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Carol Haig, Editor

A publication of [Village Movement California](#)

March 2022

Women's History Month

Women's History Month in the U.S. has its origins in the labor movement of the early 20th century to protest the working conditions for women garment workers. It has grown to recognize and celebrate women and girls working for climate action and a sustainable future for all.

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Charlotte

From the Executive Director

I recently watched the Netflix documentary, [14 Peaks: Nothing is Impossible](#), about a Nepalese climbing team that scaled the world's fourteen, 8,000+ meter mountain peaks in a six-month period. This was a first in the history of mountaineering. The film touched me deeply and offered me optimism during these dark times.

The team leader, Nimsdai Purja, pursued his seemingly

impossible dream with determination. His love for his mother and team inspired his vision and fueled his perseverance. His expressions of love and his vulnerability gave me hope.

The film's narrative upended the conventional climbing narrative of European heritage—mountaineers conquering the Asian peaks with help from Sherpas. This team was solely Nepalese, and they operated from shared values of interdependence, mutual respect, and service.

The expression of these values elevated everyone the team touched and offered me a taste of what is possible when we follow narratives focused on non-white, non-Western ways. I believe our world is desperate for new stories like this. The photography was gorgeous, and I felt like I visited a very different and beautiful part of our planet. I appreciated this given how much time I've spent at home over the past two years.

The movie spurred my thinking about what Village Movement California strives for. We have a seemingly impossible goal: to revolutionize the experience of aging. The Village narrative runs counter to ageism in so many ways. We value aging and the wisdom that it generates. We see older adults as contributors and leaders. We know that interdependence supports the autonomy older adults seek. Our communities are based on principles and practices of mutuality. They embody love.

In her book, *all about love*, bell hooks offers a definition of love she learned from M. Scott Peck: Love is “the will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth. . . Love is as love does. Love is an act of will, namely both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love.” Every day, our villages offer love through relationships, programs, and actions large and small. Love: It’s what the world needs now!

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: March – Celebrating Women

By Charlotte Dickson



International Women's Day is celebrated across the globe on March 8, and this year's theme was "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow." The United Nations conceived the theme to recognize and celebrate women and girls who are leading climate justice and adaptation work to create a sustainable future.

The day's origins lie in the labor movements of the early twentieth century in Europe and North America. It was first observed in the U.S. in February 1909, when the

Socialist Party of America dedicated the day to women's protest of harsh working conditions in the garment industry. In 1917, Russian women held a "Bread and Peace" protest and strike, sowing seeds for universal women's suffrage in that country. In 1945, the Charter of the United Nations became the first international agreement to affirm the principle of equality between women and men. Thirty years later, 1975 was designated by the UN as International Women's Year and March 8 celebrated as International Women's Day.

UNESCO states, "International Women's Day is an occasion to celebrate the progress made towards achieving greater gender equality and women's empowerment but also to critically reflect on those accomplishments and strive for a greater momentum towards gender equality worldwide. It is a day to recognize the extraordinary acts of women and to stand together, as a united force, to advance gender equality around the world."

Women's History Week was first celebrated in the Sonoma, California, school district. It spread to additional communities throughout the U.S. By the early 1980's a bi-partisan effort of Congress succeeded in establishing a national Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress expanded the week into Women's History Month after successful lobbying by the National Women's History Alliance.

The Village Movement is undoubtedly a women's movement. In California, women comprise 75% of village membership. This is partly due to women outliving men. More significantly, it is driven by a combination of women's socialization as caregivers of family and community, and their organizing and leadership skills.

This month we salute all women in recognition of their on-going struggles for equality and for their continued perseverance in all they strive for.

State Budget Request – A First for Our Movement

By Charlotte Dickson



strengths of California's diverse communities." The request includes funding for a three-year pilot program to:

Village Movement California has made a budget request to the California legislature. The one-time request for an investment of \$2,985,000 aims to fulfill Objective #90 of the Master Plan for Aging: "Promote and adapt the village model of volunteerism and services to reflect the

- Build the infrastructure needed to scale Villages
- Provide start-up funds for new Villages
- Include expansion funds for existing Villages to engage underserved communities

Components of the proposed infrastructure are a Village Incubator, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Training Institute, and a technology platform housed at Village Movement California. A key strategy is integration with the California Department of Aging's (CA) Hubs and Spokes system of services.

