



Carol Haig & Patrick Shandrick | A publication of [Village Movement California](#) | JAN / FEB 2024

2024 brings innovative programs and resources to strengthen the impact, accelerate the growth, and ensure the sustainability of villages in California. The new year brings opportunities to expand our village communities in exciting new directions.

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## From Interim Executive Director, Carolyn Ross



I bring greetings and best wishes for a happy 2024 from all of us at Village Movement California. January is a wonderful time to set intentions and make plans for the new year and we are hard at work doing just that. We are excited about many new opportunities and possibilities!

2024 will bring innovative new programs and resources that support villages in California. This year will see the launch of new villages from the Village Incubator, a continuation of our advocacy work on behalf of California villages,

and the development and launch of the new Village Accelerator program. The Accelerator will assist villages in building their capacity, allowing them to position themselves to take advantage of new opportunities. The input of our villages is crucial to designing a program that supports them to continue to grow and thrive, and in the coming weeks, village leaders will receive a survey to help us better understand where they need support and resources.

*From the Interim Executive Director continued:* February is an exciting month for villages! Not only is February 15th National Village Day, but Senator Anthony Portantino has issued a proclamation making February Villages Month in the California State Senate. These are excellent opportunities for you to promote the work your villages do to create communities of care and support for the older adults you serve. I encourage you to use [our social media tool kit](#), incorporate National Village Day into existing events, and reach out to local media and elected officials about your activities.

I am proud of all that our villages do to support and change lives. I look forward to this new year and to continuing to work alongside all of you to revolutionize the experience of aging in California!

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Carolyn Ross" in a cursive script.

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## Tales from the Villages:

### Meet Ben Nguyen, Westside Pacific Village's New Executive Director

Founded in 2009, [Westside Pacific Villages](#) (WPV) helps older adults feel connected, engaged and living active lives in the Westchester and Southbay communities of Los Angeles. Longtime volunteer Ben Nguyen is now WPV's Managing Director.



*Meet Ben Nguyen continued:*

**Q. Ben, please tell us a little bit about yourself.**

A. I am a social gerontologist, public health social worker, and psychotherapist passionate about cultivating community and creating connections.

I began studying Gerontology (the field of aging) at UCLA. I quickly became passionate about alleviating isolation among older adults, the disconnection from family, and the marginalization from the broader community which impacts overall quality of life and longevity.

In retrospect, I realized that the issues of isolation, disconnection, and marginalization were so alluring to me because of my own sensitivities toward loneliness and feelings of being an outsider as a queer Asian-American who moved around frequently growing up. This social issue served as the north star that shaped my adult life and professional work.

I was fortunate to work at the California Geriatric Education Center and to help start an intergenerational respite care program called TimeOut@UCLA. Furthering my training as a public health social worker, I focused on navigating the fragmented U.S. health care system, while also examining the loneliness epidemic and various social determinants of health that shape our wellbeing.

**Q. What is the most rewarding part of working with WPV?**

A. It's connecting with engaged volunteers and older adults who have lived in Westchester for years, and learning about someone's life, experience, and history in this neighborhood. This is very grounding for me. Los Angeles can be an isolating place because there are so many people spread apart a wide geographic distance. It is rare to find people who live and work in the same neighborhood. This can create a culture of loneliness which is exacerbated by urban sprawl and transiency.

**Q. Since becoming Managing Director, what are some of your for 2024?**

A. For this upcoming year, I would like to build and sustain more intergenerational involvement and engagement with the village, and interest in healthy aging overall.

Recently, I learned about the Village in Chicago and its "Bridging Generations Board," which involved 80 young adults organizing and leading events within the community. There is a book called "[How to Live Forever: The Enduring Power of Connecting the Generations](#)" by Marc Freedman, and I would love to operationalize the various themes in the book, including a Village for All Ages (something for everyone).

*Meet Ben Nguyen continued:* If you've seen the Netflix docuseries "Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones," I also want to get people excited about healthy aging, and the various social determinants of health that can improve our quality and experience of life. As a social gerontologist, I always say that the public health advances in the 20th century have helped add years to life, but we haven't paid much attention to the quality of those extra years, so now it is time to add life to years.

Read the full interview in [Hometown News](#).

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## Podcast covers the issues of ageism and aging.



Lynn Winter Gross and Miriam Goodman, members of the [NEXT Village SF](#), launched the first "[Not Born Yesterday](#)" podcast in late 2021. They were told by many that they would run out of people to interview and issues to cover after the first year. 72 episodes later, the show is going strong and continues to exam the problems and solutions of growing older while providing information and suggestions on how to enhance the coming years.

NEXT Village SF asked the two friends to create a podcast on the issues of aging. Both Lynn and Miriam are seasoned communication professionals, so it was a natural fit. NEXT SF is a sponsor of the podcast and covers the engineering and editing costs. Miriam and Lynn do all the heavy lifting. The podcast is a benefit for NEXT as they often get questions and inquiries from listeners about the village.

