



## Annual Appeal

With this issue we celebrate our collective achievements of 2021. As you will read in *Sankofa Stories: The Next Chapter*, “I am because we are” is an apt description of the relationship between Village Movement California and all our member villages.

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## From the Executive Director



*Charlotte*

Like many of you, I am poised to send out this year’s annual funding appeal letter to our many members and friends. Our accomplishments during 2021 place Village Movement California in a position to become a powerful generator of our life-affirming model of caring community.

Three and a half short years ago, we made our debut as a start-up coalition, offering California villages a refreshing brand and set of messages to describe and market our

organizations. A first-ever statewide survey revealed our footprint – 10,000+ members, intergenerational volunteers, and friends – dedicated to optimizing meaning and purpose, health, and well-being.

Along the way, we offered three statewide conferences and 37 web-based workshops to help our villages fulfill their own mission and vision. Last Fall, we produced a promotional video for villages to use featuring wonderful photos and video clips from many of you. It's had 2471 hits since last October. This year, we elevated recognition of the village movement as an antidote to social isolation and a vital source of volunteerism and civic engagement, by successfully advocating for a village-specific objective in California's Master Plan for Aging. This success is a game changer for all of us. We now have a platform for advancing villages as a vital provider within the statewide, regional, and local aging services networks. When we succeed, funding will follow.

It is crystal clear that Village Movement California is in the right place, at the right time. Our 44 villages offer the infrastructure for supporting millions of older adults who aren't connected to public aging services but who need a community to lean on. Since the Master Plan for Aging was published, we have started meeting regularly with leaders of six communities to support their village start-up activities. And the calls keep coming in.

We are dedicated to your villages' growth, impact, and sustainability. Village Movement California is successful when you are successful. Our relationship with you is marked by reciprocity and mutuality. Our interdependence is a model for what we are creating in communities across California. We know that independence in aging requires interdependence, and that interdependence unlocks the resiliency we all have within. That resilience will carry us through the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and the transitions of aging.

2022 will be the year when Village Movement California transitions from start-up to movement generator. We will be announcing exciting new programs to fulfill the Master Plan for Aging's objective. I ask you to join us and make a generous contribution to Village Movement California this year.

[Donate Here](#)

## November is Native American Heritage Month



We are mid-way through Native American Heritage month. This past year saw the powerful insertion of Indigenous self-representation in national media, sports, and politics. Rutherford Falls and Reservation Dogs are comedy series available on streaming services. In sports, the Washington Football Team renamed itself as did Palisades Tahoe, the ski resort which hosted the 1960 Winter Olympics. President Biden's appointment of Deborah Haaland as

Secretary of the Interior was a watershed moment in U.S. political history. A member of the Laguna Pueblo tribe, she is the first Native American to head the Department. Closer to home, [California's Truth and Healing Council](#) bears witness to, records, examines existing documentation of, and receives California Native American narratives about the historical relationship between the State of California and California Native Americans. The council's purpose is to clarify the historical record of such relationships in the spirit of truth and healing. You can sign up for their communications and attend their meetings on their home page, [here](#).

This past fall, Governor Newsom signed [two bills](#) supporting the Native American practice of prescribed burns. This practice prevents destructive wildfires and is credited with saving giant sequoia trees this recent fire season.

Native American youth led a week of action in Washington, DC, in advance of the Global Climate Summit. It was the largest gathering of Native American activists since the AIM (American Indian Movement) marched on the capital in 1972. They attracted widespread media attention. The recognition that Indigenous wisdom and practice is a key to addressing climate change has broken into international consciousness.

A great way to learn more about Native American culture is through indigenous cinema. The [National Museum of the American Indian](#) in Washington D.C. is once again presenting its annual Native Cinema Showcase online from November 12 – 18, so there are a few days left for on demand viewing. Watch [here](#).

Thanksgiving is around the corner. It is a time to celebrate our blessings, and a time to learn more about Native American history and culture.

## Ashby Village Seeks Executive Director

Ashby Village is seeking to hire an Executive Director. You can see Ashby Village's job announcement and requirements [here](#).

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## Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion



### Sankofa Stories – The Next Chapter

By Carol Haig, Editor

In the October newsletter, we introduced you to *Sankofa Stories: Black Women Reflect on Aging in Place and Community: A Narrative on Policy*. As you may recall, this report by Carlene Davis, MPA, co-founder of Sistahs Aging with Grace and Elegance ([SAGE Sistahs](#)) and

Robert Wood Johnson, Culture of Health Fellow, opened a vital conversation about Black women's experiences and perspectives on aging. Village Movement California is continuing an exploration of how we and SAGE Sistahs can work together to best serve older Black women.

