



Carol Haig, Editor

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AGING. BETTER.

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Villages: Meeting the Need

Against the backdrop of the pandemic and the upheaval it brought, along with the social unrest we are experiencing, there are signs of progress and hope. These are echoed in the flexibility and creativity of our villages as we stay true to our vision and mission, and supported by initiatives led by our state and the federal government.

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From the Executive Director



This year's Older Americans Month takes place as our villages and our state are emerging from the pandemic. The theme, *Communities of Strength*, reflects the resilience of older adults, their families and friends, and all those who offered crucial services and supports during the pandemic. Many older adults survived, and too many died. I join you in mourning the loss of millions of older adults and acknowledge the disproportionate number of deaths in communities of color in our country and across the globe.

I recently read an article confirming the strong desire

Charlotte

among older adults to age in their homes – nine of ten people surveyed. I've learned that the percentage of older adults living in congregate housing -- nursing homes, independent and assisted living, and memory care -- is at its lowest in many years and

is predicted to remain that way. These statistics show a tremendous society-wide need for what villages offer: human development, friendship and connection, supports and information, volunteerism and engagement.

How do we meet that need together? What have we learned from the pandemic, and how we will take those learnings forward? How will we fulfill the Master Plan for Aging's objective to promote and adapt our program model? Our upcoming, annual convening, REIMAGINE, will address these questions through short presentations, breakout groups, structured networking, and rich online resources.

Join the Village Movement California Board of Directors and me on June 15 and 16 from 9:00 – 12:00. Please send a delegation of four or more leaders and members so that they can discuss what they learn and make an action plan. I'm excited about the conference, and this remarkable moment in our movement's history! For more information about the conference, follow this [link](#).

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

There is some good news amidst the violence and discrimination we see each day in our nation. It is important to take in the progress that advocates are making to build opportunity and respect for people whose identities have been marginalized.

Our country's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) broke ground in March with the confirmation of Dr. Rachel Levine as Assistant Secretary for Health. [Dr. Levine](#) is the first openly transgender federal official confirmed by the U.S. Senate. President Biden stated that Dr. Levine "...will bring the steady leadership and essential expertise we need to get people through this pandemic — no matter their zip code, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability."



[SAGE USA](#), the nation's premier service and advocacy organization for LGBT older adults, posted, "Dr. Levine's confirmation as Assistant Secretary for Health is a win for the American people given that her stellar credentials are beyond dispute; it's also a win for transgender people and representation in government. Dr. Levine has been a champion for LGBT elders, who came out strong for her confirmation."

Last week, DHHS [announced](#) that the Affordable Care Act's stance on sex discrimination prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Discrimination in health care impacts health outcomes. Research shows that one quarter of LGBTQ people who faced discrimination postponed or avoided receiving needed medical care for fear of further discrimination. SAGE USA reports that 40% of older adults have not revealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to their healthcare providers.

Pasadena Village and Village Movement California are meeting with Sherrill Wayland, SAGE USA's Director of National Education Initiatives, to explore opportunities for our

movement to learn more about the older LGBT community. Stay tuned for more specific information.



Celebrate Successes, Explore Possibilities, Make Connections at Village Movement California's Annual Convening!

Reimagine!

June 15, 16 9:00 am – 12:00 pm via Zoom

Villages are lifelines to the vital connections, services, and expertise that support healthy aging. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced our value and altered how we operate. This “new normal” will require our collective ingenuity, passion, and hard work. Let’s take some time to celebrate our resilience, reimagine our villages and our movement, and make new connections with each other. We have earned this time to reflect, savor, and plan for what comes next.

REIMAGINE will combine high-quality presentations with breakout sessions to help you integrate what you’ve heard, provide time to connect with colleagues, and have fun. The Convening is built for village leaders, volunteers, and members working in communications, programs, outreach and training, governance, and fund development. It’s a great opportunity for current and emerging leaders in your village.

