

# Montgomery County Villages

## 2016 annual report

2016 has been another exciting year for villages of Montgomery County. Thousands of volunteer hours were dedicated to helping to neighbors and members as well as to the smooth operation of the village. Village leaders also engaged in partnerships with one another and with other organizations.

This year, Montgomery County Aging and Disability Services received a National Association of Counties Award for the Village Coordination Program ([http://www.uscounties.org/cffiles\\_web/awards/program.cfm?SEARCHID=2016huma39](http://www.uscounties.org/cffiles_web/awards/program.cfm?SEARCHID=2016huma39))

### **(1) Villages in numbers:**

- Active villages: **20**
- Villages in development: **13**
- New geographical communities receiving presentations on villages: **21**
- Faith communities receiving presentations on villages: **10**
- **Estimated** numbers of people involved in a village (volunteer or member): **2,700**
- Number of volunteer rides provided by five villages who participate in the Village Rides program: **4800**
- Number of miles driven through Village Rides program: **29,000 miles**  
( **This includes Regency Taxi Program run by Gaithersburg Help**)

### **(2) Opportunities and Challenges:**

#### **Opportunities**

##### **Increased Capacities**

- **Rockville Village Advisory** Committee successfully advocated for a full-time village facilitator who would work with Rockville budding villages. Trish Evan was hired this December and her work will greatly enhance Rockville villages success.
- **Montgomery County villages** are developing a plan to use villages' collective purchase power to receive discount on goods and services and potentially increase efficiency of operations. (office supply, volunteer insurance, shared software and more!)

- **Montgomery County villages** also attended the 2016 Annual village Gathering in September. Over forty communities sent a total number of 130 representatives who attended six workshops on topics such as fundraising, partnerships, liability concerns and more. The Workshops' summaries and handouts are available on the web.



- **Montgomery County villages received two workshops** to enhance their capacities: board development workshop, led by a Sara Watkins, a pro-bono

consultant and a grant writing workshops led by the village coordinator.

### **Partnerships**

- **Design for Life Coalition** is a new initiative that brings nonprofits who provide home repairs and villages together. The goal of the partnership is to ensure that low income seniors who live within the area of the village can continue to live safely at home while staying connected to their local community. Silver Spring Village and the Village of Takoma Park are the two pilot communities. Habitat, Rebuilding Together, Montgomery College, DHCA, Adventist Young Adult group and Aging and Disability Services are the partnering organizations.
- **Suburban Hospital** and County villages are engaged in a process of identifying areas of shared interest and learning about ways they can collaborate. Suburban hosted one session in November and a follow up is planned for February 2017.
- **EveryMind's Friendly Visitors Program** is working with the Village of Takoma Park to provide friendly visits for Takoma Park Residents. They offer training and vetting and the village provides the volunteer and the people who seek a visitor.
- Many villages also developed partnerships with local organizations: Kentlands Foundation supports The village at Kentlands, King Farm Citizens Assembly supports the Village at King Farm, Silver Spring village has a partnership with Downtown Silver Spring, Olney Home for Life has a partnership with MedStar Montgomery. These are just a few examples. See villages updates on page (4) for more.

### **Diversity and outreach**

- Several villages have been increasingly successful in reaching out to their diverse community. The Village of Takoma Park is working with Low income senior buildings and has created a very vibrant community. Watch this YouTube of one successful community event held recently to see what this is all about. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7SCC2ENqsk>
- Silver Spring Village have also spent time and resources of diversity outreach in East Silver Spring and Lyttonsville.
- Stonegate Community Village serves a very strong and diverse neighborhood of Greater Stonegate.
- East County Village Seniors serves a highly diverse neighborhood around East County Community Center.
- Long Branch have seen robust activity around developing a Latino based village using partnership between IMPACT of Silver Spring, TESS Center, Aging and Disability and Recreation Department.