On November 12, a small group from both organizations met to explore more deeply how the village model could meet the needs of Black women like those represented in the *Sankofa Stories* research. A key component of Carlene's work was facilitating six focus groups, each representing a different demographic of Black women:

- A group of women who had been friends for over 30 years
- Faith-based congregants from a non-denominational Christian church
- LGBTQ
- Couples – wives and husbands
- Two general groups

The focus groups explored the village model and shared their thoughts about how it might or might not meet their needs. Generally, the village concept resonated with many of the participants who could see and feel its value. Besides validating that villages are providing valued community and services, focus group participants looked beyond what exists currently and generated ideas about how villages would need to evolve to meet the needs of Black members.

At the core of Black culture is community and community-building with a focus on relationships. A Black adage that applies here is: "I am because we are." Here are a few highlights from the focus groups:

### **Fee Structure**

- To ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation, having an equitable and sliding scale fee structure is essential to address the systemically-driven Black and White income and wealth gaps
- The desire for the model to foster entrepreneurial opportunities that leverages the talents of members and volunteers from the Black community
- Because of economic, wealth and housing disparities, villages serving the Black community may need major benefactors who are also cultural icons (e.g. athletes, entertainers, moguls) LeBron James

### **Volunteers**

- Trust in volunteers who come into homes is a concern
- What about what village members can offer each other—no matter how old we are, we have something to share

### **Co-Create to Expand the Village Model**

- Create a community that is so vibrant it attracts young people
- Engage with the village community before you need it

- Structure a co-participatory design of a village to present as a model to potential investors

This meeting brought insight into SAGE and Black cultural norms and opened doors to new ways of expanding the village model to meet the needs and expectations of the Black community. Village Movement California and SAGE look forward to further exploration of what we can create together. Stay tuned!

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## Engaging Elders in Climate Action



**January 9, 2022      2:00 – 4:00pm Zoom Webinar**

Sponsored by the Ashby Village Arts & Culture Series and Village Movement California

Bill McKibben, climate visionary and author of the bestselling *The End of Nature*, has been a leader in inspiring climate action since 1989. He is the co-founder of 350.org a grassroots global network mobilizing millions of young people in the crisis of our lifetime.

With young people speaking out about the climate crisis, older adults have been less visible in this movement. But that is changing. McKibben is spearheading Third Act, a new national network of older adults supporting younger activists.

Join us to hear Bill discuss how to leverage our strengths as older adults to protect the future of all and to introduce him to our villages and what we can bring to Third Act. See the flyer [here](#).  
RSVP to [info@ashbyvillage.org](mailto:info@ashbyvillage.org).

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## Staying COVID-Safe for the Holidays

By Carol Haig, Editor

Older adults have faced numerous challenges during the time of COVID and though the number of fully vaccinated people continues to increase, we are also experiencing a rise in COVID cases and hospitalizations. While the majority of these are among the unvaccinated, our safety and that of our families and friends is a critical component of a happy holiday season. To help all of us as we plan time together with loved ones, we share some helpful ways to stay safe.

Courtesy of *The Atlantic Daily* (November 11, 2021), here are some questions to help you plan long-awaited get-togethers:

- What is the safest way to gather for a holiday celebration?
- Should people get tested before the event?
- What other measures can we take to be safe?
- Should case numbers and hospitalization information be part of the decisions people make?

The [State of California](#) provides these tips for preventing the spread of the virus:

- Get vaccinated if you haven't and get the booster if you are eligible
- Keep gatherings small
- If everyone at an indoor event is fully vaccinated, masks can be optional
- If guests are unvaccinated or their status is not known, plan small, short, outdoors gatherings—note that HIPPA confidentiality does not apply to vaccination status
- Always wear a mask over nose and mouth when:
  - Social distancing is not possible
  - Around unvaccinated (or unknown) people, especially indoors
  - Around people with medical conditions
- For inside events, good ventilation is important
  - Open doors and windows
  - Run air conditioning systems
  - Install high-quality air filters
- Check local conditions – some California counties have stricter guidelines than the State – and become familiar with out-of-state area conditions if traveling
- Activate [CA Notify](#) and ask guests to do so as well – CA Notify anonymously notifies people of a possible exposure
- COVID-19 symptoms? Get tested
- Stay home if sick

As we have learned during this pandemic, there is a lot to consider as we plan how to be together with others while staying as safe as possible. Everyone has a comfort level with the presence of this disease and each of us must assess what that is for holiday gatherings. Happy and safe celebrating!

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## Support National Village Day!

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In honor of the village movement's 20th anniversary, [Village to Village Network](#) (VtVN) is leading an effort to make February 15, 2022 *National Village Day*. Join VtVN and Village Movement California in advancing this effort by writing to your Congressional

Representative. Check your email for the announcement from VtVN with details for how to get involved.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Engaging Elders in Climate Action

January 9, 2022 2:00 – 4:00pm Zoom Webinar

See article above. Sponsored by the Ashby Village Arts & Culture Series and Village Movement California. RSVP to [info@ashbyvillage.org](mailto:info@ashbyvillage.org).

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[Donate Here](#)

## COVID-19 Information & Resources



### Ask an Expert

This daily COVID-19 feature on the San Francisco Bay Area all-news radio station, KCBS, has resumed since the advent of the Delta variant. 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](#).

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## Notices

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

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