

Friends Foundation for the Aging Proposal

Date: July 31, 2025

Organization: ARTZ Philadelphia (lead) and Quaker Voluntary Services (QVS)

TIN & Formal organization name: 81-0862996, ARTZ Philadelphia

Contact name, phone, email: Dr. Susan Shifrin, (610) 721-1606, shifrin@artzphilly.org

Amount requested: \$30,000 (with interest in partial funding if full funding is not available)

Project title: Enhancing Awareness, Community, and Volunteer Engagement with an ARTZ Fellow

Summary Description (maximum 25 words): Seeking support for increased volunteer engagement and program sustainability for current and future ARTZ Philadelphia programs.

1. What is the problem you have identified?

ARTZ Philadelphia envisions a world in which people living with dementia and their care partners enjoy the benefits of well-being that others enjoy. We are committed to ensuring equal access to the resources that enhance quality of life, inspire individual and communal creativity, and empower self-expression and continued self-realization. We are a passionate, empathetic and tight-knit team. Our team members are highly motivated individuals who build on each others' strengths and serve from the heart. But the team is quite lean. Due to the loss of pandemic-related federal and state funds, as well as individual donors' pulling back due to the volatility of the stock market and global unrest, we went from a full-time staff of four during the pandemic to a full-time staff of two (including our ED) and two part-time employees currently. As new opportunities to serve our constituents and their communities present themselves, we find ourselves needing to expand both staff and our volunteer corps in sustainable ways.

In Summer 2025, we have launched a new program that builds on our neighborhood-centered model of [ARTZ in the Neighborhood](#), whose development from 2018 to the present was so significantly supported by Friends Foundation for the Aging . Our new program, [Cafés for Care Partners & Creative Connections](#), expands our programs and our approach through new partnerships with Philadelphia-based senior centers, who have been suffering terrible budget cuts. This new programming model, funded by a multi-year Innovative Project Support grant from [The Sarah Ralston Foundation](#) and the first of a prospective three years of funding from the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, will offer separate but simultaneous programs for people living with dementia and their care partners from the neighborhoods around each senior center. Each of these grants funds a single part-time project manager and a cohort of new artist-facilitators on whom we will draw for monthly programs at what may ultimately number between 12 and 20 locations by the conclusion of these pilots. As this program progresses, there will be even more demands placed on our small team, and yet this new program is one we have envisioned for many years as a way to address the data and personal stories telling us that care partners for people with dementia dispense with their own self-care because they feel unable to leave their partners at home alone (not safe), do not have family or friends to sit with their partners on a regular basis, and do not have financial resources to pay for aides or professional companions.

Our mission is becoming better-known throughout the greater Philadelphia region. In this year's [Philadelphia Inquirer Philly Favorites](#) contest, we received “gold” in the category of [Alternative Therapies](#). Due to this visibility as a local groundbreaker, we have had more applicants seeking to volunteer with us, upwards of 40 people over the past year. This passionate group of interested volunteers are diverse in background, experience, and age. With many more community members who would benefit from our programs, at our current capacity, we are limited in our ability to serve our target population *and* we have been unable to keep up with the demands of processing the increased volume of volunteer applications and to stabilize volunteer retention over time.

Building future leadership in our field requires creating opportunities for engagement. We have learned over time that there are many young people who are interested in the work that we do and could see themselves engaging with it long-term. Leveraging collective organizational resources offered by a partnership with Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) will provide a key pivot point for young adults to enter the field in a meaningful way.

2. What is the solution you propose to address the problem?

New leaders often learn best when embedded for a significant amount of time while being able to care for their daily needs. One of the strategic goals of our new three-year plan approved by the board in April is the goal of systematically raising awareness of the services we provide, primarily to reach community members who have not yet taken advantage of our services and could benefit from them but also to reach potential partners and donors. Another goal in the strategic plan is to build a lasting infrastructure for our volunteer program that will equip our organization to make the most of our volunteers' enthusiasm and retain them over time. Part of that infrastructure will be to establish a corps of volunteers especially for our new “Cafés for Care Partners & Creative Connections” pilot program described above.

Accessible non-profit spaces for young people to gain their footing and capacity for working with adults with dementia and care partners is one way we can generate interest in our field. Volunteers champion and make possible much of the work that we do for our constituents. Filling a staffing gap that has existed since we lost our full-time Community Engagement and Volunteer Coordinator in early 2023 is vital to ensuring our programming is as supportive as possible of our population. The Fellow will create manageable and sustainable processes for our team and ensure we can bolster and – ultimately – expand our programs. The Fellow will also help us to make the case in succeeding years for adding a part-time, continuing staff member to build further on the infrastructure put in place by the Fellow for sustaining a thriving community of volunteers who remain committed to ARTZ Philadelphia over the long term.

3. What actions will you take?

As our organizational offerings run the gamut from in-person and online conversation-based programs to hands-on art-making and music-making, building a robust, sustainable volunteer process would significantly strengthen our ability to serve our community. Research will be done on best practices in volunteer recruitment and retention and those learnings will be brought to bear in creating change in this area of our work. Current staff will communicate our capacity or

lack thereof for this system as the Fellow develops it and changes will be implemented to better scale this program for the future.

It is important to us to offer the opportunity for the collaboration of young people to work and serve at connecting organizations like ours. Our commitment displays investment in this relational investment and underpins the cultivation of leadership aligned with Quaker values and the long-term vitality of institutions for aging adults. Since January, we have built a connection with QVS to identify a young person who is a fit for our community and our organizational needs. This applicant identifies as a Person of Color and is dedicated to take on the challenge of researching and scaling our volunteer process. We will offer our own extensive in-house training that provides a deep understanding of our mission, philosophies, unique approach and how we build lasting relationships of mutual respect with our constituents and their communities.

