



Creating Connections in the Time of COVID

February 2021 Newsletter



Every day, our members come together to provide support services and create new possibilities for what's next as we age. When we unite as peers, we create a purposeful space for learning, laughter, and courage as we take on the future.

Village Network membership offers online wellness programs, interest groups, educational and social events, as well as volunteer services including grocery shopping, prescription pickups, phone friends, computer help, and personalized referrals to community resources. When it is safe, we hope to gradually begin offering in-person programs, driving, MedPals, and in-person friendly visits, computer help, and minor home repairs again.

Click [here](#) to view the new video on the Village Movement on our homepage!

What's New at the Village

From the Board President



The Village Network community offer members and volunteers many gifts for navigating the fallout of recent events: loving connections, reliable programs, a focus on well-being, and optimism, to name a few. I thank all of you for reaching out and caring. I genuinely believe the countless acts of support during an exceedingly difficult year have helped us “stay the course” through this challenging time. We encourage everyone to focus on continuing to stay safe, well, connected to loved ones and friends, and helping where you can. And signing up for a COVID vaccination soon. We will get through this together!

COVID-19 Vaccine Updates from Sonoma County and CA Seniors Medicare Patrol

The COVID-19 vaccine is being administered now to healthcare workers and those over 75, and there are plans to vaccinate those over 65 as soon as possible. However, the distribution effort has encountered obstacles, and information on where to make an appointment is changing often. Kaiser offers appointments but wait times are many hours. Members call 707-566-5329 and non-members call 800-464-4000, select 3, then 0. Sutter members and non-members can sign up at [Sutter Health](#) or by phone at 844-987-6115. Safeway offers info on how to obtain a vaccination through them at [Safeway Pharmacy](#). You can also register at the pilot website [myturn.CA.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov). Check the county website [Sonoma County COVID-19 vaccine information](#) and the CA website <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines> for updates. We are urged to continue wearing masks and to observe social distancing after being vaccinated.

CA Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) has issued a fraud warning on COVID-19 vaccine scams at [Medicare Vaccine Alert Fraud info](#). According to SMP, you will likely not need to pay to get the vaccine, you cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine, and no one from a vaccine distribution site will call you asking for your Social Security number or credit card or bank information to sign up to get the vaccine.

The Federal Trade Commission has a new website that makes it easier to report fraud/scams and receive quick advice on what to do: [FTC website](#).

Volunteer Opportunities

Petaluma People Services Center is again soliciting handmade valentines for delivering to seniors for their Special Delivery Project 2021. Deadline is February 8. Click on their website for more details: [PPSC Valentine Project](#).

The Village Network is seeking volunteers to join the creative Program Team. Volunteers work together to create and produce programs for the Village community and the general public on topics of interest to older adults. Currently most of our programs are on zoom, but when it is safe to do so, we hope to offer programs in person again. We are also seeking volunteers of all ages as “phone friends” and drivers for grocery and prescription pick-ups.

Funding Campaign a Success

We have exceeded our \$20,000 goal by raising \$23,000! We are deeply grateful for the all the generous donors who have contributed to the Village Network’s mission to empower older adults to engage with a caring community – growing and supporting one another in this challenging time. Thank you!

Special Programs for February and March

To join us for any of the online programs listed below, please RSVP by calling the office at 707-776-6055 or emailing us at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. We will then send you the online link for that class and other details. If you are a member needing Tech Help you can make a request for one of our Tech volunteers to call you. Programs on Zoom can be joined by phone as well.

Online calendar at www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org

Get to Know the Village Information Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2021 10:00 – 11:00 am. (NOTE NEW TIME)

Have you been thinking about joining the Village or volunteering? Join us on Zoom at a Get to Know the Village meeting and learn more about the volunteer services available during the pandemic, and how to join our community of mutual support and make new friends. This is an online or phone meeting for potential members (ages 50+), their loved ones, and those interested in volunteering. Those with no computer can participate in the meeting by phone.

Stress Busters

Wednesday, February 3, 10:00 – 11:00 am. New!

