



What's Next: Navigating California's Re-opening

As California looks into the post-pandemic unknown along with the rest of the world, we find ourselves joining together even as we are kept apart. Villages are stepping forward with courage and creativity to support their members. There is every indication that their pioneering efforts will continue to expand their value in their communities.

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From the Executive Director



Charlotte

"Trust is our currency." I find myself saying this multiple times each week, and I'm beginning to hear it echoed by my close colleagues. Our intentional communities operate on the basis of trust. How do we manifest this trust? It's an important question to ask ourselves each day.

One striking example of this trust is our diligent process of vetting and training volunteers. Our business model depends on volunteers, and when we bring them in, we prepare them to offer the finest quality of friendship and support to our members over the long term. This requires

an investment in time and money to convey our values, expectations, and processes through training, mentoring, and background checks. I applaud you for maintaining

your standards in the face of urgent need.

I hear that many of our villages are using online platforms for onboarding eager volunteers. They are leaning into new technologies to complete vital steps and maintain their currency – Trust. Trust is especially important in a time filled with mistrust, for example false information about COVID on TV, the myriad COVID scams now in operation, and the isolation created by shelter-in-place orders.

I am heartened by the trust you place in Village Movement California during this challenging time. Since March 9, over 200 of you signed up for eight Zoom calls covering a range of challenges generated by the pandemic. Most of you are asking for more calls, and we hear you. Later in this newsletter we announce a four-part conference series on innovation. We intend to create meaningful opportunities to explore topics essential to your success as villages, and our shared success as a movement. We aim to fulfill the trust you hold that we will inspire growth, deepen impact, and ensure the sustainability of the movement.

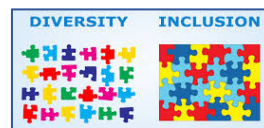
COVID-19 has put a spotlight on the cracks in our society along with the health threat to older adults. One crack is the deep disparity of COVID-19's health and economic impact on older adults of color and their families. Another is the racism hurled at people of Asian heritage by those who misunderstand the science of the pandemic.

How many in our villages experience disproportionate harm from our society's response to COVID-19? How many of us are in relationships with those whose disease burden is high? I bet the answer is "many", whether friends, family, colleagues, students, employees, village members, or organizational partners. Let's think about how we earn their trust to respond effectively to inequity and discrimination during these difficult times.

Another phrase I often repeat is "this is our time." I believe the values and ideals of the village movement are required now: intentional community; opportunities to grow in heart, mind, and body; agency in the face of inevitable life transitions; democratic process; love. Let's pull together to share our ingenuity as we expand the village movement and its many benefits further into our communities. It's time!

New! Diversity & Inclusion

In our quest to grow a movement that reflects the diversity of California's older adult communities, Village Movement California's Diversity and Inclusion Team has begun to build a policy and create a plan. A range of initiatives and outcomes are possible. We could closely partner with organizations led by Latinx, African American, Asian American, LGBT older adults to foster a wide scope of village types. Individual villages could expand their capacities to support members with a range of identities.



The Team understands that shared language is an important component of successful work. For example, what do we mean by diversity? There are many dimensions including gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, strengths and preferences, family constellation.

Practices of inclusion are vital – we don't want to check boxes, we want members to feel valued for who they are and what they contribute to the village. One concrete step each of us can take today is to use the vast array of online resources to educate ourselves about the history, culture, and values of California's diverse communities and their older members. Two opportunities are:

- PBS' New Series: [Asian Americans](#) – the link takes you to a page chock full of resources like films, blog posts, in-depth profiles, and May is Asian American month
- Pasadena Villages' 1619 Group – see article below

We welcome your thoughts about our important efforts to expand the boundaries of the village movement. Please share them with Charlotte Dickson 510-900-6380, charlotte@villagemovementcalifornia.org.

The 1619 Project

By Sue Kujawa, Pasadena Village



In August of 2019, the New York Times launched “[The 1619 Project](#)”, named after the year in which the first enslaved Africans were brought to America. The project aims to “...place the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of the story we tell ourselves about who we are as a country.” Nicole Hannah-Jones won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary for this project.

In April, twelve Pasadena Village members met via Zoom to continue their discussion of issues raised by this New York Times publication. The 1619 discussion group arose from a desire expressed by a number of members to gather together to read the New York Times articles. They wanted to learn more about our nation's complicated history, examine how it impacts us today, and most importantly, help us create a more just future.