We are pleased to present these workshops:

- **Reframing Aging** with Janine Vandenberg, Director and Chief Catalyst of Changing the Narrative. Janine will connect your villages’ mission, vision, and purpose to the national movement to change the way people think, talk, and act about aging and ageism. Be prepared to get excited!
- **Building Communities of Belonging** with The UNtraining. Two skilled facilitators will lead a presentation and discussion about diverse identities--your own and those you want to bring into your villages. Recognizing and talking about identities will help us build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive village movement.
- **Evolving the Post-Pandemic Village** with a panel of village leaders. Our panelists will address key questions about challenges facing villages, followed by breakout sessions to help you dig deep into your own thoughts and questions.
- **Sponsorship and Financial Sustainability** with Katie Brandon, Pasadena Village Executive Director. Katie will share her deep experience with organizational and business sponsorship and give you action steps and practical tips to get your new initiatives going right away.

- **Play in Place** with [Evan Johnson](#). Evan is the founding director of the Cosmic Elders Theater Ensemble, a project of Canada's [Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation](#). He will lead a convivial theater arts workshop that is sure to give your energy and mood a boost.

Registration for a group of four or more is \$50/ per person until May 31.

Registration for an individual is \$75 until May 31.

Register by May 31 before prices increase!

Register [here](#).

Download this promotional [flyer](#) and share it with your village leaders, members, and volunteers.

Please reach out to Charlotte with any questions:

charlotte@villagemovementcalifornia.org, 510-900-6380

Tales From the Village



The Post-Pandemic Village: One Approach

By Carol Haig, Editor

While the COVID-19 infection rate drops and the fully-vaccinated numbers rise in California, many aspects of our lives are gradually opening up. Even with on-going daily alterations to safety requirements, through it all we have seen inspiring examples of villages finding new ways to stay connected with members and volunteers. And now, planning for re-opening is underway.

AgingNext Village in Claremont offers us a look into their process and how they are involving their members and volunteers in programming and operational adjustments. They are a smaller village with about 80 members and volunteers. Like other villages, they moved many of their activities online to comply with CDC, California, and County safety guidelines. And now they are ready to 're-open' their programming.

The Surveys

AgingNext Village designed two surveys—one for members and one for volunteers—to learn what was important to them as the village transitions to more in-person contact and activities. The surveys covered a wide range of questions giving respondents a place to voice opinions and share ideas.

Significantly, the surveys were conducted peer-to-peer by telephone. That is, a member called other members and a volunteer called other volunteers. This immediately made the surveys more personal and provided an opportunity for conversation and

connection. As we go to press, staff are tabulating and interpreting the survey findings, and we got a peek.

A Look at Preliminary Findings

With the many operational and programming adjustments AgingNext Village made during the past year, some will work well as our world slowly opens up again and others can safely revert to pre-pandemic norms with a few variations. Some examples:

- Efforts to keep members and volunteers connected during the pandemic have paid off as people are comfortable easing into controlled in-person activities, one or two to start with, to help everyone acclimate
- Group events and activities will initially be small to medium sized
- Masks and social distancing will be required
- People will be able to choose their participation based on their personal comfort levels

Upcoming Plans

Pre-pandemic, AgingNext Village's social calendar covered two-month periods. When COVID-19 arrived with all the rapidly changing safety protocols, a one-month calendar proved to be much more manageable and that continues. Here's what's on the village's agenda:

- May – A Cinco de Mayo celebration with drive-up breakfast burritos brought 30 participants who had a great time waving to friends and eating good food
- June – Launch of a walking group on a small scale
- July – A drop-in for ice cream outdoor event with a short time frame so people can come and go at their own comfort level

All other programming will continue to be offered online or in the modified form developed during the pandemic. This includes creative re-imagining, such as:

- A regular dining event held at local restaurants morphed into a drive-through with the help of community partners
- Monthly birthday get-togethers became sponsored personal cupcakes delivered to the celebrants' porches by volunteers
- Friendly visits went from pairs getting together to masked and socially distant porch visits
- The book club went from in-person group meetings to Zoom

Bea tells me villagers are excited about seeing friends, participating in favorite activities, and enjoying how their village will continue to evolve.