On March 3, Village Movement California's budget request was presented to the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Health. We had less than 24 hours to mobilize participation in the hearing, something that is required for a request to move forward through the budget process. A dozen village leaders and Board members called in to the meeting. Seven were successful at making public comments in support of the request, a task that required multiple calls into an oversubscribed phone line. Five sent in emails of support. Six villages and one supporting organization sent in letters. We greatly appreciate this remarkable demonstration of support.

There's a lot of work ahead of us to succeed with this request. We'll need to:

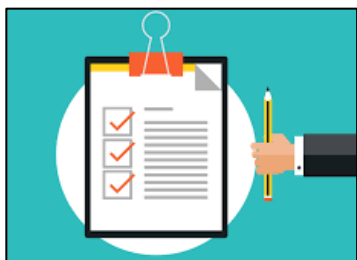
- Mobilize our member villages to write letters and make calls
- Encourage village leaders and members to meet with their legislators
- Keep track of processes in the Senate, Assembly, and Administration

Our timeline runs through mid-June when the state budget is finalized. Whatever the outcome, this step into the California budget process is a watershed moment for Village Movement California. We are serious about making Villages a strong, reliable part of the aging services system in our state. We want thousands more older adults to have the community, supports, and expertise they need to continue living lives of purpose and meaning in their communities.

We invite you to attend an orientation workshop about the budget request and learn how you can support our campaign to scale California's Village Movement on **Tuesday, April 5**, 10:00 – 11:00 am.

Register [here](#). Please sign up to receive alerts: charlottedickson@villagemovement.org

2022 Member Survey Findings



Thanks to the 42 villages that submitted their data for the Annual Village Member Survey. A first glance at the data shows that our village movement grew through COVID!

Some villages experienced a decline in membership, and some tremendous growth. The outcome was 7% growth across the state.

Learn more about this and other trends on **April 18** when the Village Movement California Data and Evaluation Team hosts the interactive workshop **2022 Member Survey Results: Where We Are, Where We Are Going** from 11:00AM – 12:00pm. Register [here](#).

Request for Anecdotes From Village Members & Volunteers

By Charlotte Dickson



As the Master Plan for Aging is implemented, Village Movement California is in communication with our stakeholders in the California legislature and the aging services system.

Part of the work we're doing is helping our stakeholders better understand what our villages provide. Examples of the kinds of support members experience through village volunteers and staff will help clarify the value of villages to communities in California.

Please ask your members and volunteers to tell us, in their own words, how the village helped a member:

- Stay in their home longer than expected
- Find a needed service
- Stay connected and mentally healthy during COVID-19
- Improve their quality of life

Brief is better—one paragraph or less, please. Send anecdotes to charlotte@villagemovementcalifornia.org.

Age-Friendly Bay Area on TV

By Scott McMullin, Villages of San Mateo County



Charlotte Dickson & Scott McMullin

KMVT15 Silicon Valley Community Media has offered a unique opportunity for Villages of San Mateo County (VSMC) to produce a series of monthly studio recordings called *Age-Friendly Bay Area*.

Scott McMullin of VSMC hosts the episodes which explore the wide range of services and

resources that are available for older adults in the greater Bay Area.

In the first episode Diana Miller of Santa Clara County Aging & Adult Services introduced us to the concept of Age-Friendly Communities, with an overview of the Age-Friendly cities of Santa Clara County. Next, Susan Houston of Peninsula Family Service described the variety of service programs offered by this wonderful nonprofit. Most recently our guest was Charlotte Dickson, describing villages in general, the role of Village Movement California, and plans for future growth of villages as a natural tie-in with the California Master Plan for Aging.

There will be village leaders interviewed in the coming months, as well as other key contributors to services for older adults. This link will take you to the series of recordings as they become available: [age-friendly bay area - YouTube](#)

Palos Verdes Peninsula Village – Executive Director Position Announcement



The Palos Verdes Peninsula Village is seeking an experienced, innovative, and collaborative leader committed to our mission of enriching the lives of older adults who wish to age in the places they call home. We opened our doors as a nonprofit corporation in January 2016 and currently have approximately

110 members and 70 volunteers. Our staff consists of the Executive Director and one part-time Office Coordinator. For details about requirements, responsibilities, and application instructions see the complete job description [here](#). Please share this announcement.