"Some people think podcasts are just for the young and technically proficient," Miriam shares. "But the reality is that if you have a cell phone or a computer, you can easily listen to the podcast. Our listeners are people of all ages and we have heard from fans all around the world." While they initially thought their audience would be mostly older adults, they hear from adult children, caregivers and friends that learn something new each time they listen.

[You can listen to "Not Born Yesterday" on your favorite podcast platform.](#)

## Conversation on Care: Supporting Higher Needs & Frail Village Members



California's older adult population continues to grow and is quickly approaching the point at which the first baby boomers will turn 85. We are experiencing these demographic changes in our villages. Founding village members are aging and new members are coming to us later in life at a time when they need more support and services. In the past year VMC has spoken with many villages who are innovating and evolving to meet the growing needs of their ageing membership.

Our 2023 conference featured [conversations about the ways in which we and our villages care for one another](#). The conversation continued at the recent BRAVO meeting where villages were invited to share best practices around caring for members with more acute needs. Some examples are highlighted below.

Leaning into the promise that we have made to empower our members to age independently is crucial, and I am heartened by the dedication of our villages to continue to support those they serve and work to meet their increasing needs. We may not be able to meet all a member's needs, but we are able to provide a supportive community that can be one part of a tapestry of care.

**Sausalito Village, Tricia Smith:** *Sausalito Village has an Emergency Preparedness committee that has broken down the village into local groups, each with a volunteer Captain. Every member has been interviewed for their emergency 'readiness' via a two-page questionnaire. We have found the questionnaire allows an easier way to ask more sensitive "health related" questions to determine who the most vulnerable members are.*

*All vulnerable members are followed by a buddy from the Healthcare Advocacy committee. For extra care, vulnerable members are also encouraged to use Sausalito Village's Member Referred Provider List, which includes lists of private pay service providers including caregivers recommended directly by other members.*

Conversation on Care continued:

**San Francisco Village, Kate Hoepke:** *Since 2019, San Francisco Village (SFV) has partnered with Sutter Health in a project to reduce hospital readmissions. Patients in the Acute Care for the Elderly (ACE) Unit at the Mission Bernal Campus of California Pacific Medical Center may opt for a free 90-day membership with SFV to receive social care navigation services.*

*The support and services provided are not different from what all SFV members have access to: assistance with grocery shopping, transportation to follow up appointments, regular check-in calls, social connection, and referrals to citywide programs such as Meals on Wheels, In-home Supportive Services, etc.*

*A recent evaluation by Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity found that patients who opted into SFV membership were four times less likely to be readmitted to the hospital. So far, the program has served 80 patients.*



**Foster City Village, Pam Frisella:** *We recently received a grant that enabled extra vulnerable members to connect with volunteers one-on-one through our “Buddy Connections” program. The funding came from a local Healthcare District that provides Caring Community grants to local non-profits who provide crucial health services for the residents in our area. The grant allows volunteers to take members out to coffee, lunch, or other outings.*

*We are implementing a training (two 45-minute zoom meetings) for all volunteers that have contact with members to help them identify the signs of aging and the changes they see in a*

*member over time. We can then better identify the types of services the village can and cannot provide the members and link them to additional resources when needed.*

## Villages in the News



### **America Is Aging into a Housing Crisis for Older Adults**

A growing range of senior-focused living models has cropped up to serve varied needs. Aging-in-place “village” networks can help older adults stay in their homes by connecting them with supportive services within their neighborhoods. Age-restricted affordable rentals or intergenerational home-sharing programs can also combat cost burdens and social isolation at once. New models of multigenerational housing are emerging in urban areas.

Read more in [BLOOMBERG'S CityLab](#).

## KQED

### **Bay Area Nonprofit Helps Connect Seniors Needing Assistance with Volunteers**

As we age, our social networks tend to shrink, leaving us feeling disconnected from the world around us. And that can take a toll on someone’s mental health. That’s why a coalition of villages here in California are working to change the way we address aging, by bridging the gap between health and social care.

Listen to how San Francisco Village is Building Community for Seniors in Need on [KQED's California Report](#).

## Pacifica Tribune

### **It takes a Village, and helping others helps you grow older gracefully**

There are more and more studies of late showing the effects of isolation and loneliness on longevity. COVID-19 provided a perfect Petrie dish for demonstrating how this works. At the Village of the Coastside we have long been aware of the effect on retirees after they no longer have the social aspects of going to a job every day. Also, with a lot of our Coastsideers, they find that many of the friends they had are over the hill and no longer readily accessible.

Read more in [PACIFICA TRIBUNE](#).

*Villages in the News continues:*

## **SENIOR UPDATE**

THE EYES AND EARS OF ALAMEDA COUNTY SENIORS

### **A Community of Elders: The Village Movement**

Villages are neighborhood-based organizations that connect older adults to the community and programming they need to continue living in their own homes. For the roughly 90 percent of older adults who say they want to age in place, the village model offers social connection, volunteerism, and assistance with key activities for daily living.