When the ARTZ Fellow starts they will have the opportunity to assist with in-person and hybrid programs – particularly our new, multi-site program described above – getting to know the population we serve by meeting them where they are and learning from the lived experiences they share. The Fellow will be exposed to relevant research and studies about the impact of arts-based experiences on the lives of people affected by dementia.

4. Describe the population to be served.

We have grown from touching the lives of 100 people living with dementia and their care partners at the end of 2014 to reaching more than 10,000 constituents since the pandemic. Our primary population served is over the age of 65. We are particularly committed to bringing resources to and engaging in co-creation of programs with historically underserved communities in such neighborhoods as Hunting Park and Northwest Philadelphia.

We work exclusively with people who are underserved and vulnerable to the inequities of our healthcare, economic, and social systems: whether by virtue of their recent experiences of stigma and isolation due to a dementia diagnosis or whether because of generations of inequitable treatment due to cultural background, language barriers, race, gender, and residential zip code now compounded by the inequities around the lived experiences of dementia.

5. Are there partners/collaborators for implementation or funding-who? Has the solution been tried by other organizations?

This partnership will advance our mission to provide high-quality programming. QVS has demonstrated its ability to find committed and well trained young adults in Philadelphia for over a decade. Working with QVS provides an opportunity for ARTZ Philly to trial a new staff person to support this transition period. The Fellow will increase the capacity of ARTZ Philly to continue to do the important work of making our diverse range of online and in-person learning more accessible to older adults and foster connections across generations. This solution has been tried before at other ageing organizations and proved useful to both the Fellow and the non-profit.

Over the last several months we have worked to identify a young adult who is passionate about our organization and about serving older adults. In addition to the initial vetting infrastructure provided by QVS and the interview process through which that vetting becomes collaborative, the QVS Fellowship program also provides additional support and training for the young adults who work with organizations like ours, making the opportunity for us to impact on the populations that we serve that much more accessible and viable. This connection will create long term gains for our constituents and the experience of volunteers. Doing this level of relationship building has contributed to the commitment of the Fellow, QVS and ARTZ to this collaboration. With other volunteer programs like AmeriCorps losing funding, these types of partnerships are now more vital than ever.

This type of interaction has been successful with another arts-based organization in Philadelphia. Fleisher Art Memorial has had great success with a similar model. The QVS Fellowship allows us to leverage key resources that are available, having a qualified young professional eager to support our work and a local Quaker organization committed to providing accessible full-time staff at a cost that is more equitable to smaller organizations like ours and committed both to the success of the young professional and to our success. This is a rare and valuable resource indeed!

6. How will you know your actions are having an impact? How will you measure outputs and outcomes?

We will evaluate the impact of this collaboration through metrics around increased and more timely volunteer engagement, along with early evidence of strengthened retention gathered from informal conversations with and formal, anonymous surveys of our volunteers. That is, significant increases in our ability to properly screen, onboard, train, and retain volunteers will be a key metric of success. Metrics for assessing the impact of the Fellow on enhancing awareness of our programs around the region will include tracking the number of program inquiries by individuals, approaches by other non-profits and for-profits regarding partnerships with us, press opportunities, and other similar data pre- and post-the Fellow's arrival and efforts.

While the Fellow will not be a traditional staff member, they will be encouraged to be deeply involved in decision-making with our staff with regard to rebuilding and revising our volunteer program. Older populations have shared great feedback from intentional engagement with young people.

This is an innovative opportunity for our organization to make a lasting difference for our constituents living with dementia and their care partners, as our volunteers are the "front line" along with our program facilitators, changing the daily lives of those we serve. As an organization that offers our programming at no cost, the investment of increasing our volunteer capacity will allow us to provide more programming to our target population and be good stewards of our resources and capacity.

Program summary budget:

	Notes	Requested Support from FFA
Volunteer Recruitment/Retention Revamp, Program Support, Outreach to Raise Awareness: ARTZ laptop and cell phone for Fellow Subscription/Digital License add-ons for Fellow: subscriptions to select professional journals identified by Fellow to augment in-person best-practices research; additional Zoom license for Fellow for online meetings; additional Adobe Creative Suite license for Fellow to support outreach efforts (with flyers, etc) Supplies for Fellow's biweekly in-person meetings with current lead volunteers and biweekly or monthly regular group meetings and engagement events with full cohort of volunteers (30-40); in-person meetings with other non-profits' volunteer managers to research best practices Outreach to Raise Awareness of ARTZ programs and services, incl. printing and postage Supplements to QVS public transportation stipend for Fellow as needed; ARTZ staff time mentoring, oversight of, collaboration with, Fellow	Total of Itemized Expenses: \$15,494 Cost of equipment: \$1800 Estimated cost of digital licenses and subscriptions: \$1200 Estimated costs of supplies: \$3500 \$1500 Estimated travel costs (unclear, given the possibility of deep cuts to SEPTA service, may need to rely on Uber/Lyft): \$1000 5% of full time for ED = \$3,371 5% of part-time for Community Engagement Manager = \$1500 1% of full time for Director of Programs = \$630 3% of part-time for Administrator = \$993 Organization Contribution: \$4,494	\$11,000

ARTZ Fellow	Cost \$24,000 - 9.5 months of full time engagement with ARTZ Philly that supports, professional and personal development, housing, utilities, food, transportation, medical care and equity funding Organization Commitment: \$5000	\$19,000
		Total: \$30,000