

**Annual Report for the Spiritual Formation Collaborative  
for the period of May 1, 2023-April 30, 2024**

**1. What do you want the PYM body (all 10,000 of us in PYM membership) to know about your Collaborative?**

We want PYM Friends to know that the SFC has been an ongoing resource for spiritual growth for individuals, Meetings and Quarters for the last 25 years. Through those years, our own spiritual resources have deepened through our work, and we continue to offer plentiful opportunities for spiritual nurture and deepening throughout PYM. We want the body of PYM to know that the Spiritual Formation Collaborative (SFC) offers the opportunity for deepening the spiritual life of any group of Friends including within a Monthly Meeting/Quarter or several Meetings at once. We will come to any Meeting and will offer our program for a few hours, a day, a weekend, or for the full nine-month traditional program. We hope to deepen individual spiritual lives and have a lasting spiritual effect on Meetings through our programs, retreats, spiritual friendship/accountability groups and reading groups. We want Friends who participate in our programs to better understand how to help one another grow and thrive within a Meeting and to deepen their own spiritual practices. We have been offering our program since 1998 and have used our long experience to continually improve the program and offer additional options. Our evaluations are a testimony to the effectiveness of this program for strengthening the spiritual life of everyone in the Meeting. They are available for viewing on our website. <https://www.pym.org/spiritual-formation-program-collaborative/>.

**2. How does your group meet and how frequently?**

The entire collaborative meets every other month on Saturdays from 10:00am-12 or 1:00 pm. We may call additional meetings as needed. From May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024 the entire Collaborative met 7 times. In addition, teams organizing specific events meet as many times as needed to plan the event; an average of 3-4 times before each retreat or event. For example, a team planning a SF program for a Meeting might have an introductory session with the Meeting, 4 planning sessions for the Meeting program, and then 3 weekend retreats themselves. Members take individual time preparing their pieces for the retreats/events and then share the results at team planning meetings. We also hold a weekend annual retreat in August for the Collaborative itself for spiritual refreshment, renewal and long-range planning.

**3. How is the work of the Collaborative being shared with the PYM community?**

We offer the 9-month Spiritual Formation Program, weekend programs, day long program or partial day programs to any Meeting in PYM that requests our programs. We offer a retreat at Summer Sessions and a yearly weekend retreat currently being held at Pendle Hill to the entire body of PYM. We maintain a website sharing information on our programs, all our materials and designs, as well as a calendar for our upcoming programs. This link gives a 3-minute video that is a nice overview of our programs. <https://www.pym.org/spiritual-formation-program-collaborative/>. In addition, we have a print brochure that can be printed or shared electronically. We often prepare individual flyers for specific programs to encourage registration. We rely on PYM staff to provide PR for summer sessions and our annual weekend retreat.

**4. How does your Collaborative remain spiritually grounded through its work?**

The first hour of all of our meetings is used as a check-in spiritually. If a member requests it, we hold that member in the Light. We take care of one another spiritually, nurture one another and Elder one another. Team meetings also begin and end with prayer. And before a program begins team members meet and pray for an hour before the program, pray throughout the program and times are scheduled for Worship during the program. It is also our custom for each facilitator to be paired with an elder, who holds both the facilitator and the group being facilitated In the Light.

When we hold retreats, if we are not facilitating, members will often participate in the activities either with other SF members or participants if appropriate. Spirit and the audience always teach us and guide us during retreats. We continually learn new things and have the Spirit guidance affirmed.

Once per year our collaborative holds a retreat for members when we renew, refresh and examine our work. We pray for one another and support one another in our lives and in our SFC work.

