

More information is available through our website:

www.quakeragingresources.org
(Large Print Resources are available)

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Edited by Pat McBee, Grounded in God, Care and Nurture in Friends Meetings, 2002 Quaker Press of FGC, Philadelphia,

That All May Worship – An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities, 2005, National Organization on Disability, Washington, D.C.

Erik Carter, Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities, 2007, Paul Brookes Publishing, Baltimore, Maryland

<http://www.everyoneisincluded.us/currentinclusionnews.html>

Including Everyone



Aging Resources Consultation Help

www.quakeragingresources.org

Quaker Aging Resources is a collaborative project of New York and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Quakers and is generously funded by the Thomas Scattergood Foundation and Friends Foundation for the Aging.

***Q:** Do I show through my way of living that love of God includes affirming the equality of all people, treating others with dignity and respect, and seeking to recognize and address that of God in every person?*

PYM Faith and Practice, 2002

Including Everyone: At any time, you may experience a challenge that means you need adaptations to access places, activities, and community. We are all in some way differently-abled. For some, needs differ only slightly or temporarily from the mainstream, others face lifelong challenges. Creating an inclusive environment supports Friends' Testimony of Equality and enriches the spiritual community by allowing us to experience the beautiful diversity of humankind. How can a faith community create an environment where everyone fits, all are welcomed warmly and each person's needs are considered?

When creating accessibility and developing community, there are many resources for help, but keep in mind that individual needs vary. Ask a person what they need rather than make assumptions. Many groups are eager to address building accessibility, and this is important. (It is difficult to attend an event if you cannot access the bathroom.) However, inclusiveness requires sound communication and a welcoming attitude in addition to physical accessibility.

Nothing About Me without Me- This phrase offers a reminder to first ask people what they need. Assess why your members can't attend. Are people truly homebound, or is your environment shutting them out? Do you need to work on the environment, communication, or attitudes so everyone is welcomed and included?

Following are some ideas gathered from varied Quaker Meeting's responses to a Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Care and Aging Survey conducted in 2009 and also from [Grounded in God, Care and Nurture in Friends Meetings](#), edited by Pat McBee. In addition, you may contact your Yearly Meeting, or a local advocacy group for resources and support.

How can our Meeting Help?

- Think of a variety of barriers-check that architecture and communication is accessible, and that your attitude is welcoming.
- Maintain awareness of local resources, call on them or your regional faith organization (Yearly Meeting for Friends, Area Agency on Aging, advocacy groups) for help. Regularly make any resources known, i.e. financial assistance that is available.
- Announce needs for rides, visits, or other support after worship, during events, through phone committee or e-mail lists.
- Provide education for the community, on sensitivity and related to specific challenges.
- Maintain contact information for family members or close friends of people who choose to share this information. This helps in the event of a crisis. You may also establish a “buddy system” for people who live alone.
- Support caregivers—Clearness Committees and spiritual care as well as practical support such as cooking, cleaning, visits, transportation.
- Provide opportunities for service to the community—a homebound person may be able to serve on the phone committee, for example, or ask homebound members to mentor new or younger attenders.
- Communicate with people who are unable to attend through newsletters, phone calls, Web blogs, e-mail, home visits, send photographs or letters.