### **Faith Communities outreach**

- Anne Lipe volunteered her time to conduct a survey of all faith communities in the Upper County area on their perspectives and actions around aging in place. She created an analysis of the results and submitted a report which included recommendation for next steps.
- Holy Cross Parish Nurses received a training on villages and how the parishes nurses can work with them.
- Three mosques are now working on creating a village like program: ISG in Germantown, MCMF in Gaithersburg, and Islamic Community Center of Potomac.

### **Communications**

- Village leaders continue to receive monthly updates from the Village Coordinator. The email includes events, grant opportunities, resources and announcements. All emails are archived on the WAVE website. <http://wavevillages.org/index.php/groups/montgomery-county/general-information>
- The Village Coordinator maintains an up to date website which contains information on all active and developing villages as well as resources, information and links. It also features an interactive map with villages' catchment area. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/village>

### **Challenges**

Last year's analysis of the challenges remains relevant. It is reiterated here with some edits:

#### **Sustainability**

- Sustainability refers both to financial viability of villages as well as their ability to attract and sustain volunteers for leadership positions and hands-on volunteer tasks. This past year two villages became inactive due to lack of

volunteer leadership and two villages that were in development stages halted their activities.

- Financial sustainability: villages rely on grants, donations and memberships to sustain their operations. This requires ongoing fundraising efforts.
- Sustainability will remain a prime concern for developing and active villages. This issue should be viewed as an integral of village operations and not as a problem with a one-time solution.
- Some villages struggle to determine if to charge fees and how much. Fees are often the major way a village funds its operations but on average they only cover about 60-70% of the budget.
- The Village Coordinator continues to consult and support villages in their efforts to sustain all aspects of their operations.

### **Members' needs and village capacities**

- Village members who age at home can become frailer with time. Villages strive to ensure a balance between the desire to support all members as they age at home with the limitations on what they can offer and the safety concerns for the member.
- Villages cannot be seen as the only solution to aging in place. It is essential that there is a realistic understanding of what a village can offer and what it cannot be expected to deliver.
- Villages will be most successful when partnering with other community resources to provide a more comprehensive support system. Villages are working on developing partnership with organizations that complement their services (such as homecare, care management etc.)
- Each village defines its own "comfort level" and degree of involvement with its members. IONA (a DC based aging services agency) has an ethics committee which is available for village leaders who struggle with specific situations.
- The built environment (home and public spaces) will continue to pose a challenge. Villages can offer robust services but people with mobility impairment may have difficulty aging in their homes and neighborhoods in their current state. The Design for Life Coalition is a step in the right direction.

### **Diversity**

- Diversity will continue to pose a significant challenge to villages. Villages report great interest in diversifying their membership but encounter difficulties in connecting with isolated older adults or people with limited English proficiency.



- In addition to the obvious barriers to outreach (language, access), there are different cultural perceptions regarding older adults in different groups. In many cultures, older adults' relationships focus on family only. This makes the concept of a village more difficult to "sell".

### **(3) Villages reports**

**\*The summaries below have been provided by the villages. Not all were able to submit theirs.**

## **Bannockburn Neighbors Assisting Neighbors (NAN)**

Bannockburn Neighbors Assisting Neighbors (NAN) continues to serve the inter-generational needs of our community, with a focus on providing social/educational opportunities and services for seniors. In addition to filling all ride requests originating in our community, our volunteers have transported a few people from other villages. We have about three dozen volunteers of whom a dozen are very active. Most ride requests are from approximately a half-dozen seniors.

New in 2016 were trips to attractions in the metro area. Volunteer drivers provided transportation and docents or volunteers conducted tours. The Wise Elder program presentations were another highlight and drew a large attendance. The Community Association bought a microphone/speaker system at our request because hearing speakers are our monthly events was a challenge for many of our seniors. That system is utilized for NAN and other community events. NAN Block Coordinators gathered and verified information to update the neighborhood Directory, an example of collaboration between two of our neighborhood organizations.

