

ARCH 2021 Grant Proposal

Executive Summary

New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) seeks continuing support from the Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA) in 2021 for our Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) Program, now in its thirteenth year of partnership with FFA. We seek to continue building trusting Quaker communities that care for one another as we grow older and live with disabilities. We do this while dismantling ageism in ourselves and the world around us. We offer trainings, workshops, and ongoing support to volunteer Visitors and Quaker communities that helps to deepen trusting relationships, bridge intergenerational divides, and equip Friends with resources and support to help each other as we grow older. We request \$64,000 in support of our total budget for the ARCH Program of NYYM of \$124,437.

History

NYYM has served the 70+ Quaker meetings in New York State, Northern New Jersey and Western Connecticut for 325 years. In 2017 the ARCH program became fully integrated into the operations, budget and programming of NYYM. Since its genesis in 2007 the ARCH program has grown into a diverse network of over 130 volunteer ARCH Visitors, seven ARCH Local Coordinators, and an ARCH Director, and continues to be supported and overseen by NYYM's Committee on Aging Concerns (CAC). In 2018 a new approach to our Visitor training program was launched, offering a series of seven weekly sessions via video conference allowing participants from diverse locations to participate from home.

Project Details

The Problem and Our Part of the Solution

Many Friends do not have adequate access to the support we all need to thrive (or even survive) as older and differently abled people. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the inherent racial, economic, and social inequity in health care in our country. Combine this with our culture's toxic aversion to growing older and to disability and we have created a perfect storm of inadequate access. Quakers from every walk of life may have difficulty accessing the care we need as we grow older and live with disability.

To begin to address this problem we need to start within ourselves as we dismantle the systemic bias that allows such a system to be normalized as adequate, and our Quaker communities can help us do that. Our meetings are more than a collection of individuals - they are whole communities. Many of NYYM's Quaker communities (though not all, particularly our prison worship groups) are composed primarily of White older people, while younger people and people of color are often fewer in number. Though many Friends long for racial and age diversity, racist and ageist patterns are often replicated in our own structures, assumptions, and practices. Undoing this systemic bias takes real commitment, bravery, persistence, faithfulness,

and humility. This problem also demands that we think of ourselves not only as particular individuals (old/young, Black/White, etc.), but as a whole interdependent community united in our commitment to our collective thriving at every age. As an integral part of NYYM, CAC and the ARCH staff have spent these pandemic months in deep discernment about how the ARCH program is being called to our part of the solution. We have discovered a renewed commitment to the values that ground our work.

We seek to make change through:

- **Advocacy** (this takes two forms)
 - Advocating with the larger world for expanded access to what we need to thrive as we grow older, as we find we need support, and eventually meet life's end. This might look like interfacing with the NYS Department of Corrections to bring ARCH programming into prison, or identifying and working to dismantle systemic bias in our communities.
 - Advocating with those we are in community with, to help navigate and connect with options available in the current health care and social services systems, and regarding options in dying and after death. For example, assisting Friends with completing advance directives or consulting about housing options.
- **Love** - Deepening supportive intergenerational relationships that sustain and enrich us all through mentorship, shared learning and working opportunities, and developing our capacity to listen
- **Vulnerability** - Growing in our capacity to trust each other and to be worthy of trust across difference by sharing our stories while staying actively curious and open to the multiple truths we carry about the end of life, offering/receiving help, and growing older across cultural and racial differences - key to our work of dismantling internalized bias
- **Joy** - Transforming what too often is experienced as diminishment, burdensome, shameful, less than, or undesirable about growing old into an embrace of the gifts and opportunities of being an older person through capacity building and lifting up non-Eurocentric cultural norms about growing older

Actions

Since its establishment, our program has supported access to the care we need to thrive as older people by offering **trainings, workshops, and continuing support to volunteer Visitors and Quaker communities**. These offerings continue and are also in an ongoing process of transformation that has been accelerated by the pandemic and the uprising for racial justice in 2020.