Want to learn more about what AgingNext Village is doing as they reopen? Contact Bea Kirkman at bea@agingnext.org



Introducing myNurse.ai – A New Trusted Advisor

By Carol Haig, Editor

The relationship between Village Movement California and our member villages is special, as is the relationship between each village and its members. Collectively our mission is to support healthy aging for older adults so they can live independently in the communities they choose. Village Movement California is a trusted advisor for villages just as villages are trusted advisors for their members. Therefore, we are pleased to announce our relationship with our newest trusted advisor, [myNurse.ai](#).

About myNurse

myNurse delivers..."the first digital health program designed specifically for older adults..." This organization provides support to older adults who have chronic health conditions through a digital disease management solution that increases positive results for members. With the sponsorship agreement we have with myNurse, we are working to fulfill our mission while also advancing the burgeoning telehealth care trend for the benefit of village members.

myNurse members utilize health testing devices such as blood pressure monitors to take, track, and transmit their vitals on a regular schedule. myNurse assigns each member a personal licensed clinician who tracks and interprets their data, and checks in with members regularly by telephone or video to provide encouragement and make sure members have everything they need to manage their condition. myNurse works with the member's primary care physician to share all data and progress. myNurse is a covered benefit with Traditional Medicare to minimize out-of-pocket expenses.

A Shared Mission

Village Movement California and myNurse share a common mission, making this new relationship mutually beneficial. We also share a culture of listening, further connecting the two organizations and enhancing our focus on supporting the members of our villages. Says Charlotte Dickson, Executive Director of Village Movement California, "This high-touch telehealth program will support optimal health in our villages while preventing hospital visits. myNurse's program gives villages a new tool for helping members and volunteers stay healthy and take charge of their aging journey."

Pilot Program

myNurse is offering their unique services to four villages in a 12-month pilot program: Ashby Village, Berkeley, San Clemente Village, San Clemente, SLO Village, San Luis Obispo, and San Francisco Village, San Francisco. The pilot includes educational workshops for villages, responding to inquiries from village members, and assisting any village members who want to enroll in myNurse's program. Village Movement California,

myNurse, and the pilot villages will regularly review and evaluate pilot activities and assess how well village members' needs are being met.

Please direct your questions to charlottedickson@villagemovementcalifornia.org



Media Repository – Join the Pilot

The pilot program for Village Movement California's Media Repository launched in April and will continue through June. We want to learn if a Media Repository is a useful resource that villages will contribute to and borrow from. Media can include articles, entire newsletters, photos, and videos for use in village newsletters and other materials.

The Media Repository pilot will run for three months: April – June. During that time we will monitor the interest and usage, make adjustments to improve the user experience, and determine whether or not to make the Repository permanent.

Want to participate? Request access to the Repository from Carol Haig at:
carolhaig@earthlink.net.



Villages and Post-Pandemic Life

May 25

An open forum webinar for Village to Village Network members only. Includes hosted breakout rooms for participants to discuss their best practices or questions about next steps in opening up more services. VtV members should watch for an email with the Zoom link and details.



Equity in Aging Webinar Series

June 2, 2021 – July 2021, Every 1st Wednesday, 10:00am – 11:00am

Monthly peer-led webinars 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.
June 2, 2021 – Culturally Informed Policy and Programs With and For Older Immigrants and Refugees. Register [here](#).



Intergenerational Learning and Practice Group

June 24 10:00 – 11:15 PDT

Please join Kate Hoepke, San Francisco Village, and others who are building intergenerational programming and community, for sharing and discussion. If you haven't joined us before, please watch this workshop [video recording](#) before attending. Register [here](#).

For more information contact charlotte@villagemovement.org



Caregiver Support Group

July 21 10:00 – 11:00

Please join Esther Gillies and Monica Hubbard, leaders of the Pasadena Village Support group, and others considering a caregiver support group at their villages.

If you haven't joined us before, please watch this workshop [video recording](#) before attending and take a look at the [caregiver page](#) on the Village Movement California website. Register [here](#).

COVID-19 Information & 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 and recorded [here](#).

Recent offerings include: *What is Long Covid?* Listen to Dr. Putrino of the Mt. Sinai Health system discuss what he terms “a novel post-viral condition” [here](#).

Notices

Have an upcoming event you'd like to open to other villages? Send the information to the newsletter editor: carolhaig@earthlink.net

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