Heads Up! Village Movement California Annual Conference



Village Movement California's annual conference will take place on **June 21 and 22** from 9:00am – 11:30 am. This year's theme is "Re-Engage".

The end of COVID as a widespread, life-threatening disease allows villages to expand in-person offerings. It creates an opportunity to re-engage members, volunteers, and partners in the vital work of villages. It's also a tender time, filled with the anxiety and grief created by loss of life, health, and mental wellness.

Together we will explore how villages can step up to the opportunity of re-connecting with their communities in shared purpose and activities. The conference is designed to re-engage your village and its members with Village Movement California. The Planning Committee is committed to making it simple and affordable for villages to send their members and volunteers. Registration will open in April.

Villages and Gen X Volunteers

By Carol Haig, Editor



Tammy La Gorce has written an important article in the New York Times, focused on younger volunteers stepping up to get involved with villages around the country. This is welcome news for established villages as well as those in formation.

With examples and quotes from both retirees and people in their 40's and 50's, La Gorce paints a vivid picture of innovation and forward-thinking within the Village Movement.

Some examples: "[Ms. McWhinney-Morse](#) was in her mid-60s when she and a handful of others her age started laying the groundwork for [Beacon Hill Village](#). But younger villagers are surfacing. Jenn Prunty founded [My Glacier Village](#) in the Flathead Valley of Montana four years ago, when she was 49. Kathy O'Kane started volunteering at her village in Pennsylvania, [Lancaster Downtowners](#), in 2018, when she was 51, with an eye toward eventually retiring to it. And Conner Sandefur, 44, joined [Fearrington Cares](#), a village volunteer center in Pittsboro, N.C., two years ago."

For more in-depth observations about the changing demographics of villages, read the full article [here](#).

Invest in Your Personal Well-being Account

By Carol Haig, Editor



“Your well-being is like a retirement account: The sooner you invest, the greater your returns will be,” says Arthur C. Brooks of The Atlantic, the author of *The Seven Habits that Lead to Happiness in Old Age*.

Drawn from an ambitious study begun in 1938 by researchers at Harvard Medical School, participating male students were followed from youth through adulthood. Every few years, researchers checked in to find out about their lifestyles, habits, relationships, work, and happiness. For more than 80 years, the study has continued, expanding beyond Harvard students, and providing an extraordinary opportunity to study happiness and health.

While there is considerable variation in the study participants’ happiness and health, researchers have identified two distinct groups: the *happy-well* who have good physical and mental health and high life satisfaction, and the *sad-sick* who are below average in physical and mental health and life satisfaction.

Happy-well older adults have some advantages: coming from some wealth, having happy childhoods, long-lived ancestors, and avoiding clinical depression. That said, there are specific things each of us can do right now to make sure our well-being account is as full as possible as we age:

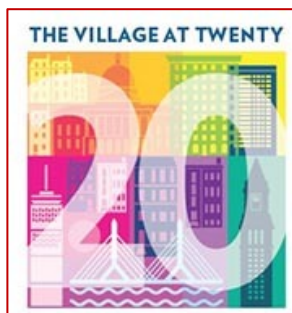
1. Don’t smoke – the sooner you quit, the more smoke-free years you’ll have
2. Watch your drinking – drinking is one of the most powerful predictors of becoming sad-sick
3. Maintain a healthy body weight with a diet of moderate portions and lots of fruits and vegetables
4. Prioritize movement by scheduling some exercise every day – walking is the best
5. Practice your coping mechanisms to keep from over-thinking problems, unhealthy emotional reactions to stressors, or avoidance behaviors
6. Keep learning – engage in the lifelong pursuit of subjects that interest you
7. Cultivate stable, long-term relationships with spouse/partner, family, friends

To maximize your chances of happiness as you age, pursue these goals. If you can only choose one, make it #7. The Harvard study tells us that “...the single most important trait of happy-well elders is healthy relationships.”

Read the full article [here](#).

The State of the Village Model

By Carol Haig, Editor



The Village Movement is now in its 20th year with more than 40,000 members in U.S. villages. Sounds like a lot of people, doesn't it? When you consider our country's 54 million older adults though, our villages serve just a few of those who could benefit from what we offer.