Trainings

Effective advocacy begins with an understanding of the current systems of health care, social services, options in dying and after death, and the barriers that some of us experience in accessing those systems, services, and options. The ARCH Visitor training offers Friends an

opportunity to explore those systems, services and options, and to consider the ways that they can be useful, and the ways that they can be made better. But the deep empathetic listening that we practice in the Visitor training unlocks a door to relationship and accompaniment that can help us make the most of what is available to us.

Visitor training remains our core offering, and we recognize that it must also be transformed to be more accessible and relevant to Friends from different cultural backgrounds and life circumstances.

Visitor training has already been transformed from a weekend long residential retreat into an interactive online course so Friends can participate remotely. The course currently comprises seven 1.5 hour weekly sessions. This approach has helped us to offer ARCH Visitor training to Friends who can't or choose not to dedicate a weekend residential retreat to training, at the same time dramatically cutting the cost of operations. It also opens up the possibility of sharing the program widely with Friends beyond NYYM.

However we recognize that our training could be even more broadly inclusive. **We plan to continue to revise and reimagine the Visitor training in additional ways over the next 2-3 years:**

- **As a correspondence course** that could be utilized by those who don't have access to a computer, and adapted for incarcerated Friends
- **Utilizing asynchronous learning technologies** (such as Friends General Conference's Spiritual Deepening E-Retreats Platform) for Friends who do have internet access but for whom synchronous timing is not available (e.g. due to timezone, work schedule, or other commitments)
- By **re-examining our entire curriculum for racist and ageist patterns of language, assumptions about older people, and cultural norms that center on Whiteness and privilege**. This effort is one of continual seeking and transformation. Examples of such assumptions and norms include assuming that older people are less adept with technology, or that all Friends have equal access to the internet, email, or the capacity to volunteer their time. This work has already begun in 2020 with a planned series on "Grief Literacy" open to the entire NYYM.

Workshops

Before the pandemic, workshops, learning, and reflection opportunities had been offered to groups of Friends all over our NYYM by ARCH Staff and Visitors, including our prison worship groups. Workshops are important ways that Quaker community members of every age are exposed to the ways that growing older affects everyone, and how we might grow in our capacity to trust and rely on one another in ways that are life affirming and well bounded. These are distinctive from the ARCH Visitor training, usually focusing on a specific topic (e.g. advance directives, care teams, etc.), for a shorter time frame, and are offered to Friends broadly. The pandemic has curtailed the personal contact, congregating, and travel that has made in-person workshops possible in the past. The pandemic has also increased the need for information about advance directives, grief and loss, and care teams in particular.

Since March of 2020 our workshop offerings have transitioned completely to online and remote formats. As a team, ARCH staff are working to **expand the ways to deliver this workshop content** both on and offline, such as developing new stand alone written materials and offering more remote interactive experiences that inform through personal engagement. Written resources on trauma and grief as well as transitioning from a prison worship group to an outside meeting on release are already in process. We are actively deepening our capacity in new technologies and platforms for remote engagement beyond video calls.

Ongoing Support to Volunteer Visitors and Quaker Communities

The ARCH Visitor network flourishes when Friends can easily connect to the support and resources they need. This is still true in a pandemic, as we continue to remain open, flexible, and agile. Local Coordinators are the conduit for connection to the support our program offers. The Local Coordinators continue to digitally organize geographically proximate groups of Visitors to connect to each other and the needs in their area. They connect Friends with particular areas of interest or concern such as aging while incarcerated, or housing concerns. Local Coordinators also make direct referrals between older Friends, ARCH Visitors and Quaker communities. Since working exclusively remotely, ARCH staff have come to see new ways they can **collaborate across distance on projects such as intergenerational mentorship, conflict transformation, and healing work**. One Local Coordinator worked from Florida after the pandemic caught her there by individually calling each Visitor in her area. Another has been reaching out to each clerk of the prison worship groups via the new email system to help them stay connected when the worship groups are not allowed to meet. As a staff team we are learning that geography no longer divides us, and that we can call on each other's gifts in support of ARCH Visitors in every region.