**5. If possible, please provide a report showing the requested budget vs actual expenses.**

(See attached)

**6. What are the major accomplishments for the year? How do they compare to the goals identified in your funding request?**

**Listening One Another Into Wholeness** on April19-21, 2024

One of our major accomplishment this year was our Annual Spiritual Formation Weekend Retreat entitled **Listening One Another Into Wholeness** on April19-21 ,2024 held at Pendle

Hill and open to all of PYM. This year we had 32 people attend from 12 different Meetings. A description of the retreat is as follows:

“Nurture your spirit with a weekend retreat designed to uplift your sense of hope and interconnectedness through listening deeply to self, others and to nature. We will have the opportunity for loving conversations and activities with fellow travelers on the Spiritual Journey. We are pleased to provide an opportunity to gather with .O, a member of Central Philadelphia Meeting and a seasoned facilitator of workshops focused on Quaker values rooted in love, peace, and social justice. Additionally, we will be joined by Molly Hicks, a member of Old Haverford Meeting, who will share her creative music and songs that express her spiritual relationship with God and with others.”

**Retreat to prepare the Holy Ground of our Summer Sessions Gathering** on Wednesday 1-4pm July 26 and Thursday 10-12 July 27, 2023.

We treasure our role of setting the atmosphere for Spiritual led Summer Sessions by offering a pre-retreat that we hope will help summer sessions participants come from a deeper spiritual place before beginning Sessions. Below is a description:

“ We will approach the annual session’s theme of “Living with our Neighbors: Growing into Beloved Community” by exploring the question that Jesus is asked at the beginning of the parable of the Good Samaritan, “And who is my neighbor?” Friend Tom Gates will lead that part of our discussion.

During the workshop we will deepen listening skills and share with Friends in intimate as well as large groups. This is a chance to delve into your Inner Light with Friends by your side. We will share in w(holy) listening, Lectio Divina, passages from Thomas Kelly’s “Beloved Community,” and our own experiences and challenges of being in this world as a neighbor and a member of a blessed community.”

We also offered an information table on the Spiritual Formation Program (SFP) at the summer session fair.

**Offering the 9-month Spiritual Formation Program to Haddonfield Meeting** September 15, 2023 to May 17, 2024 Both the opening retreat on September 15-16, 2023 and the Midyear retreat on January 13, 2024 Happened during this time period. The closing retreat was on May 17-18, 2024. A description follows:

“A 9-Month Program Community

The Spiritual Formation Program components of two weekend and one one-day retreats, personal spiritual disciplines, readings, devotional groups and prayerful support combine to provide a structured community in which each member may discern God’s call and prepare to follow it.

Throughout the nine months, many insights and deep relationships are forged in this intimate exchange. The Spiritual Formation Program encourages Friends to take seriously God’s call in their lives. This is done through a structured, supportive community where:

- Each person commits to full participation in the entire program so that everyone will have a rich experience;
- Each person undertakes a daily spiritual practice for the entire program, a critical component of spiritual formation;
- Each person is a member of two regional groups that meet monthly: a reading and a spiritual friendship group;
- The reading groups (7-10 people) gather to share, worship and discuss responses to assigned devotional readings. These are books about spiritual experience, prayer, scripture, community, the Religious Society of Friends and ministry;
- Smaller spiritual friendship groups of 3-5 within the larger reading groups are also formed and meet on another day each month, sometimes over a meal, to relate their on-going experience of their daily spiritual practices and to share how the Eternal is breaking in on their lives”.

We will be offering this 9-month program again in the fall for Bucks Quarter and are now diligently recruiting for the program. We currently have 16 people registered.

### **Sharing and Teaching one Another in the Beloved Community: Retreat for Old Haverford Meeting on December 10, 2023**

Old Haverford offers members and attenders 2 retreats every year. They invited the Spiritual Formation Collaborative to facilitate their retreat on December 10, 2023. The focus of the retreat was to share transcendent experiences more vocally to enable Friends to teach one another. In order to do this, we examined our spiritual journeys, considered how to deepen worship and when to share revelations during worship.

We are pleased that individual Meetings have been contacting us programs within their meetings. As noted above we designed and offered a one-day retreat for Old Haverford, Gwynedd Meeting requested a speaker which we identified for them and Lansdowne Meeting has requested a 2-hour session for June 8 as a part of their retreat.