Record keeping continues to be a challenge. Neighbors arrange rides with volunteers without going through the Village Rides request process. We know we provide about twice as many services as are tracked. Board participation also is a challenge, with a minority of board members carrying most of the administrative burden.

We continue as an all-volunteer organization with no dues and no paid staff. Although some volunteers contribute a lot of time, we are able to operate without dues by in-kind contributions and voluntary cash donations.

## **Little Falls Village:**

- Organizationally, Little Falls Village faced several significant challenges in 2016 we will continue working to resolve in 2017 including a re-organization of our board. We completed two total office moves, and, for the first time in four years,

our new member recruitment efforts didn't offset our loss of members to high levels of care.

- We created what we call "*Connections*", a program designed to reach out and personally touch every single member (and now volunteers too) on a very regular basis. The goal is to make sure they feel "connected" with the Village and to make it easier for them to ask for assistance. Volunteers have been responding to a lot of requests for handyman services and calls for with computers and phones.
- We held an "*Antique Road Show*" type of fundraiser last Spring. It was well received and raised about \$5,000. The LFV Development Committee hasn't formally decided whether to repeat the event in 2017. That decision will come early in the year as several fundraising options are considered.
- Our events and activities calendar now shows monthly meetings of a new Poetry Club and a "Game Day" for anyone who loves to play board or card games. We have one volunteer who has attracted quite a following by teaching folks how to play mahjong.



## The Village at Kentlands

The Village at Kentlands began providing services on November 1, 2016. Over 30 volunteers were trained in October 2016 and currently 12 residents have signed up to be members. The Village Planning Committee developed an agreement with Senior Rides to provide the software program that is being used to document requests and services provided. The Committee also succeeded in receiving grant funds from the City of Gaithersburg which will be used to build an interactive website for the Village.

Plans for 2017 include doing more outreach to potential members, training more volunteers, creating an educational lecture series for the Kentlands/Lakelands, developing partnerships with local businesses and creating a successful fundraising strategy

## Rockville City Advisory Committee:

- The Rockville Advisory Committee met monthly during the year. The primary focus in 2016 was to draft recommendations a city-wide village support program, including the creation of a village facilitator position. A primary concern of the committee has been to ensure that a facilitator could focus on

providing support to neighborhoods without the resources to start the village discussion process.

- The recommendations and job overview were presented to the Rockville Mayor and City Council in early March with a recommendation that the facilitator position be funded as soon as possible. Committee members provided several updates to the Mayor and Council throughout the spring.
- The position was approved and funded in June. The hiring process is complete and the Rockville Village Facilitator will be in place in December.
- The Committee organized and hosted a second successful communications event at the Rockville Senior Center in October 2016. Attendance was estimated at about 145 including city and county council members.
- Rockville currently has approximately 3 villages in planning and discussion stages. The challenges continue to be gathering a critical mass of neighbors to move beyond the discussion stage.
- The Rockville Village Facilitator will work with the Rockville Senior Center to continue to expand village support. The 2017 goal of the Advisory Committee will be to work with the Village Facilitator to support village development.

**The FELD** (Falls Road, Evans Street, Laura Lane, Dale Drive) started in the fall of 2015 following the first Community Forum held at the Rockville Senior Center in October. A group of interested neighbors met several times to discuss how to move ahead. A survey was drafted requesting what type of help or need neighbors were interested in. We received approximately a 19% response from our small group. Results were compiled and distributed to neighbors. In both efforts, surveys and results, the neighborhood email list was used as well as hand delivered. A successful seminar presented by a neighborhood attorney at a private home was held in the spring on the topic of Health Care Directives.

Fifteen individuals from our sixty homes attended. FELD hopes to expand its reach outside our four streets and move ahead, but have many questions. We are eagerly awaiting the hire of the new Villages Coordinator at the Senior Center to help us with answers and ideas.”