Read more in [SENIOR UPDATES](#), by Alameda County's Commission on Aging, pages 11-12.

## **Sonoma Index-Tribune**

### **Innovative new health program available to Sonoma seniors**

Created in January 2022, the Village of Sonoma Valley is a curator of community resource organizations and neighborhoods aimed at improving the quality of life at all stages of aging. It is part of a statewide coalition, the Village Movement of California, and on a national level, the Village-to-Village Network. It is part of a growing network of organizations and agencies trying to address the needs of older adults in Sonoma County and Sonoma Valley, in particular.

Read more in [SONOMA INDEX-TRIBUNE](#).

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## **Upcoming Events:**

*See all upcoming events & slides and videos from past events on [our Events page](#).*

Thursday, January 25, 10am-12pm

### **Implementing the Master Plan for Aging in California**

The Implementing the Master Plan for Aging in CA Together (IMPACT) Stakeholder Committee advises the California Health and Human Services Agency on the implementation of the Master Plan for Aging, focusing on accountability, outcomes, and continuous improvement towards the Plan's five bold goals for 2030. [RSVP here](#).



*Upcoming Events continues:*

Tuesday, February 6, 10am-noon

**Vibrant Living Resource Fair**

Learn about the local nonprofits and businesses who offer services and support to older adults including the nonprofit Pasadena Village who helps aging-in-place older adults connect with each other and the resources they need to live vibrant lives.

Women's Twentieth Century Club of Eagle Rock, 5105 Hermosa Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90041.

[Learn more here.](#)

Thursday, February 15

**National Village Day**



With more recognition for villages comes more opportunities for funding, and the ability to help thousands more older adults thrive where they choose to live with meaningful connections to their communities. Let us advance the village movement so that millions more older adults can benefit.

Use [our social media tool kit](#), incorporate National Village Day into existing events, and reach out to local media and elected officials about your activities.

Thursday, February 29, 10-11am

**Independent Living Centers 101**

The Independent Living Centers (ILC) are similar to the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) as a statewide network of care that receives funding from the State of California to serve a specific population and offer a range of resources to Californians.

VMC will host Brett Eisenberg, Executive Director of the [California Foundation for Independent Living Centers](#), to learn how this statewide system supports younger and older people with a range of disabilities, and what your regional ILC can offer your village members.

[RSVP here](#)

## *Upcoming Events continues:*

Tuesday, April 30

### **Caregiver's Journey: The Roadmap to 2030**

Save the date for this in-person conference and advocacy day in Sacramento. Californians aged 60 and older will comprise 25% of the population in 2030. Family caregivers and their allies are invited to join Village Movement California and our partner the [California Coalition on Family Caregiving](#) for a morning session and discussion on how we can support Californian older adults, family caregivers, and the role of the CA Master Plan for Aging. After lunch, participants will have an opportunity to meet with their elected representatives and the offices of key committees about caregiving and long-term services and supports.

In advance of this event, there will be two webinars:

- February 27— “Data Trends on Family Caregiving and Aging in California—What this tells us about the needs of Californians,” including the cost of Long-Term Services and Supports
- April 23— “Advocacy 101 and Tips for Meeting with Your Representative”

Thursday – Friday, September 12 & 13

### **VMC's 6th Annual Statewide Conference**



Save the date for our annual conference which will be held in La Jolla, CA! More information on the agenda, tickets, lodging, and sponsorship opportunities to come.

Ongoing

### **Best Practice Caregiving Resource: Two New Dementia Care Programs Added in Multiple Languages**

[Best Practice Caregiving](#) has added two dementia care evidence-based programs to their resource database of proven dementia programs for family caregivers. The newly added programs are Caregiver: Thrive, Learn and Connect (Caregiver TLC) and Tele-Savvy.

[These evidence-based programs are offered remotely and in several languages.](#)

Upcoming Events continues:

## Survey of LGBTQIA+ Older Adults in California



Villages are rooted in community and culture and can provide the culturally sensitive care older adults need. This is especially important for California as our state has large communities of LGBTQIA+ older adults. If you are an LGBTQIA+ California resident over the age of 50, take the state's Department of Aging's survey intended to identify gaps in needs and highlight priorities in the areas of health, economics, and well-being. [Take the survey here.](#)

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## THANK YOU DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

Thank you to all who help make our work possible in 2023. When one village is strong and successful, all our villages are more empowered, our movement is strengthened, and together we can transform the experience of aging in California. [Join us by donating today!](#)

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\* Village Movement California Board member

## WHO WE ARE



5,000

VILLAGE MEMBERS  
IN CALIFORNIA



50

VILLAGES THROUGHOUT  
THE STATE



3,000

VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT  
OUR VILLAGES

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## Notices

Have an upcoming event you'd like to open to other villages? Send the information to the newsletter editor: [patrick@villagemovementcalifornia.org](mailto:patrick@villagemovementcalifornia.org). All articles and notices published here are available for use in your village newsletter. Please include this citation: *Reprinted with permission, Village Movement California.*

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