



Caregiving Support

Most caregivers in the U.S. are family members who are stretching to add the care of a loved one to their existing responsibilities. Our villages are uniquely positioned to give care to their caregiver members, supporting them and welcoming their loved ones in village activities. Read on to learn more about caregiving support.

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From the Executive Director



Charlotte

Caregiving is a hot topic within the aging field with leaders from many sectors looking at ways to acknowledge and support family caregivers. Family members provide the majority of care in our state. The Master Plan for Aging recognizes this and contains potent recommendations for a system of family caregiver support.

How do villages support the family caregivers in their midst? As villages grow and mature over time, members who joined when they were active and healthy develop

physical and mental challenges that require a caregiver's help. The members' spouses and partners move into the caregiver role and this shift can change members' relationships with their villages. For example, they may have to take a break from their leadership positions or stop participating in programs. Isolation from the village itself is a danger for both the person whose health has declined, and for their family caregivers. These are naturally occurring dynamics that villages need to address.

A group of family caregivers at Pasadena Village felt isolated from the village and decided to build a peer-led social support group for themselves and others in their situation. A social support group lets caregivers know that they are cared for, that others can provide assistance, and that they are part of a compassionate network. Resources provided include companionship as well as emotional or informational support. The group is a lifeline for its members – read their article below in **Tales From the Village**.

There are numerous ways villages support their family caregiver members. One is including the couple in village social events and programs. I have heard powerful testimony about how Pasadena Village provided vital social connections and new friendships to a family caregiver and her spouse after his catastrophic health event. This village maintains open invitations to members with progressive cognitive challenges. These acts of inclusion support the member and their family caregiver.

As intentional communities of care and support, villages can thoughtfully consider what they offer the family caregivers in their midst. Two major strengths of our movement are creativity and responsiveness. We can harness these to support families when they enter the transition to caregiver and care receiver.

Village Movement California was awarded a grant from the Arthur N. Rupe Foundation in August to build our movement's capacity to support family caregivers, including those who are caring for partners with dementia. A major activity of the grant is working with the Pasadena Village Caregiver Support Group to develop the *Village Caregiver Support Group Toolkit*. The *Toolkit* will include guidelines for organizing a village social support group, along with information and resources offered by caregiving organizations. The *Toolkit* will be featured on a website page dedicated to caregiving. In 2021, Village Movement California and the Pasadena Caregiver Support Group will offer webinars and coaching to help your village start your own family caregiver program. In the meantime, please complete this three minute [survey](#) about caregivers to inform our work.

Fire Season Continues



[CALMatters](#) reports that in our 14 most fire-prone counties, fewer than 25% of Californians have signed up for emergency alerts. To increase their chances of receiving local alerts, people need to [actively register](#) with their county. Please make sure your village members and volunteers are signed up! [This link](#) will take you to a list of counties and their sign-up forms.

In Northern California, PG&E continues to impose Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS). Village members and volunteers can stay on top of scheduled PSPS by using this [link](#).

Across the state, utilities offer the *Medical Baseline Program* to people who rely on devices that use electricity. The programs are based on medical need, not on income. Benefits include lower rates on monthly energy bills and extra advance notification of PSPS.

[PG&E Medical Baseline Fact Sheet with Links](#)
[PSE Medical Baseline Web Page](#)
[SDGE Medical Baseline Web Page](#)
[SoCalGas Medical Baseline Web Page](#)

Update: California Master Plan for Aging

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) finalized its recommendations and sent them to a Cabinet level workgroup for adoption and incorporation into the final plan. The Governor will approve the final plan in December.



Villages are included in the recommendations for two of the five goals: **Goal 2:** Livability and Purpose, and **Goal 3:** Health and Well Being. Use this [link](#) to see the specific language for Goal 2 (page 114) and Goal 3 (pages 184-185). A team of village leaders has reached out to the Secretary of the California Department of Health and Human Services (CAHHS) and the California Dept of Aging Director advocating that villages be included in the Governor's final plan.

For more information, contact Charlotte, charlotte@villagemovementcalifornia.org

Diversity & Inclusion – Equity Too

By Charlotte Dickson, Executive Director



Village to Village Network's October 6 conference sessions included an excellent panel focused on Diversity Equity and Inclusion. It was moderated by Aiyshen Padilla, AARP Vice President for Enterprise Strategic Relationships, and it featured Christine Happel, Village in the Ville, Kathy Pointer, Director Kingdom Care Senior Village, Megan Jochimsen, Executive Director Hotel Oakland Village, and Elisa Barnett, San Diego LGBT Center.