Our Quaker communities are being challenged to transform into the multi-racial, multi-age communities we aspire to be. Separating ourselves into silos of identity or concern belies our interconnected nature - we need each other in our diversity. **Our commitment to fostering loving intergenerational relationships needs to extend beyond how we care for our oldest - into how we care for each other at every age**. Advance directives and care teams are needed as much by new parents as they are needed by older people. When we normalize this need it makes it easier for everyone, including older people, to access. Easier access helps us to thrive, and thriving people make stronger more resilient communities, and stronger more resilient communities are better able to offer one another care as we grow older. While our mission remains committed to thriving older Friends, we recognize that limiting our care exclusively to older people counterintuitively limits our capacity to have an impact on how well our communities can care for one another. We are already beginning to see this happen in the success of the mentorship program launched in 2020. For this reason we will continue to explore how to expand our focus while maintaining our vision of communities that effectively support older Friends.

Partnerships

We continue to explore new ways of **servicing more Friends and sharing the costs**. With our proven capacity to offer our ARCH Visitor training online, the boundaries of geography begin to be dismantled, and we are recognizing how many of the concerns and blessings we experience with growing older are shared among Friends.

Along with the boundaries of geography, we are learning that possibilities may exist for us to cross the boundaries of yearly meetings. **Our model of supporting Visitors with proximate ARCH Local Coordinators could be expanded to include Local Coordinators from other yearly meetings** that those organizations could hire, and who could collaborate with NYYM's ARCH staff for programmatic support. This could offer other yearly meetings a way to meaningfully support volunteer ARCH Visitors in their area without the expense of a full, or even half time employee. If we could scale up the system we already have established it could leverage one of our greatest assets: our experience and expertise in managing a robust and already far flung program.

As we consider this possibility we will explore if it would work for other yearly meetings to collaborate with NYYM to offer the ARCH program in their yearly meeting by sharing in the expense of training volunteer Visitors from their area, and in the expense of programmatically supporting a dedicated Local Coordinator for their area.

Conversations with Friends in New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) on this possibility are ongoing. The need to hear from Friends directly about where they find themselves, the nature of their concerns related to growing older, and what they feel would benefit their community are key inputs from which to develop potential future partnerships that could have the greatest impact.

Outputs/Outcomes/Measurements

We anticipate completing at least **two ARCH Visitor trainings in 2021, which would train a minimum of 12 Friends**. As of July 2020 two Friends have been trained using the online format this year; another remote training is planned for this fall.

Given the age and longevity of our program, we are at a phase where we understandably and expectedly experience some attrition in volunteer Visitors who for one reason or another move on from this ministry. Therefore we will be working **to maintain our current number of active ARCH Visitors**, approximately 130 in NYYM.

Revising and adapting the Visitor training program to new modalities will likely be a multi-year undertaking. We'll provide **a written report on our progress** in 2021 with the goal of offering at least one new modality by 2022.

We look forward to **growing our number of workshops, learning, and reflection opportunities** in 2020, offering at least five in NYYM, and two in other yearly meetings or other Quaker forums. As part of our efforts to cultivate the gifts of leaders among us, at least three of these will be led by either Local Coordinators or ARCH Visitors. As of July 2020 three such workshops have been offered this year. We'll also develop at least two new stand alone

resources or engagement experiences such as written materials for incarcerated Friends, or remote/socially distant experiences that don't require internet access.

In support of an ongoing exploration of a multi-generational whole meeting approach to embracing a range of different abilities and the needs of older people, **we'll develop one workshop and one written resource in collaboration with children, young adults, parents, and/or middle aged people specifically** that draws on the experience or expertise of older people.

Our exploration into cross-yearly meeting collaboration in support of aging concerns would result in **a written report detailing our learning** about our own capacity to share the ARCH program as broadly as it is desired. This report will try to answer such questions as: what are the insurance and legal issues, would this be considered unrelated business income, how does this fit into the overall faith and practice of NYYM, and what other questions need to be answered, among others as determined.

