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ARCH Director's Report
Callie Janoff
NYYM Summer Sessions

Good morning Friends. My name is Callie Janoff and I serve this yearly meeting as the Director of your ARCH program. ARCH stands for Aging Resources Consultation and Help.

If you are **over the age of 65**, raise those hands. Keep your hands up. Raise hands if **you are in a caregiver role with someone over the age of 65**. If you are caring for someone over 65 **and also caring for children under the age of 18**, put up your other hand. Those of you without your hands up currently: **is there someone in your life that is over the age of 65 that is a part of this yearly meeting that is important to you?** You can raise your hands too. Thank you Friends, you can put those hands down.

Growing older isn't something that happens to **someone else. It happens to us.** So why do we resist terms like elderly, aged, retirement, senior citizen, even old, if **they are us?** There are very powerful assumptions and unspoken rules in our world, that tell us that **youth is preferred**, that any diminishment in our capacity to be "productive" is a diminishment to our value to society, and that we can actually **avoid dying**.

NYYM's ARCH program engages Friends and meeting communities to reconsider these assumptions about the last third of life. We help to create opportunities to **experience growing older as a blessing**, as something to **look**

forward to, as a **rich opportunity for spiritual growth** for ourselves and those around us.

For the last 10 years the ARCH program has served NYYM Friends by creating these opportunities for fostering vital monthly meetings in the **workshops** we offer to monthly & quarterly meetings and worship groups. In **ARCH Visitor training** individuals go deeper into how to offer and to receive care that is a mutual exchange of gifts of the spirit, growing our capacity to trust and be vulnerable with each other: key ingredients for going deeper in worship. By **singing our counter-cultural message** - that blessings attend our last third of life - to one another and into the world around us, we amplify our commitment to equality and justice.

Last year at this time the ARCH program was at a watershed moment: either ask for support from NYYM, or dramatically scale back this vibrant program whose work supports us all. **Friends chose to support the ARCH program**, and such generous funding came forward from individuals to continue our work, that funds from NYYM were not needed in 2016 after all. In addition we applied for and received an additional grant from our primary funder, the Friends Foundation for the Aging, to engage in strategic and business planning to chart a path forward that could be both flexible and prophetic. That strategic planning process happened this Spring and **the seeds of that process are already beginning to sprout and grow**. We have distributed a one page summary of that 21 page plan, which is available in full both on the ARCH page of the NYYM website and there are a couple of copies on the ARCH table in Gullen Lounge.

I'll let Friends review this at your leisure. But I do want to point out the two bubbles that say **strategic and operational priorities**. These describe a way forward to integrate the content, the programming, the ministry, AND the operations, and administration of the ARCH program with the content, programming, ministry, operations, and administration of the New York Yearly Meeting. Friends who's ministry is to care for the NYYM's programming and offerings and those who's call is to the finance, operations, personnel, and administration of the yearly meeting are already hard at work sorting out the nitty gritty of how to do this, and it is my sense that the bulk of this work will be completed this calendar year.

Now I know you are all asking yourselves: How can I be involved with this great work! I'm glad you asked. **Start by taking the ARCH Survey**. There are some paper copies here, but even better is if you can take it online. I have that web address here, and at the ARCH table, where you can also return those paper surveys. Ask others in your meetings to take the survey too. And We'll send this out to the NYYM email list at some point later this summer or early fall.

What else can you do to support the ARCH program? If you didn't get a chance to yesterday, **thank Anita Paul**, co-founder of the ARCH program who is retiring from the program staff this year. **If you have benefited from the wise counsel, spiritual support, and generous listening of Anita over the years, consider making a donation to the ARCH program or to NYYM that honors her years of service.**

But maybe most importantly, we can all participate in this Cultural Revolution by **getting right with ourselves and your own assumptions about aging:** our own or others. Is your meeting burdened with unmet aging related concerns? **Invite us to facilitate a program or workshop for your meeting.** Are you in a transition, struggle, or quandary related to your own aging, or the aging of someone you care about, but haven't or don't feel you can ask for support? **It is a radical act to ask for and to receive the care of others.** There are sign up forms on our table in Gullen Lounge to Visit with an ARCH person this week. Or call or email me to set something up after Summer Sessions. **Are you passionate about dismantling our culture of mass incarceration?** Visit the interest group this afternoon about Aging, ARCH and Prisons. Are you someone who is called to ministry with elder Friends? Consider taking the ARCH Visitor Training, or sign up for our newsletter: ARCH Supports by visiting the ARCH table. **Thank you Friends!**