A new program for Village members, volunteers, and donors, with an option to continue for an additional three sessions. For many of us, it’s hard not to be stressed and anxious in the midst of challenging times. In these workshops, we’ll learn how stress starts, and a simple, effective method to handle our reaction to stressful situations. Stress Busters (also known as Ding Sum) has been serving older adults in San Francisco for over 30 years, reaching 900 people through monthly in-person seminars, and now via Zoom <https://123DingSum.org>.

Facilitator Eileen Chan will be joined by her husband, Gary Ow.

Transforming Your Life Story New!

Tuesdays, January 26 through April 6, 2:00 – 3:30 pm.

Would you like to experience happiness no matter the external conditions? The trick is to develop an awareness of each moment and the choices we make. Providing “inspiration provokers” and “imagination stokers,” Elad Levinson invites curious, open-minded seekers to explore and reimagine their individual life stories. This series is limited to 20 Village members and volunteers able to commit to weekly attendance, with five new spots now open. **RSVP ASAP** to register. *Elad has worked as a psychotherapist, leadership consultant, and coach. He is also an artist and the author of Inspire Me! which participants will be invited to download for free.*



Age-Friendly Petaluma: What's Next?

Thursday, February 18, 2:00 – 3:30 pm.



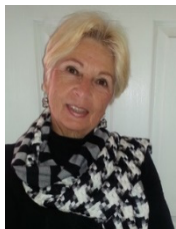
Age-friendly communities are great places to grow up and grow old in, and Petaluma is among 472 U.S. cities that have joined the AARP Age-Friendly Network. Find out what's next for Age-Friendly Petaluma and what that means to you. Learn about results from the city's recent Age-Friendly Survey and get the inside scoop on possible priorities as the city starts making good on its commitment to become an age-friendly community. **RSVP by February 8** to register and receive Zoom link.



Kris Rebillot serves as Chair of the Petaluma Senior Advisory Committee, and is committed to fighting ageism and to making aging as positive as possible. When she isn't championing Age-Friendly Petaluma, she's busy working as Director of Communications for the Buck Institute for Research on Aging.

Modernism Comes to the Bay Area

Thursday, March 18, 1:00 – 3:00 pm.



Join art historian Linda Loveland Reid as she charts a course of mid-20th century Modern Art in the Bay Area: Artists Clyfford Still and Mark Rothko exploded onto the California scene and pushed painters out of their comfort zone. Abstract Expressionism became the norm. An association called Sanity in Art declared modern art a Communist movement. Bay Area artists rebelled. Figurative Art emerged as a Bay Area tradition exemplified by work of artists Hassel Smith, Sam Francis, Frank Lobdell, Elmer Bischoff, Richard Diebenkorn, and David Park.

RSVP by March 8 to info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org or 776-6055 to register and receive the Zoom link.

Linda Loveland Reid is a frequent lecturer for Osher Lifelong Learning (OLLI) programs at Sonoma State and Dominican Universities. She is also an abstract and figurative painter, community theater director, and novelist.

Spark Your Inspiration for 2021

Thursday, March 25, 1:00 – 3:00 pm (*rescheduled*).



Inspiration comes in many flavors and colors: It can be as small and personal as seeing something anew, or as big and collective as understanding the scope of the times we live in. What inspires you? Who Inspires you? How do you get yourself into a mindset to be inspired? Explore these questions with this uplifting interactive workshop led by Elad Levinson. Open to the public. **RSVP by March 22.**

Elad has 50 years' experience as a psychotherapist. His areas of expertise include applied neuroscience and mindfulness practices. You can download his book Inspire Me! at <https://www.eladlevinson.com>. The book is free; Elad asks only that you donate what you can to the Village Network of Petaluma.

Classes and Interest Groups

TED Talks Discussion Group

Friday, February 12 and 26, 11:00 am – noon.

We will view a TED Talk together on Zoom and then discuss it. The subject will be announced to members and volunteers ahead of time.

Village Social Hour on Zoom

Friday, February 19, 4:00 – 5:00 pm.

Join us to enjoy each other's company and share how we're doing. We explore new interests as well as moments of fun and inspiration we've found. Members and volunteers are welcome. *Hosted by Paul and Anne Greenblatt.*

Bocce Ball Meets More Often!