**The King Farm Neighbors Village** (KFNV) held its recent meeting on November 9, 2016. The meeting was held at Ingleside at King Farm and was followed by a wine and cheese reception hosted by Ingleside. Board

The KFNV is one of many villages nationwide which brings together residents of all ages within a community to identify and provide services neighbor-to-neighbor. These services are particularly focused toward the many older residents today who want to remain in their homes as they age. Villages identify volunteers who help neighbors and identify vetted professional service providers.

Bob Silva, President of the King Farm Neighbors Village, provided a report on the accomplishments which the KFNV has made in its first year and the plan going

forward. Primary among the many accomplishments is the recent award of a grant to KFNV by the City of Rockville which will help to fund its work. In the next few months the KFNV will be reaching out to all KF residents with a survey to help identify the most needed services. After analysis of the results of the survey the KFNV will begin the process of identifying volunteers and service providers and then matching service requests with available volunteers and providers.

Elaine Koubek, Assistant Director of Ingleside and residents of Ingleside shared information about the Ingleside community and emphasized their interest in partnering with KFNV in projects of mutual interest.

The KFNV was also fortunate to have Pazit Aviv, Village Coordinator from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services speak to the meeting attendees. Alexis D'eangelo and representatives from The Rockville Senior Center provided valuable information about the services and activities available at the Senior Center.

All King Farm Residents are invited to attend future meetings of the of the Neighbors Village or request information at [KFNVinfo@gmail.com](mailto:KFNVinfo@gmail.com)

**The Village of Rockville Park** continues to build awareness slowly. A group of neighbors "meet" on the sidewalk to talk about issues and offer solutions. We had a very successful potluck in mid September and gathered names, phone #'s and emails for a group of about 20 families. We hope to grow that each time we meet. I created a spreadsheet and sent it out to all on the list. Now we can communicate easier when fun events or challenges appear in the neighborhood. Right now, our neighborhood is very stable and we have identified families that need support and reached out to both the City Social Services and other groups to assist. The main focus of the group is simply to get to know one another and help out with basic support in an informal way; shoveling, keeping an eye on the neighborhood, reporting unusual activities to the police, etc. We stay connected with the broader East Rockville Civic Association.

## **Bethesda Metro Area Village**

BMAV is delighted to announce that 2016 was a year of growth for us. We hired a part-time executive director, have approximately 75 members, and have 16 trained and vetted volunteers. In November we opened with three services for full-time members: transportation to medical and medically-related appointments, friendly visits, and light household chores (like light bulb replacement and storm window assistance). 2016 also was a very social year for BMAV. We held several wine and cheese parties, started two interest groups (knitting and bridge), and held several informational sessions on topics of interest, including Medicare Part D plans and tech training. We have several events planned for the winter including the first in a speaker series, a museum tour, and a holiday sing-along.

Our challenges are (1) devising a good fundraising plan to keep us sustainable, (2) getting the word out to the community that we exist and are open for business, and (3) recruiting more board members.

Quick stats:

16 and vetted trained volunteers; approx. 75 members; approx. 12 full service members (remainder are social members); 5 board members; 6 volunteers who serve as committee chairs or have regularly recurring roles; 3 available services 1 paid staff; approx. 1-2 social events per month

## **East County Village Seniors**

We entertained a surprise visit from Congressman John Sarbanes on November 2 - who stopped in at East County Community Center to visit the seniors on his tour of East County. He politely posed for a photo with a few of us. He also observed that there were not many men in our Fitness Class, nor in ECVS. (Photo is on website.)

This has not been an overly productive year for us. However, I exercised my delegation authority and was successful in getting about six members together to agree to research some ideas for the organization. Two brought their projects to fruition and were quite successful – Estate Planning and Wills, Power of Attorneys and Healthcare Directives. It is challenging get people to contribute. Over the past several months I have scheduled several safety and wellness related classes for the organization through MC Fire and Rescue and Holy Cross Senior Source, respectively, to be conducted next year.

