



April 16, 2024

Friends Foundation for the Aging

Response to Grant Questions

**1. Will The Hickman contribute to the costs?**

Yes, The Hickman will invest in multiple ways.

- a. The Community Life department budgeted for a part time individual to specialize in art programs once a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor like Art For the Aging was identified and funded. Most specifically this individual would have expertise in creating pottery including operating a kiln. The Hickman has a kiln that has been inactive for some time. One of the areas of the Art For the Aging Project (AFTA) is pottery.
- b. The Hickman will pay all payroll costs for The Hickman staff to participate in 12 training sessions.
- c. The Hickman will pay for support materials including food and beverage for Phase 4. Phase 4 trains professional and family caregivers in nuanced art modalities.

**2. Are current program staff not experienced in the arts? Where did this idea originate (residents, staff, admin)?**

The Co-Director of Community Life, Danielle Foley earned a Masters in Fine Arts, from The University of Pennsylvania. The other Co-Director of Community Life, Stacey Farrell is a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). Both have a depth of experience in art and specific types of occupational therapies. The issue is not that the team does not have art expertise but that two obstacles prohibit the team's evolution and the progression of varied art programs: time and access to progressive art techniques.

Please find attached a few months' calendars showing the number of activities on any given day. Regular programming includes transporting residents to the sight of the activity in addition to the planning, purchasing and execution of activities. Time is a premium. Research time is unavailable to staff members. AFTA will identify content and provide customization specific to improving the quality of life.

The AFTA program is a workforce development program while simultaneously providing new opportunities for creative expression.



The concept of enlarging and improving the arts program comes equally from staff and residents. Staff have expressed the need for activities that more assertively develop neural pathways and provide access to those with varying diagnoses and movement limitations.

Residents express a need for innovative activities. Residents love to learn and are constantly looking for events that offer joy, and improve physical, cognitive, and emotional health. At monthly resident meetings, residents have verbalized the need for pioneering activities that offer a lot within 1 activity: learning a skill, bonding to other residents, and attachment to caregivers and family members. The idea of sharing dance, pottery, sketching and other art forms with families is a pungent drive for residents. They are hungry for things to share with their families that are fresh and new. One expressed that sharing art with family is the completion of a circle: a resident creating a piece of art and gifting to a family member is reminiscent of when a youngster shared kindergarten creation with them.

### **3. Is virtual training effective?**

AFTA has successfully implemented various virtual programs, including training initiatives for teaching artists with diverse abilities and backgrounds in multiple art disciplines. The D.C. Commission of the Arts and Humanities and the New Bedford Housing Authority in Massachusetts have engaged AFTA's services for these programs. The training sessions were conducted virtually, while workshops and meetings adopted a hybrid approach, accommodating both in-person and virtual attendance. The outcomes were notable, with caregivers experiencing prolonged tenure and participants showing a decrease in depression levels. Virtual training allows for greater accessibility and inclusivity, enabling individuals with diverse abilities and backgrounds to participate in a broader cache of art mediums without the barriers of physical location or mobility constraints.

Acknowledging the limitations of relying on Zoom presentations for seniors, professionals at The Hickman's Community Life program emphasize the necessity of supplementing virtual sessions with personalized guidance from staff members. Firsthand supervision has proven to be instrumental, facilitating residents' comprehension of concepts and fostering enthusiasm for continuous learning.



**4. Can you afford to implement the programs that this group teaches? It seems they may work at a higher price point.**

Two significant barriers impede the team's growth and the advancement of diverse art programs: time constraints and limited access to innovative art techniques. AFTA addresses these challenges from the outset through Phase 1. By facilitating planning meetings, conducting surveys, and tailoring training content, AFTA mitigates these obstacles, which are typically time-consuming and often prohibitive in a standard operational context. Collaborating with Community Life, AFTA designs modules across various art disciplines, ensuring minimal disruption to daily routines.

The higher cost associated with this approach is relative to the comprehensive expense of employee time. Factoring in taxes, benefits, and insurance amplifies the hourly wage, significantly increasing both hard and soft costs. Moreover, the opportunity cost of diverting caregivers from their daily activities further compounds these expenses.

AFTA's core responsibility lies in researching, training, and implementing progressive art programs. By focusing on this mission, AFTA maximizes efficiency, minimizes disruptions, and optimizes resources, driving the evolution and success of its initiatives.

**5. Has there been any thought of expending this training program to include staff from the other historic Friends boarding homes?**

Thank you for this insightful suggestion. We did not consider the possibility of joining other Friends Homes in this initiative. As we have experienced before, there is undeniable strength in collective efforts. We are open to the prospect of connecting with other Friends Homes, mirroring the successful collaboration we had during the Montessori Credentialing process.