Wednesdays, February 3 and 17, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, at Leghorn Park's bocce courts. (Meets first and third Wednesdays)

We've had so much fun playing bocce ball at Leghorn Park that we have decided to play twice a month. It takes only about five minutes to learn this simple game, but it takes a lifetime to master. We pretend to be competitive, but really we just socialize and have fun. Please bring a mask and gloves. Rain cancels, but if it is raining at 3:00 pm., plan to play at 4:00 pm! **RSVP by Wednesday 12 noon** by email to George Beeler at agbcomm@sonic.net.

Gentle Chair Yoga – Stay Healthy During Stressful Times

Mondays and Thursdays, 11:00 am – noon.




We practice yoga asanas, Eden Energy exercises, breath work, and meditation to improve strength, flexibility, and inner calm. Beginners welcome. The class is currently conducted over Zoom, and you will have the option to be seen or only heard, if you choose. Donations by non-members welcome.

Pat Martin, CMT, EEM-CP, CYT, is a State Certified Massage Therapist, Eden Energy Medicine Certified Practitioner, and Certified Yoga Teacher.

The Joy of Writing Group

Tuesdays, 10:00 – 11:00 am.

 We write for fun, in fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry, etc. We write original stories in a noncritical environment. Come have fun with us, whether you are a veteran writer or a nervous beginner. All are welcome. Members free, non-members \$5 donation.

Men's Discussion Group

Alternate Tuesdays, 11:00 am.

We get together with other men via Zoom to discuss our lives in a spirit of fellowship. The group is limited to eight Village members and volunteers. Let us know if you want to be on the waitlist.

The Village Garden and Chat Group

Tuesdays, February 2 and 16, noon – 1:00 pm. (Meets on alternate Tuesdays)

In this group, we talk about anything from sharing seeds, plants, fruits and vegetables, to art and jigsaw puzzles. Join our friendly group!



Retired Nurses Group

Wednesday, February 3, 10:15 – 11:45 am.

We discuss our nursing practices, education, and favorite stories while getting to know one another.

Shopping Online: Individual consultation for members needing assistance with Instacart and other delivery options is available through the Village.

Staying Connected with Zoom: Individual consultations for members on how to participate in programs via Zoom is available through the Village.

"The Village was wonderful before the pandemic – but now it's a link to life!" – Village member

Events Around Town

Qigong Online: Teja Bell, Zen Master and committed practitioner of Qigong, offers a 12-minute guided Qigong practice at <https://vimeo.com/qigongdharma>

Santa Rosa Symphony

February 28, 3:00 pm.

The Santa Rosa Symphony performs a free concert, featuring Czech Suite in D major, on YouTube. Look for SRS@Home Series.

Anytime. Tune into the YouTube SRS@Home channel on your smart TV, computer, or other device for other virtual performances. You must subscribe to the channel. For more information and quick links, go to

<https://www.srsymphony.org/Events-Tickets/SRS-HOME>

Art Spot

February 10, 2021, 1:00 to 2:30 pm.

Art Spot with Linda Loveland Reid: Jacob Lawrence and the Harlem Renaissance. For more information and to register, go to seabarts.org. Click on Current and Upcoming Events

"Members seem to share a common desire to help each other, which generates as many rewards for the giver as it does for the recipient." – Village volunteer

Member Profile: Len Nelson



Village member Len Nelson is always looking up. When he was a kid in northern Michigan he had the good fortune to be able to see the Northern Lights — "magnificent and wonderous," he recalls. Is that what led to his interest in astronomy? His family moved to Chicago in the 1950s. Stars were not as visible there, due to light pollution, but a book on the stars and articles in *Popular Mechanics* and *Mechanics Illustrated* magazines prompted him to build his own telescope with an 8-inch mirror.

After majoring in anthropology at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, Len began looking down. He enjoyed history and American Indian archaeology and went on digs in Arizona, Illinois, and Iowa. Then he looked outward and joined the Peace Corps to teach English, science, and PE in Tanzania. After that, still looking out into his own planet, Len joined the Army, went to officer candidate school, and volunteered for Vietnam, where he rose to the rank of first lieutenant.

Returning to civilian life, Len landed in the insurance industry. "Clearly, not my idea of a career," he said, "but it paid the bills." This brought him to Detroit where he worked for Hartford, Great American, and Fireman's Fund insurance companies. We should be grateful to Fireman's Fund for transferring Len to San Francisco in 1981. That's when he and his wife, Charlotte, came to Petaluma.