One of Ms. Padilla's first statements was that we must include *equity* in any conversation about diversity and inclusion. Equity is the lens through which we look at what people need to live their healthiest, happiest lives, and then commit resources to

support this. In our movement, subsidizing membership fees exemplifies a commitment to equity. Villages invest resources to support members who do not have the financial capacity to pay full dues. What are other examples of equity in our movement? What else might we do?

A question from the audience that stood out for me was, “What are some things well-meaning White people do that is difficult for you, and what could they do instead?” The panelists who identified as Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (BIPOC) graciously shared their responses. The answers are best practices to incorporate as we seek partnerships with diverse organizations and leaders in our communities:

“I don’t like being asked to speak for everyone in my community. I am one person! I suggest White folks educate themselves.” We are fortunate to have the Internet and many curated lists of resources to access on our own. Village Movement California’s website has a list of videos and short reads [here](#).

“White-led organizations should show up for the BIPOC organizations and leaders they want to engage. If you want to invite a group to help you, reach out to them with a genuine offer of support. Show up for them!” BIPOC organizations seek genuine relationships with communities like ours. They don’t want to feel used. They want to get to know us, experience our genuine curiosity about their strengths and challenges, and form reciprocal bonds. We can identify organizations we are curious about and begin the relationship-building process.

We are all learning all the time! Working to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive village movement, and society, is a journey. The California Department of Aging (CDA) just announced a monthly peer-led webinar series called *Ensuring Equity in Aging*. This free resource is an excellent opportunity to learn with others in the fields of aging and intergenerational community. More information is below in **Upcoming Events**.

New! Villages and COVID

In this new section, we focus on how villages are innovating to support their members in the time of COVID. Many of you have valuable experiences to share. Our first item, below, is a project that provides just such an opportunity.



Best Practices Toolkit

Pazit Aviv, Village Coordinator in [Montgomery County MD](#) and Village to Village Board Member, is creating a COVID toolkit for villages. She seeks your input. Here’s her invitation to you:

COVID-19 has created a new reality for everyone, and villages are now adapting to it. There is no road map to guide us, but through our collective hivemind, we can build our knowledge base.

Many of you have excellent ideas, policies, and best practices other villages would love to know about. Please share this request with the person on your team who is best able to enter your contributions. There are six categories you can choose for your entry:

- *Safety policies*
- *Programming*
- *Volunteer recruitment and retention*
- *Leadership sustainability and growth*
- *Communications strategies and tools*
- *Financial sustainability*

The link to use for your entry is [here](#).

Thank you for your help! Please feel free to contact Pazit Aviv, Pazit.Aviv@montgomerycountymd.gov, or 240-777-1231

Navigating California's Re-opening: Round 2

Businesses around the state are making plans to re-open as counties make progress towards reaching the indicators for active COVID cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and more. On the other hand, congregate housing sites for older adults, like independent and assisted living, maintain strict guidelines for sheltering in place and barring visitors. That's because COVID remains easily transmitted, and is often deadly for older adults.

Villages throughout the state continue to do their work online and at a distance. Several are organizing small outdoor gatherings, but none have opened their offices or program spaces.

Last May, Larry Meredith, retired director of Marin Health and Human Services, made a Zoom presentation about the first re-opening. He stated that the re-opening of businesses is driven by economic concerns, not health concerns. He maintained that villages are fundamentally in the business of supporting the health and well-being of their members and should be driven by health concerns.

We advise you to hold back from opening your indoor program and meeting spaces and continue to follow local public health department and CDC guidelines until a vaccine is approved and widely available to the public.

Watch the video-recording of Larry's presentation [here](#).

Tales From the Village

Caregivers and the Village

By the Pasadena Village Caregivers Support Group



Sometimes it creeps up slowly. Other times, it is a traumatic life changing event. Whatever the cause, when one partner in a relationship becomes increasingly dependent upon the other because of long-term and often progressive physical or mental health problems, the result is life changes for both partners.

As one partner struggles with health issues and sometimes decreasing capacity to function, the other takes on the role of Caregiving. This new role is different from parenting and other kinds of dependent relationships because of the couple's history. It is this history, often very long, that supports the bond and the historical behaviors that require reshaping to fit the shifting needs of the present.

Caregivers begin to absorb responsibilities that were formerly shared. And sometimes they are forced to take on responsibilities that were never previously shared – one partner had always taken care of them but, for whatever reason, no longer can. Over time, these responsibilities can become overwhelming. Caregivers experience changes in lifestyle. They grapple with questions of decision making and 'who is in charge'. They struggle with internal messaging pressuring them to 'stay strong'. Fighting issues of isolation and fatigue become commonplace. Those fortunate enough to have the resources may hire help to provide limited respite and assistance with caregiving needs, yet another layer of things that must be 'managed'.