Some members of the group were curious to know if there were any other villages around the country that had similar groups. Dick Myers, facilitator of the 1619 group, posted an inquiry on the national Village to Village network website. Sara Lennox, from Northampton Neighbors in Massachusetts, responded that she was interested in learning more about the project.

And so, thanks to the wonder of Zoom, Sara joined our April meeting and will be a part of the group. Dick continues to reach out to people of other Villages so they can learn from each other and tackle the important issues raised by the Times's articles.

At the April meeting, members continued their discussion of an article by Ta-Nehisi Coates advocating for reparations to be made to partially mitigate the stain of slavery. The discussion also focused on the current coronavirus pandemic and the impact of race on coronavirus cases. The meeting participants were reminded once again that the residue of slavery permeates everything. The discussions continue next month.

If any village member is interested in learning more about this discussion group or joining it, please contact Sue Kujawa at susangail.kujawa@gmail.com.

Update

Master Plan for Aging



Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings resume on **May 28, 9:00am – 12:00pm** on Zoom. Sign in details are [HERE](#). Contact Engage@aging.ca.gov.

Scheduled Zoom Calls: Villages Respond to COVID-19

Village Movement California will continue to hold weekly Zoom calls to facilitate information sharing and skills development to help our members navigate these tricky times.



Date	Time	Topic
Wednesday May 20	2:00 – 3:00 pm	What's Next: Navigating California's Re-opening
Wednesday May 27	2:00 – 3:00 pm	Statewide Coffee Chat #2

May 20, 2020, 2:00 – 3:00 PM [REGISTER HERE](#)

May 27, 2020, 2:00 – 3:00 PM [REGISTER HERE](#)

Video-recordings and PowerPoint slides from previous weekly calls are posted on the [COVID-19 Resources page](#) of our website. Scroll down the Resource page to find them.

Statewide Coffee Chat #1 a Success!

A group of 73 people from 31 villages ventured onto the first statewide Zoom event for village members. We broke into 14 small groups for half the call. One person wrote, “It was great to recognize each other in our shared mission and get some renewed energy from other village members,” and another “...excellent and fun!”



Zooming Together Statewide

Our next statewide coffee chat for village members will be held on May 27 from 2 – 3 pm. Register [HERE](#).

Please share this information with your members:

Village Movement California’s second statewide coffee chat gives you a chance to meet and talk with village members all over the state. Join this fun and enlightening event with a smart phone, tablet, computer, or by telephone. Register [HERE](#).

Upcoming Events



Weekly AARP Tele-Townhall Calls continue with helpful information during COVID-19. Calls take place every Thursday. Find detailed information and topics [HERE](#).



Brand New! Village Movement California's 2020 Statewide Conference Series: Innovation Can't Wait

Innovation can't wait – it demands to be created now. The COVID-19 era insists that the village movement embrace innovation to succeed. In lieu of a face-to-face convening, we're launching a statewide **Innovation Can't Wait Series**: June 24, July 8, July 22, and August 5 from 2:00pm – 3:30pm on Zoom.

Our series will address critical topics identified during VMC's recent weekly calls. Each session will feature presentations and discussion. The topics are:

- Marketing and Membership
- Financial Sustainability
- Building Community with Technology
- The Intergenerational Village

Please look for a registration link and more information over the weeks. Emails and eblasts will contain the subject line: *Innovation Can't Wait*. Please check the website periodically as well to be sure you don't miss anything.

Important note: California village leaders will receive a short survey to help the Planning Committee focus the conference sessions. Please urge them to complete it!

Tales From the Village

Village Movement California members have been in the news!



City Heights Village San Diego was featured in a recent public service announcement about COVID-19 questions asked of the local Health and Human Services Agency. View it [HERE](#).

SLO Village was featured in an article in the Tribune about providing services to members during the pandemic. View it [HERE](#).

San Francisco Village's video was shared on social media and picked up by the "Make Your Mark" Campaign of the [California Department of Aging](#). View it [HERE](#).

Please send us links to media coverage. We'd like to share them with our members, funders, and partners. info@villagemovementcalifornia.org

Sausalito Village & the COVID Initiative

By Carol Haig



Sausalito Village is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. In a small city with no senior center and limited programming for seniors, Sausalito Village has become a vital provider of social connection and needed services for residents over the age of 60.

Building a Partnership

How did this happen? Betsy Stroman, village founder and past president, led the way to a strong partnership with the City of Sausalito based on mutual aid. The fledgling Sausalito Village needed access to venues to hold programs and special events. The City of Sausalito welcomed an organization that promised to offer so much to older adults and provided the space at no cost. And a special partnership was formed.