Here Len saw clear skies and joined the Sonoma County Astronomical Society, for which he has served as President, Vice President, Membership Director, Community Activities Director, and Adult Advisor to young astronomers. Halley's Comet's visit to our skies in 1986 roused his interest in comets and in showing the heavens to the public at the Robert Ferguson Observatory at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, where he is a docent.

Len retired from insurance in 2001 and got involved in birding — still watching the skies. He cares for his wife, who is handicapped, and finds time to be a docent with the Petaluma Wetlands Alliance, for which he also serves as Research Chair and coordinates and compiles bird surveys at Shollenberger Park and Ellis Creek. He builds, maintains, and monitors 60 tree swallow nesting boxes at those two parks as well as at Tolay Lake Regional Park. He also grows milkweed to attract Monarch butterflies. By the way, Len is also a photographer. And still looking up.

— Jane Merryman

Reflections from Our Members and Volunteers

"Ever since I stumbled on a Village Network invitation in the Argus Courier some six years ago, I've thanked my lucky stars for that good luck—first in finding a group of open- and community-minded neighbors, and then for the opportunities to be of value to each other. Now in COVID-time, the rapid pivot to safe connections via Zoom has allowed us to continue our friendships, even if only as 'movie stars!'"

"When I was with Sonoma County Medical Association there was never enough transportation for older folks. This problem seems to be helped in Petaluma through the Volunteer Driver Program of the Village Network. Also, Friendly Visitors is a wonderful service for seniors living alone, especially in this time of COVID-19."

"I have loved meeting new people and getting to know them. Even though I still have a number of old friends, broadening my horizons with new friends is a delight. During this restrictive time, having programs available on Zoom has been a real boon. And the alacrity and speed with which the online programs were developed was remarkable!"

"It has given me venues to make new friends in both the walking group and the writing group. This was a primary goal for me in joining. It has opened up discussion of new skills and takes on modern life in the TED talks group. And Steve Schlich has been a very valuable help in solving computer mysteries. Volunteers are wonderful!"

"I love the Village! The sense of community has been so important to me. I moved to Petaluma six years ago and jumped right in. I found the people involved with the Village to be genuine, caring, kind, and generous with their hearts and their time. It has been especially helpful during COVID. Many of the activities we usually did in person are available on Zoom. I get to see friends and exercise and learn new things and even get computer help when I need it. I have found being a phone friend very nourishing to me and the members I visit with. This connection has been very helpful to keep us from feeling isolated and being supported by our Village community."

"I've also really appreciated the gift of masks, and the special delivery to my door. The Village rocks!"

Friends Shape Your Future



Friends are important – they give us a feeling of belonging, bring fun and laughter, lend an extra hand, offer emotional support, and give guidance when you need it. And, whether you realize it or not, their influence goes well beyond the moment. Your close friendships help to shape the course of your life.

Friends affect the ways that you think and feel about yourself. How your friends think about and respond to you will, over time, have a strong influence on your perceptions of yourself. A friend who sees you as the kind of person that you'd like to become will have a positive influence on you because it helps you become more like your ideal self. You can also expect a similar effect from close friends. However, friends who treat you less favorably will likely have a negative effect on who you become.

Friends influence each other's lifestyles. When friends share music, hobbies, eating habits, and lifestyle choices, their tastes can rub off on each other. This can affect how you spend your time, like choosing to do volunteer work versus spending more time chilling out with TV and a glass of wine. These things can directly affect your health and happiness.

A strong social network is associated with a healthier and longer life. Much research has shown that people with friends and supportive family are less stressed and are physically healthier.

Given the many different ways your friendships affect you, it may be important to ask yourself: Does this person have qualities that you are looking for in a friend? How might they be likely to influence your future?

— Adapted from an article by Leslie Becker-Phelps, PhD

<https://blogs.webmd.com/art-of-relationships/2016/09/4-ways-your-friends-shape-your-future.html>

State Master Plan for Aging Boosts Local Initiatives

Governor Newsom's office has just released the "California's Master Plan for Aging" (<https://mpa.aging.ca.gov>). Stakeholders from across California, including state and local governments, health and social service providers, and housing and advocacy groups, began work on the plan in June 2019. But the initiative faced a crisis in 2020 when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led the state to make drastic budget cuts, including some to critical services for older adults. After intense negotiations, community members working with the state and federal government found a path forward to maintain these critical services. COVID's impact on older adults, their caregivers, and organizations that provide services for them lent even greater urgency to meeting the myriad needs of California's rapidly growing older population.

