will implement efficient resource management practices to maximize the impact of the grant funds. This includes careful budgeting, cost-sharing with partner organizations, and leveraging in-kind contributions from volunteers and local businesses.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** We will explore opportunities for collaboration with other organizations and institutions that share our mission and goals. By pooling resources and expertise, we can extend the project's reach and impact.

A project budget with projected income (including other sources) and expenses.

Budget

Other sources of support: OSS Contract for Senior Center Services: \$10,000 for administrative and social worker support

Budget requested of FFA:

- Admin: \$5,000
- Social Work Staff and Peer Facilitators: \$15,000
- Program Supplies (workgroup and technology for some): \$7,500
- Promotion/Printing: \$2,500

Budget Narrative: By far the largest expense (\$15K) for this project will be our Social Work staff time. We have two staff Social Workers assigned to develop and implement the Virtual Peer-led Caregiver Support Group. The next highest expense (\$7,500) is to purchase hotspots and tablets for any participant in need so they can access the virtual sessions. We also plan to mail welcome kits to the participants. We have also included Administrative expenses (\$5K) in the budget as well as printing and materials (\$2,500) for marketing the group to the community.

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