As you've been reading in this space, Village Movement California is committed to helping establish new villages, expand existing ones, and explore ways to move us from a boutique option to a scalable model accessible to all interested older adults. In her article in this issue, *State Budget Request – A First for Our Movement*, Charlotte describes Village Movement California's recent request to the State for significant funding to support our growth plans.

To help us understand both the tremendous benefits villages offer their members and the challenges of establishing and sustaining a village, Judith Graham has written a thought-provoking article in *California Healthline*. In it, she offers a balanced view of what villages offer to their communities and the challenges they face.

"We have been brilliant about creating a sense of community and giving people a sense of belonging and being cared for," said [Susan McWhinney-Morse](#), 88, a co-founder of Beacon Hill Village. "But can what we do be scaled broadly? That's the critical question."

And, "What you have are a lot of fiercely independent, hyperlocal organizations scrambling to keep their head above water, and a lot of inefficiencies," said Joel Shapira, who served on the board of the Village to Village Network for six years. "What you need are a lot more orchestrated efforts to bring villages together."

Learn more by reading the full article [here](#).

Upcoming Events



Village ED Roundtable

March 23, 2022 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Village Executive Directors (paid and volunteer) are invited to a regular gathering with EDs of fellow villages. Members bring relevant and timely topics to learn from each other and create meaningful conversations.

To participate in the Roundtable email Katie Brandon, ED Pasadena Village: katie@pasadenavillage.org . Zoom link will be sent by Katie or Charlotte in advance of the meeting,

Additional dates for this group:

- May 25, 1:00pm
- July 27, 1:00pm
- September 28, 1:00pm



Understanding the Medicare Hospice Benefit

March 24, 2022 10:00am

Speaker Sheila Clark has more than 25 years of progressive experience in leading hospice and palliative care programs in California. Sheila is President and CEO of [California Hospice and Palliative Care Association California](#). Register [here](#).



Aging, Ageism, and the Future of Elderhood

March 27, 2022 2:00pm – 4:00pm Zoom webinar

Sponsored by Ashby Village Arts & Culture and Healthier Aging

Louise Aronson, MD, geriatrician, and acclaimed author of "Elderhood" will speak on expanding how we view old age, improve geriatric care, and empower elders to retain agency and maximize wellness as we age. RSVP to info@ashbyvillage.org and you will receive a link to the webinar.

*Although this event is FREE for all to attend,
[Ashby Village thanks you for any tax-deductible contribution.](#)*



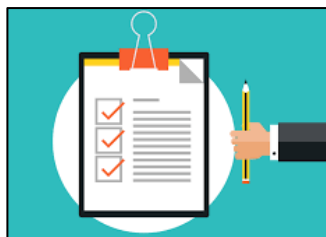
Advancing Village Movement California's State Budget Request

April 5, 2022 10:00am – 11:00 am

Join us to learn about our budget request and how you can support our campaign to scale California's Village Movement.

Register [here](#). Please sign up to receive alerts:

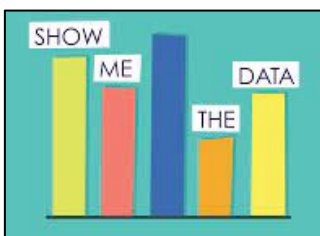
charlottedickson@villagemovementcalifornia.org



2022 Member Survey Results: Where We Are, Where We Are Going

April 18, 2022 11:00am – 12:00pm

Learn more about data trends and successful programming in this interactive workshop hosted by the Village Movement California Data and Evaluation Team. Register [here](#).



Show Me the Data: Leveraging Qualitative Data for Impact

April 27, 2022 10:00am – 12:00pm

Hosted by the [NorCal Coalition for Older Adults' Social Connectedness](#) (COASC). A walk-through of qualitative data gathering basics, how to make sense of what you already have, and hear about key learnings from a collaborative evaluation project.

Learn about speakers and see agenda [here](#). Register [here](#).



Village Movement California Annual Conference

June 21 and 22, 2022 9:00am – 11:30am each day

The conference is designed to re-engage your village and its members with Village Movement California. To be held virtually.

Registration will open in April.

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 in recorded and transcribed formats [here](#).

Recent offerings discuss [Long Covid](#) and other findings as experts learn more about this disease.

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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