The organization has not grown in number; however, most events – meetings or presentations, average about 15 people and not the same people all the time. This is disappointing. As a result, I requested one of the project leaders to research having lunch brought in on our monthly meeting dates. She reported at the recent meeting and those in attendance indicated they did not want to participate in the federal program, however, would prefer to contribute to a lunch fund and have it catered. That is an accomplishment that perhaps may interest more members to attend.

## **Silver Spring Village**

It has been a very busy year for Silver Spring Village. We had a part-time executive director, Debbie Billet-Roumell and a part-time program administrator, Vanessa Ripps on board for the full year. In FY 2016 we provided 725 one way rides, 523 friendly visits and check-ins and 403 other home services to our members; and we introduced new services including medical note-taking and a storm buddy program. We continued and added to our series of member



interest groups including: chess, poker, current events, book club, foodies, getting to know you groups and Scrabble. These groups meet regularly and are extremely popular. We hired a diversity/outreach consultant who helped to increase our membership in numbers and diversity. We introduced a more academic bend to some of our programming including presentations on the economy, NASA, and global warming. We also introduced new health and wellness programming: including workshops on Alzheimer's disease, auditory health, and emotional issues related to aging. We grew our list of partners, which now include: Silver Spring Town Center, Easter Seals, Holy Cross Hospital, Silver Spring Public Library, Habitat for Humanity and Silver Spring Day School. All in all, it has been a great year and we are excited to continue our work with seniors in our community.



## Potomac Community Village

As of Dec. 13, we have 176 individuals as members. We have 91 people who have regularly volunteered in the past year. Of these, 24 are non-members, 67 are members. In all, about 200 people are directly involved with PCV.

47 of our 91 volunteers are vetted and provide "direct services" (transportation, computer and other household help, friendly visits and calls) to our members. Of that 47, 18 are non-members. 49 of our 91 volunteers provide "administrative" services to PCV by serving on our Teams (Communications, Program, Help Desk, IT, Volunteer, Membership). Six of those 49 are non-members. We also have an overlap in that a number of our 49 administrative volunteers are also direct services volunteers.

We provided 203 direct services to our members this past year: 160 round-trip rides (about 2,900 miles) and 43 non-transportation services: 25 were assistance





with computers and other electronic devices, with the balance caregiver relief, friendly visits / calls and household chores. Our Help Desk agents responded to almost 400 phone calls this past year, making connections for volunteer assistance, providing 35 members with names of contractors from our Member-Suggested Contractor List, and handling an assortment of other queries – with the majority from local residents wanting information about PCV, from adult children wanting information to share with their parents, from members registering for PCV events, and from others wanting to volunteer.

We have a website ([www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org](http://www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org)), a monthly print



newsletter, a listserv that is sent out 3 to 4 times a month to more than 460 email addresses, and a Facebook page

([www.Facebook.com/PotomacCommunityVillage](http://www.Facebook.com/PotomacCommunityVillage)).

We hold monthly evening meetings 11 times a year that are free and open to all in our community, and generally attract about 65 people, occasionally reaching close to 80. We hold monthly Morning Coffees and Afternoon Teas at local restaurants, also open to all in our community, and use the meetings and the coffees / teas as an opportunity to attract new members and volunteers and create new social connections.

We had two daytime events this year, with 60 in attendance at a movie in the spring, and 50 at a

Lunch and Learn program in December. Both of these were free and open to the community.

We introduced two other programs this year which small numbers of members have responded to: a Holiday Friends Program, under which members invite a fellow member or two who might otherwise spend the day alone for a meal marking one of the season's holidays, and a Storm Buddies Program, for members who would like a phone call to check on their well-being when there is ice, snow, power outages, etc. Those actions which have been particularly valuable to us this year, and which other Villages can learn from, are:

- 1) using large (12" x 24") magnetic Volunteer Driver signs on our volunteer drivers' cars. This attracted attention and phone calls to us, and is the reason we were noticed by the Potomac Farmers Market manager who offered us a free booth at the Farmers Market. (See #2 below.)