Following many meetings among diverse groups over the last 18 months and backed up by extensive research, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee reached agreement on five major aspirational goals:

1. **Housing:** *We will live where we choose as we age in communities that are age-friendly and prepared for climate change and disasters.*
2. **Health:** *We will have access to the services we need to live at home in our communities, able to optimize our health and quality of life.*
3. **Inclusion and Equity:** *We will have lifelong opportunities for work, volunteering, engagement, and leadership and will be protected from isolation, discrimination, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.*
4. **Caregiving that Works:** *We will be prepared for and supported through the rewards and challenges of caring for aging loved ones.*
5. **Affording Aging:** *We will have economic security for as long as we live.*

These goals are further defined by more than 100 action-ready initiatives. For example, advocates for Village Networks were able to ensure that the Village movement in California is recognized and supported. Many of the goals and priorities in the Master Plan overlap with Age-Friendly Community initiatives that the City of Petaluma is developing. The Village, working with Age-Friendly Petaluma, will identify ways we can contribute to local community actions.

For example, the Village is launching a pilot test of an iPad lending library to help our members become more engaged and connected, via internet access, with the Village, their families and friends, healthcare providers, and other information resources. This aligns with the Master Plan's "Inclusion and Equity Goal: Closing the Digital Divide."

Linking Village initiatives and member needs and interests with larger community efforts and resources will enable us to more effectively bring value to our members and the larger community as well.

— Scotti Kluess, Village Board member

More Ideas for Thriving at Home

Petaluma People Services Offers Virtual Counseling Support: 707-765-8488. Also: [Rental Housing Assistance](#)

County of Sonoma
Warm Line



Call **(707) 565-2652** for free and private support if you or someone you know is experiencing emotional stress and anxiety during COVID-19.

Film Suggestions from Village member and Film Group discussion leader Jerry Spremich

Some available on Kanopy, Sonoma County Library's free streaming movie collection: [Kanopy.com](https://www.kanopy.com)

On Netflix:

Blood and Water: A girl from Cape Town searching for her lost sister transfers to an elite school in pursuit of a popular student who may have answers. (Well done so far)

Tiny Pretty Things: If you like ballet, this showcases dancing and the dancers who compete for the lead parts. (Realistic ballet)

The Queen's Gambit: Realistic chess competition with some emotional fallout.

Bridgerton: So far, the best period drama this season featuring debutante girls looking for the perfect mate. The refreshingly diverse cast is the result of Netflix applying an 'inclusion lens' to casting decisions.

Kiss the Ground: an excellent (and entertaining) explanation about carbon sequestration and how it could reverse climate change.

On Hulu: (You can subscribe for \$5.99 a month with ads)

Four Weddings and a Funeral: New version. Former college roommates reunion, with all the complications that it brings.

Mistresses: One of the best series. A lot of quirky shenanigans by four close friends. It's worth staying till the end.

Little Fires Everywhere: Don't miss this one. Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington are superb. It sparkles with neat surprises and great storytelling. The jewel in the crown.

Normal People: Young lovers who can't seem to stay together except in bed. Well done, good acting.

Jane Eyre: Yes, it's the classic tale of tough love, the 2006 version. Great acting, good story.

Cardinal: A plot to find a serial killer by crack male and female detectives. Well done, if this is your thing.

Good Books Village People Are Reading:

Untamed, Glennon Doyle

Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer

A Promised Land, Barack Obama

The Vanishing Half, Brit Bennett

Hamnet, Maggie O'Farrell

Caste, Isabel Wilkerson

The Salt Path, Raynor Winn

My Grandmother's Hands, Resmaa Menakem

The Secret Lives of Church Ladies, Deesha Philyaw

War: How Conflict Shaped Us, Margaret MacMillan



As part of a national movement, the Village Network of Petaluma is a nonprofit membership organization empowering adults 50+ to live active, independent, and connected lives in the places we call home.

info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org | 707-776-6055 | www.VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org

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