Two significant events occurred during the past four months affecting the Caregivers who are Pasadena Village members – the creation of a Caregiver support group and the arrival of the Coronavirus.

In January, at the request of the Village Support Assessment Team, a group of Caregivers came together and drew up plans for a Caregiver support group with guidelines for participation and a schedule of regular meetings. The group began meeting in early February.

And then, Coronavirus struck. Social Distancing orders were issued for the entire state. It became clear that the risk to Caregivers and their partners was heightened by having outside help come into the home. The services designed to reduce the demands on the Caregiver were stopped. Even contact by family members was limited. The sense of Caregiver isolation, loss, and fatigue increased.

However, a place where members with these common issues could come together and share and support one another had already been created. For the Caregivers, the Caregivers support group offers a place to gather, now on Zoom, to share experiences and resources, to relieve some of the stress of the job they hold and make a human connection. For the village, this has been one additional way of giving and of improving the community life of our members.

Join the Village Movement Video Goes Live!

We released our new video on October 14 and have received lots of good feedback from you. You can see it on our [homepage](#).



We are pleased that 38 villages contributed money and visual assets to the video – all of the pictures and video footage comes from our members.

Our October 14 workshop laid out best practices for sharing the video digitally. The workshop included a coordinated plan to build impact across the state. Here are links to the [video-recording](#) of the workshop, and the PowerPoint [slide deck](#).

Our next step is tracking the impact of the video on member inquiries and enrollment. Please contact us if you would like to participate in a statewide effort to do this.

If your village hasn't yet participated, you still can. Contact Charlotte, charlotte@villagemovementcalifornia.org, to determine your contribution amount and get links to the video and workshop materials.

Want to share your online events with other villages?



You may have noticed that we've sent eblasts about events sponsored by Ashby Village that overlap with the Village Movement California's priorities, such as the conversation with State Treasurer Fiona Ma about the Master Plan. Village Movement California will gladly send out information about events your village is holding that may be of interest to villagers across the state. We can send eblasts or we can add a notice in our newsletter. It goes out mid-month and always has space for events. Please contact Charlotte with your event information: charlotte@villagemovementcalifornia.org.

Village Movement California Resource Inventory – Short!

We are conducting an inventory of our members' resources, skills and expertise so that we can plan future programs. Follow this [link](#) to complete it by **November 6**.



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](#).



Statewide Coffee Chats are Back! Member to Member Coffee Chat: Resilience

November 17 1:30 – 2:30pm

COVID-19 has impacted our daily lives for over eight months now. How are you doing? How are you adjusting to a situation that keeps changing with indefinite uncertainty? How have you built your resiliency bank to continue to cope?

Join village members across the state to engage in small group dialogue about your life—what is hard, what is bringing pleasure, what are your fears and hopes? What parts of your day are spent with and without purpose? What makes you feel liberated, restored, hopeful? Let our community support you and be a support to others. Who knows, you might just hear or share the exact idea that will make the day brighter!

Register [here](#)



Equity in Aging Webinar Series

November 4, 2020 – July 2021, Every 1st Wednesday, 10:00am – 11:00am

Monthly peer-led webinars will feature national, state, and local leaders exploring how we can help make our communities more just and build a California for *all* Ages. Sponsored by the California Department of Aging.

Webinars will cover a range of topics including how historic and systemic discrimination and internal biases harm the well-being of [BIPOC](#), [LGBTQ](#), and disabled older adults. Join us for the first webinar: *Ensuring Equity with Tribal Elders*, November 4, 10:00 – 11:00a.m. [Register for the Tribal Elders webinar here!](#)

Special COVID-19 Resources

Ask an Expert



A daily COVID-19 feature on the San Francisco Bay Area all-news radio station, KCBS, each Q&A session has a pandemic-related subject and compiles listener questions into a 20-minute discussion with a subject matter expert. All discussions are available in recorded and transcribed formats [here](#).

A recent program discussed *How to Assess the Risks of Different Activities*. For example, instead of designating some activities as off-limits and others as safe, we should be evaluating our environments and the precautions being taken. Listen [here](#)

Correction –*In our September issue, the article Disaster Preparation Makes a Difference should identify the village as Village Santa Cruz County not Village of Santa Cruz County.*

All newsletters are archived [HERE](#)

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