- 2) having a booth at our weekly Potomac Farmers Market for 6 weeks this fall, which brought us 65 new names for our mailing list, many new volunteers and new members. We did not wait for people to approach us but went up to those who looked like our "target" audience, asked if they had heard of Potomac Community Village, and went on from there.

- 3) In January 2016, WAVE presented a "branding" program which several board members attended. This brought home to us that our communications materials must use words that speak to our target audience's emotions: independence, peace

of mind, being safe in our homes, friends, living where we want to, the opportunity to help others.

4) We had a successful push to increase our membership and get more administrative volunteers by holding two New and Prospective Member events at our president's home, one in May and one in October. We followed up the snail mail invitations and email reminders with phone calls from our board members to those people who had not yet responded, resulting in many more people attending the events. As part of this, we stressed to our board a goal of generating a certain number of new members by a set deadline, which we met. We have another New and Prospective Member event scheduled for late January 2017.

## Wyngate Neighbors Helping Neighbors

In 2016, Wyngate Neighbors Helping Neighbors -- an all resident/volunteer, no fee, inter-generational village -- completed its 1st year offering 1400 north Bethesda households assistance and social activities.

Our volunteers gave 11 rides, prepared & delivered 19 meals, made 11 friendly visits, and provided 10 other types of assistance.

We organized a weekly walking group, weekly meditation class, monthly book club, occasional meetings of French speakers, and a live music interest group. We hosted stress reduction seminars and presentations on the Human Genome, the County library's digital resources, and County's resources for older residents.

Assistance and social activities have raised the spirits of all concerned. We benefit knowing we live among nice people.

Organizationally, we shared our experiences with emerging villages even as we continued to develop our infrastructure. Nearly 60 residents are interested in our volunteer orientation and joining our 38 volunteers! Our challenge remains on the demand side -- expanding and strengthening our community's awareness of WNNH, particularly among those who are not digitally connected.

## The Village of Takoma Park

Membership: The Village of Takoma Park has 182 members with 4 memberships pending. The Board consists of 12 members. The Board meets every month. The main committees are: Communication, Volunteers and Membership and they consist of 24 members. The communications committee



publishes a quarterly Newsletter, which is well received.

**Services:** November 12, we conducted a “Service Day” together with the youth from the Adventist Church serving 9 households. A service day involves in-house and garden work for seniors. We intend to repeat the service day in April 2017. We have 77 seniors who request rides and 32 drivers. Since April, 2015 we have given 960 rides to seniors. We have 15 Friendly Visitor volunteers who are matched, or about to be matched up with a senior in Takoma Park whom they visit once a week. We have completed 21 minor home repairs and we are testing new projects, such as running “Errands” for seniors and “Walking with seniors”.

**Meetings:** We have monthly seminars, called “Aging-Well” attended by 30 to 70 seniors. We are also developing meetings with tenants in major apartment complexes and we are testing the use of interpreters for non-English speaking tenants

**Support Groups:** We have two support groups, one on “Movement Disorders” (Parkinson’s Disease and Multiple Sclerosis) and one for parents of adult children with disabilities (POSNA).

## **Chevy Chase at home**

Chevy Chase at Home has had another busy, productive year. Not only will we have fulfilled over a thousand requests from members for volunteer services, but we have also produced interesting educational and cultural programs, provided

physical activity classes and special programs for our members and the community at-large. We are continuing our home safety program, in coordination with the Montgomery County Fire Department, and look forward, in 2017, to adding to the 80 homes that have already been inspected and outfitted with new smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

This year we extended our boundaries and have included almost 500 homes in the Chevy Chase West and Village of Drummond area, across Wisconsin Avenue. We already have a dozen trained volunteers from CCW and Drummond and several new members. We look forward to more as 2017 begins.





