

What problem(s) were you addressing?

The problems we sought to address through our project in 2024 were as follows: 1) Culminating our six-year ARTZ in the Neighborhood project and directly addressing its replicability: employing community-centered, culturally-respectful approaches to documenting lessons learned from community advisors and other community members throughout the six years of the project; 2) compiling a first draft of a user-friendly “how to” manual of best practices for developing QoL-enhancing programs designed and implemented in collaboration with and in direct response to the needs and priorities of the programs’ intended participants. To follow where they lead.

What change did you expect to create? What were the desired objectives, outcomes and outputs of the program and progress made toward each during the reporting period?

We expected to identify, describe, and document lessons learned from our community advisors and other community partners in 2018-2024 as we co-developed with them best practices for employing community-centered, culturally-respectful approaches to co-creating QoL programs for community members living with dementia and their care partners.

Objectives and Outputs, Selected:

New and/or re-energized objectives:

1. Collate and analyze the voluminous data acquired through informal and formal assessment of the project, its processes, and its outcomes from 2018-2023. **Objective mostly met.**
2. Complete a first draft of the manual of community-driven program development best practices for work with people living with dementia that has been one of the long-term objectives of the project but had to wait until the project was far enough long to make it possible. **Objective met.**
3. *Future objective:* Once manual is completed (end of 2025), disseminate the information and catalyze a policy shift in caring for people living with dementia and their care partners throughout the service sector.

Continuing objectives:

1. Seeking wisdom and guidance of community advisors in all aspects of the work of ARTZ in the Neighborhood, including their input on the lessons learned to be documented in “how-to” manual. **Objective delayed until 2025 due to scheduling challenges, community advisors’ illnesses and frequent travels out of country.**

Outputs:

1. Basic outline of “lessons learned” content for manual, including the following topics (pending review by and feedback from advisors):
 - a. “Flagship” community organizations
 - b. Community liaisons
 - c. Community advisory groups
 - d. Building trust
 - e. Culturally respectful programming co-created with community members
 - f. Making and preserving memories
 - g. Making space for joy in talking about dementia
 - h. Data collection and knowledge production
2. First draft of “lessons learned” section on community liaisons (see attached to report)
3. Preliminary vision for manual:
 - a. Forward, including voices of community advisors and flagship community partners about significance of project, why important
 - b. 3-5 pages per “lesson learned”
 - c. Sidebars in “lessons learned” section, direct quotes from community advisors and program participants
 - d. Photographs of program participants, community liaisons, community advisors
 - e. Appendices with step-by-step guidance
4. To be published as ebook and print book

Measures of success, qualitative and quantitative;

Outcomes this year were measured according to adherence to timeline for data gathering, analysis, and documentation; and overarching conceptualization of “how-to” manual content.

Of particular note: thanks to funding from Friends Foundation for the Aging, we were able to hire a part-time graduate assistant to work with us in collating and analyzing project data. Jocardo Ralston, the graduate assistant (a PhD student from University of Pennsylvania), is a bilingual, BIPOC individual with substantial experience as a community educator in under-resourced communities similar to those with whom we have worked in ARTZ in the Neighborhood. He immediately embraced and was moved by the project and – thanks to his own areas of experience and expertise -- was not only able to contribute to data research and gathering but also to weigh in on content.

Unanticipated outcomes and barriers

Unanticipated outcomes: Thanks to Jocardo’s data organization talents, we benefitted from a completely unexpected and extraordinarily useful discovery. The ARTZ team (project director, project coordinator, and community liaisons) have been using the application Slack to communicate with each other about the project since 2019. As a result, Jocardo was able to gather data from real-time, honest and open project developments, adjustments, revisions, challenges, and successes, all in the authentic

voices of staff and community liaisons and including many direct quotations from community advisors. (We have included one such document created by Jocardo as an attachment to this report.)

Our project evaluator has utilized a range of data to establish a preliminary outline for the manual content, which we will flesh out in 2025. Real-time tracking of the project's themes and evolutions through Zoom videos of programs and advisory group meetings during the pandemic; visual documents (such as photos, meeting flyers, examples of art-making by community members); and the Slack transcripts all bring to life the project and its lessons longitudinally and will enable us to augment our draft of the manual with extensive community member quotations, photographs, and other materials that will convey the journey and spirit of the project to those who use the manual, as well as the essential lessons learned.

Unanticipated barriers: As described in our 2023 grant proposal, it had been our intention to thoughtfully and purposefully integrate community advisors' review and feedback at various points in the creation of the "how-to" manual draft. As described above in the objectives section, scheduling meetings for our project evaluator with community advisors to do this in focus group fashion proved a continuing challenge, with recurring illnesses (including multiple rounds of COVID as well as cancer diagnoses and treatments) and repeated out-of-country travels creating insurmountable barriers. We plan to pick up this part of the review, advise, and consent by community advisors as we proceed to the full draft of the manual in 2025.

Sharing and replicating results

The ultimate goal of the manual on which we have been working is to share all that we have learned – all that we have been taught by our community partners and advisors – and to enable others across the region and beyond to learn from our advisors too, and to replicate our approach. The agency of people living with dementia-related conditions including memory loss is central to all that we do at ARTZ Philadelphia. There can be no greater confirmation of agency, we believe, than watching one's own experiences, perspectives, insights, and priorities shape a new set of best practices.

Project Financial Statement, Variances, and Sustainability

We have attached a project financial statement for the period of the grant, from January-December 2024. It essentially adheres to the numbers projected in our application. The following actions will ensure the project's sustainability for 2024 and beyond: 1) We have received funding from Janssen Pharmaceutical, which has supported ARTZ in the Neighborhood since 2018, to continue work on the manual; and we are seeking additional funds elsewhere. 2) Our new three-year plan on which the board and staff have begun work this fall continues to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility best practices in all aspects of our operations. ARTZ in the Neighborhood will continue to be the centerpiece and a key driver of our DEIA efforts. 3) We are continuing with Music in the Neighborhood (funded for the second year by PECO Powering the Arts) and will be discussing with our Hunting Park community

advisors the possibility of their serving as mentors for emerging community advisors in the Germantown/Mt. Airy neighborhoods in a cross-community effort that we have already begun through periodic shared, bi-community programs.

4) Finally, we have received a Sarah Ralston Foundation multi-year Innovative Project grant to launch a new program serving both care partners and people living with dementia in Philadelphia senior centers, including Center in the Park, our current NW Philly “hub” for ARTZ in the Neighborhood efforts. Building on the community-driven, co-creative approaches of ARTZ in the Neighborhood, this new program “Cafés for Care Partners + Creative Connections” will carry forward the principles and aspirations of ARTZ in the Neighborhood in new neighborhoods and to new constituents.

Feedback on interactions with FFA

As we have noted year after year, we have found it particularly valuable to receive both financial and strategic support from Friends Foundation for the Aging’s Board and Executive Director, even when things are not going quite as we had hoped. It is that continued support and honest feedback that has enabled us to acknowledge, scrutinize, and learn from missteps and to change course for the better while learning productive, lasting lessons. We look forward to returning to Friends Foundation for support in the future for future innovative projects.