Sustainability Strategy

A primary strategy for the ARCH program has always been to remain financially nimble. Our 2017-19 Strategic Plan outlined three scenarios for various funding patterns, a best, modest, and worse case scenario each with a way forward for the ARCH program. The budget detailed here falls somewhere between our modest and worse case scenario, leveraging available funds from multiple sources to achieve our goals.

Our long term sustainability also depends on mindful cultivation of future leadership and succession planning. By continuing to develop a group of professional part time local coordinators, we are strengthening our base of ARCH Visitor trainers who can continue to promulgate our methods and processes.

Our programming must also remain responsive. We continue to seek ways to expand the ARCH network by providing training in new and more accessible ways as described above. A continuing focus on dismantling internalized age and racial bias and structural ageism and racism is a way for Friends who focus more on social justice than pastoral care to engage with our program. An ongoing commitment to incarcerated Friends requires us to examine how to respond to the needs of people growing older inside prison and understand how the ARCH ministry can be embodied in an inclusive manner in a carceral setting. Consulting with current and former members of our prison worship groups and listening to their lived experience is an integral part of this process.

As the ARCH program becomes increasingly integrated into the ministry and operations of NYYM, we recognize the opportunity to come out from our "old people" silo and to engage with people of every age. Our experience that what concerns any of us concerns all of us, allows us to engage in a holistic way that supports the oldest among us at the same time that it supports all of us at every age. We will continue to explore how we can utilize ARCH's existing strategies to encourage our thriving at every age. We will continue to develop new strategies for integrative multi-age approaches to our work that support thriving Quaker communities which in turn can nurture us all at every age.

Replicability

We are developing strategic partnerships and collaboration partners to help us sustain our thriving program. Building on our experience with sharing our weekend in-person ARCH training retreats both with NEYM in 2014 and with Concord Quarter of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 2018, we continue to explore the potential to partner with other Friends meetings in a more ongoing way. Rather than simply sharing our experience so that others could replicate our program, we can invite others to participate in our existing program, developing cost-sharing mutually beneficial relationships across organizations.

FFA Values

We intend to continue to exemplify FFA's values in our own.

“As Friends, we approach our work with open hearts and minds and as an opportunity for spiritual growth for all involved. We acknowledge the mutuality of ministry. We ground our work in worship and adhere to Friends' traditional practices in a way that is accountable and transparent. Working in a spirit of love, respect, honesty, and teamwork, we maintain confidences and seek always to honor the commitments we make to one another.” (From the NYYM's ARCH 2017-19 Strategic Plan)

Budget 2021

Actuals are unaudited	2021 Budget	2020 Budget	2019 Actual	2018 Actual*	2017 Actual*
Funding Source					
Grants (FFA, Mosher)	64,000	64,000	69,000	69,000	76,114
Contributions Aging Concerns	20,000	10,000	22,685	2,980	5,280
Products and Services Contributions	1,000	9,000	1,534	4,735	2,826
Total	85,000	83,000	93,219	76,715	84,220
Expense					
Staff Salary and Hourly Wages	89,259	85,324	72,045	82,013	73,740
Other Wage Expenses	9,354	6,826	5,079	7,818	5,460
Health Benefit	18,876	19,594	17,574	19,990	13,240
Pension	3,247	3,178	3,116	2,805	
Travel and Administration	3,500	7,362	4,235	4,096	7,814
Visitor Training and Enrichment	200	200	46	2,860	3,237
Total	124,437	122,484	102,096	119,582	103,491
Funds					
Aging Concerns Invested Trust	5,000	5,000	4,602	4,670	4,721
Aging Concerns Designated Use Fund				16,838	14,538
Balance From NYYM Operations	34,437	34,484	4,275	21,359	319

Budget Narrative

Our budget includes columns for previous years, indicating a similar pattern of spending for most major expenses of our program: primarily staff. Significant differences include an increase in individual giving directly to the ARCH program, and a decrease in the funds allocated to Visitor Training and Enrichment, since most of these costs are eliminated with our use of remote training methods.