In June, we produced "A Conversation Between Geraldine Brooks and Guy Raz." Ms. Brooks, a Pulitzer Prize winning writer, and author of The Secret Chord, was aptly engaged by Guy Raz of the NPR TED Radio Hour, about her life as an author, and particularly, the challenges of writing highly researched historical fiction. An audience of over 200 people enjoyed one of our most successful community programs.



Another special program, in November, was the post-election discussion by Charlie Cook, editor and publisher of the Cook Political Report and political analyst for *The National Journal*. He informed us about what just happened in the election, and looked forward to what happens now? Mr. Cook, a veteran political analyst, was incisive and informative in his presentation, a week after the election.

## Olney Home For Life

2016 was another great year for Olney Home For Life (OHFL) and its volunteers. We continue to expand the services we provide to our seniors. In 2016 OHFL:

- Transitioned the Friendly Visits pilot program to a full program providing 155 visits through Sept.
- Delivered 755 rides to our seniors and are on track to deliver 1000 rides by the end of the year.
- Expanded the Friendly Calls program delivering 1,300 calls through Sept. providing isolated seniors with a social contact.
- Had great success at OHFL's first fund raiser and silent auction event in November at the Olney Winery (see pictures below)



- Council Member Nancy Navarro and the County Council recognized our volunteers and their volunteer efforts at our annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration event in October.

OHFL is privileged to have such dedicated volunteers and the support of the community and local businesses. This is key to delivering our services.

## **Washington Grove**

In Washington Grove, the interest in Aging and Disability services, a part of the national Aging in Place or Villages movement, began in 2016 with three residents: two nurses (one, president of the Grove Women's Club), and a trainer/writer for with an adult disabled son. The initial core group hoped to serve not only seniors, but the disabled and children in the neighborhood. They were soon joined by a technology expert.

Washington Grove is a unique 1870s former church camp on the National Historic Register with approximately 500 residents and a town management form of government. While it is already an intact "village," the group planned to keep the new organization separate from the Town of Washington Grove. However, a Memorandum of Understanding may be drawn up to define the relationship. A Methodist Church in the village may also have a relationship with the new organization, such as providing occasional meeting space. To determine interest, there was a community-wide meeting with Pazit Aviv in April 2016, at which approximately 40 people attended and many completed a survey indicating interest in being involved or needing/supplying services.

In the intervening summer months, illness and travel commitments required a search for strong leadership personnel and an expanded core group. In September, several new people stepped forward to take on leadership roles and to work on the launching. Organizational details are still being worked out. A new core group is meeting in January 2017. Already launched is a transportation network ,and in progress are a mission statement and new survey..

## **North Chevy Chase Connections**

North Chevy Chase CONNECTIONS is a multi-generational village under development since August 2015 in an area with 5,000 persons in 2,000 homes just inside the Capital Beltway. We meet monthly in church-donated space attracting an average of 20 neighbors at meeting times that alternate between afternoon and evenings to accommodate those who work. We communicate via an e-mail list of 400 plus civic association list-serves and our own website designed by a board member and hosted on a free platform. During 2016 our activities have blossomed:

- We concluded an online survey of neighbors' needs and volunteer skills that we used as a planning tool.
- We passed by-laws, elected a nine-person board, were incorporated in Maryland, and received our 501 (c) 3 federal nonprofit status.
- We conducted polling place information table outreach and e-mail sign-up during April and November elections thanks to volunteers who manned the tables in 2-hour shifts while the polls were open.
- Highlight of the year was our first social event held at Woodend Mansion in May which attracted 130 neighbors to an elegant volunteer-run wine and cheese party featuring home-made hors d'oeuvres. Many attendees indicated on sign-up sheets their willingness to participate in a variety of proposed interest groups aimed at multi-generational fellowship.
- Organizing interest groups with volunteers has required more time than anticipated especially for the Kids and Families group and one for Visual Arts, but a Gardeners' Group had an excellent organizational meeting featuring an expert neighbor's slide presentation on the county's rainscape/erosion control program. A Walking Group meets every Saturday morning and a small Golfing Group is active.
- We are starting to have outside speakers at our monthly meetings, which have so far included one by the Village Rides program of JCA and one on technology and computer questions by an expert neighbor.
- Senior Referrals and Outreach is under construction thanks to two neighbors who are veteran social workers and a Welcome Wagon program is being designed for new neighbors.
- We have begun a budgeting process and plans for fund-raising, and we hope to begin launching services, perhaps starting with rides, before the end of 2017.