Age-Friendly Cities Designation

When the World Health Organization, WHO, launched the [Age-Friendly Cities Project](#), it defined such cities as those that:

- Recognize the great diversity among older persons
- Promote their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life
- Respect their decisions and lifestyle choices
- Anticipate and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences

AARP promoted this project in the U.S.

Sausalito was the third city in California to receive the Age-Friendly designation. It came about through the efforts of the Age Friendly Sausalito Task Force, which included Sausalito Village members. The City was interested but leery of the expense they anticipated in meeting the requirements. Sausalito Village promised to come up with a creative and inexpensive way to fulfill its Age-Friendly plan of action and they surveyed 2400 residents age 55+ to learn what was important to them. The survey called out transportation as a major issue; in Sausalito, city busses only run on the flats of town and on the 101 freeway above, leaving its many hilly neighborhoods without public transportation.

CARSS Comes to Sausalito



The village already had volunteer drivers providing rides and running errands for its members. The Age Friendly Sausalito Task Force, whose members were also village leaders, proposed a similar service for the city.

The result, after five years of operation, is [CARSS](#) – **Call A Ride** for Sausalito Seniors – staffed with volunteer drivers and offered free to residents age 60+ for any reason within the City limits.

It runs weekdays from 10am – 2pm. Older adults can reserve a ride up to one week in advance or same day. The village runs the program for the city and recruits and screens volunteer drivers. The village's salaried concierge, who manages all village members' service requests, simply expanded her duties to also manage the ride requests for **CARSS**.

After a gap grant for the first year of operation, some **CARSS** data:

- Approximately 40 volunteer drivers
- 5 years of operation: 11,000 rides
- 165-200 rides/month
- Most rides are 10 minutes

Operating cost is 22k/year, paid by the City of Sausalito. Due to COVID-related budget shortfalls, Sausalito Village has committed to raising the funds for next year.

COVID-19 Arrives

Most **CARSS** volunteer drivers are over 60 years of age. When COVID-19 arrived the majority were reluctant to continue driving and for safety reasons **CARSS** stopped offering rides. Instead, **CARSS** offered to run errands for anyone in Sausalito age 60+ or living with someone 60+. They enrolled people they knew and trusted—spouses and partners of city staff—as interim drivers while they recruited and screened new drivers.

Currently there are 11 drivers, all under the age of 60, six of whom are new. Some are temporary as they are currently off work. The older, established drivers have taken on other volunteer tasks for the village. After an initial flurry of errand requests, the re-purposed program is steadily providing needed services, completing over 300 errands in the first six weeks. **CARSS** will continue as an errand service until it is safe for village members and drivers to ride in a car together again.

How to Build Partnerships for Your Village

Many of the most successful villages across the U.S. have solid affiliations with their local governments, community agencies, faith-based organizations, or other established local providers. Tricia Smith, Sausalito Village president, suggests that villages wanting to build and nurture such relationships explore what their city or other potential partner needs that the village could provide. Develop relationships with local leaders and identify a project your village could do for your city that won't cost much. Libraries and parks and recreation are likely entry points.

For more information about building city and community partnerships, please contact Tricia Smith, triciasmith58@yahoo.com.

Special COVID-19 Resources



AARP's One Stop Information Guide on COVID-19 for all Californians

— how to get caregiving support, how to stay safe at home, and how to find important resources through the California Aging and Adults Information line. There are also contacts to report fraud, abuse, or neglect and more. The resource card is digitally available in English, Spanish, and Chinese and can be downloaded [HERE](#)



Friendship Line — from the California Department of Aging, is a vital lifeline for those feeling isolated and alone to connect with a caring, compassionate voice ready to listen and provide emotional support. During this time of COVID, when the most vulnerable population is even more isolated than usual, this service provides an ally, a friend, and most importantly a human connection. Most people who staff and volunteers converse with daily are those who live alone and simply need to talk to someone – to connect. **The phone number is 888.670.1360.**



Restaurant Meals for Older Adults: Great Plates Delivered

— In late April the state authorized funding for a restaurant meal delivery program for older adults who are “at high risk of exposure to COVID-19 or have an income of no more than 600% of the federal poverty level (about \$75,000 a year for a single person).” The program is administered at the local level and is coming on board daily. Use this [LINK](#) to find your local program, and let your members know about it!



Medicare Fraud in the time of COVID-19 includes robocalls, donation requests, and fake offers for protective equipment and “cures”. Learn more [HERE](#).

All newsletters are archived [here](#)

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Our mailing address is:

3220 Fulton Street San Francisco, CA 94118

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