We believe our programs not only deepen the spiritual life of individuals and meetings but also result in participants joining their meeting as members.

Our activity matches our funding request and includes an additional Spiritual Formation program: Introduction for Bucks Quarter on April 14, 2024. A few things to note: Haddonfield’s closing retreat was scheduled for May 17 and 18; we have been accepted to provide an FGC workshop on July 1 and are working hard on that program and we are fulfilling a request from Lansdowne Meeting to be a part of their Meeting’s retreat on June 8 as noted above.

**7. What are the things that are stopping/hindering your mission, if any?**

**New members** We need help recruiting younger members for SF. Anyone below 70 would do. This is intense work and needs Collaborative members to devote a fair amount of time. As a result, our members are often retired but we continue to look for those still in the work force and will accommodate our planning meetings to their schedules.

**Need to Improve the registration and recruitment for our yearly weekend retreat**

First of all, we would like to thank PYM staff for their work and support of our program. They have been wonderful. That being said, we would like to make a few suggestions to improve our work and need PYM staff to assist us in making these improvements

**Registration link 6 months before the program:** Every year it is difficult to get registration for our yearly weekend retreat on the PYM website far enough in advance, to give us time to recruit a fair-sized audience. Online registration is often ready 1-2 months before the program. We would like it up 6-8 months before the program so that when we recruit throughout the year, we can give possible participants the registration link. Registration this year was improved by the timely responses of Melinda Wenner Bradley

**Post card out well in advance of the program:** Currently one post card is sent to each meeting clerk and clerk of worship and ministry 1-2 months before the program. We would like additional recruitment efforts and approaches earlier. For example, at 6 months before the retreat and 3 months before the retreat.

**Using a timeline, work together as a team:** We realize PYM staff needs specific information from us in order to make these changes and suggest we agree on a mutual timeline so PYM staff can do this advance work. We hope these changes can improve the number of people benefiting from our program.

**Online listing:** It would be great if the travel reimbursement form and guidelines were listed on the PYM website so members are more likely to submit expenses

**8. Would you like additional support from PYM staff, the Quaker Life Council Clerk, your Program Support Committee liaison, or the Program Support Committee?**

We have received excellent support from Wendy Kane and Melinda Wenner Bradley. Despite the fact that Melinda was doing 2 jobs she responded very quickly to our requests and was instrumental in making our annual retreat in April a success.

Wendy Kane is my go-to-person with questions and has helped with budget creation, PR for the annual retreat and guidance regarding PYM processes. The Collaborative is deeply grateful to both of them and to PYM continued support of Spiritual Formation Programs.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Susan Thompson, Clerk

Spiritual Formation Collaborative of PYM

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## Spiritual Formation Collaborative

### PYM Funding Request for FY Oct 1, 2023 – Sep 30, 2024

Expense description	Amount approved	Amount used	Explanation of use or justification
Annual Spiritual Formation Weekend Retreat at Pendle Hill - mileage only	561.88		
Annual Spiritual Formation Weekend Retreat at Pendle Hill: honorarium for Valerie Brown, Retreat Speaker	\$800.00	\$400.00	Valerie Brown's fee was \$800 and she was unable to participate; replaced by .O with a fee of \$400
Annual Spiritual Formation Weekend Retreat at Pendle Hill: honorarium for Mollie Hicks, Retreat Speaker	\$200.00	\$200.00	
Printing 50 color brochures	\$100.00		
Printing 25 black & white flyers	\$25.00		
Supplies	\$100.00		
50 copies of PHP #288	\$225.00		
NOTE: The collaborative has submitted a program for FGC "Creating/Learning from our Spiritual Stories, and if this program is approved they will be submitting an additional funding request for			
Travel		\$339.93	From FY22-23 payment never received and had to be resubmitted
Annual Spiritual Formation Weekend Retreat - accommodations for all collaborative members to attend, including room and meals	<u>\$2,365.00</u>		Additional funding approved at 2024-02-12 meeting
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$4,376.88</b>	<b>\$939.93</b>	