## Villages of Kensington

Villages of Kensington (VoK) had a soft opening on January 31, 2016, with an opening party at Temple Emanuel in Kensington, on a bright, sunny, and fairly warm day, one week after a large snowstorm! About 85 people attended, including various local officials. From that point until June 30, 2016, we offered a household Charter Membership for a set price that provided rides plus one social event per month for all residents of Greater Kensington (ZIP code 20895). On July 1, we opened fully, providing





a full range of services, social/educational events, and Washington Consumer Checkbook online subscriptions. To tell people about VoK and answer questions, we participated in several Kensington-area events, including April's International Day of the Book and the 49th annual Labor Day celebration.

To date, we have 43 members and 35 trained/vetted volunteers, with 29 volunteer-candidates in process. Our 7-member Board of Directors meets monthly in a large meeting room at Kensington Park Senior Living, one of our partners.

Rides are by far our most coveted service, but getting our members to request assistance for other needs has been a challenge. In addition, we know anecdotally that there are many individual households of seniors dotted throughout Greater Kensington who could benefit from our services and camaraderie, but finding them among our total 7,500 households is challenging.

We have no paid or contract staff, so it is sometimes difficult for potential members to understand why we charge a not-insignificant full-services annual membership fee -- \$250 for individuals and \$350 for 2 people at the same address. We explain this by indicating the real-world value of the services we provide (which gets more solid with each additional volunteer!) and the costs we incur to run VoK for which someone must pay. And we then say that we'd make our services free to Kensington residents if we were to find a "Sugar Momma/Daddy" who would pay our costs for this and subsequent years. Maybe if we put that 'Karma' out there frequently enough, it will come to pass!

## **Burning Tree Village**

2016 was a rebuilding year in some respects. Some of our founding board members, and more recent members decided to follow other interests. One former member rejoined, and we are fortunate to have three new members - new ideas, and new energy!

Our website has been completely redesigned and we added MailChimp as a new communication option. We continue to have a weekly e-newsletter. BTV continues to have a number of group activities: the Lunch Bunch meets monthly, there is a knitting group, and a beginning Men's Group. We regularly offer rides to doctor's appointments and other errands. Events included a Medicare Forum, the 4th of July family parade and picnic, the Memorial Day Walk, a Cocktail Volunteer Recognition gathering, a Fall Community Kick-off, and an October Community Service Event (collecting toiletries and socks for homeless shelters). We also participated with neighboring villages in shared events.

## **Mill Creek Village**

Our all-volunteer village has sponsored several social events again in 2016, with great success: game night (25+ people), a St. Patrick's Day party (75-80 people), ice cream social (80), end of summer potluck picnic (~100), and community walk (20). We get great feedback and continue to promote these in order to help community members get to know each other better—and they are fun! We continue our community newsletter, which remains a vital communication link in our neighborhood.

30 or more community members are active as Board Members, Social Committee members, drivers, or handyman service providers. We have had 8 drivers provide 110 rides to 5 community members going to medical appointments this year. We have had two handyman requests.

Challenges:

- We have had turnover in drivers for various reasons and are now down to 6. We struggle to keep enough drivers.
- We would like to have a logo designed for us, but haven't been able to find a way to have that done cost-effectively.
- We struggle a bit with communications, because not all community members have internet. Distributing flyers is a bit labor intensive, and we haven't decided about investing in signs.