

President's Corner



If you are at all like me, you found yourself glued too long to the Olympics on television these few weeks, probably staying up too late to find out who won the final gymnastics or diving competition. Weren't they all so magnificent - strong in body and mind, full of spirit and camaraderie? Do they bring back memories of you years ago, or a friend or schoolmate? Maybe not, but that does not keep us from admiring their active bodies and strong intent.

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, October 9 from 4:00 – 6:00 PM at Jason's community room where we shall be hosting a most festive gathering honoring all Marin Villages' volunteers, 350 strong! Please be sure to come and help us celebrate these extraordinary men and women who are the backbone of all that we do.

May we all take a lesson from the Olympics, as we continue getting out and growing in mind and spirit, enjoying the many enriching opportunities provided by Marin Villages.

Partnerships and Grants

We have been actively working with the County and other organizations to forge partnerships and foster relationships that support and promote our programs and services. The following are among our most recent activities:

Older Americans Act

In May, we were awarded the Older Americans Act grant for the new category entitled "chores". This is initially a one-year grant for \$10,000, for which we have an opportunity to extend another three years. Through this grant, we aim to deliver much needed help to seniors who are unable to lift/move boxes, replace light bulbs and smoke detector batteries and other household "chores" which, when left undone, can create unsafe living conditions. We aim to complement our own

volunteers' work by connecting seniors to other organizations' programs, e.g. Rotary Day of Service, to help ensure their needs are met.

Marin County

During the budget planning session this Spring, Marin County's Board of Supervisors recognized the impact Marin Villages is making in the community and the relief our services provide other County resources. As such, we have received \$30,000 from the County for this next fiscal year. We will use these funds to strengthen and streamline our volunteer system, target membership and volunteer outreach in the Twin Cities and Central San Rafael, and underwrite scholarships for seniors who are otherwise unable to afford membership.



Isaiah and Bonnie Ryan

Veteran's Administration

We are currently working with representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to list Marin Villages as a vetted service provider. The VA is receiving inquiries from senior veterans interested in joining Marin Villages and has funds allocated to support our services.

Dominican University

Last year we worked with two students from Dominican University's occupational therapy department to create Home Safety checklists and guidelines. We are continuing to cultivate our relationship with Dominican, exploring internship opportunities for candidates in the occupational therapy graduate program.

Marin County Aging Initiative

We are active members of the County's Aging Initiative, participating in their planning sessions and speaking at the Inform & Connect series for caregivers and service providers. The County has been active coordinating and consolidating services for seniors under their 457-INFO (4636) program at marinhhs.org/resources.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)

Marin Villages has been partnering with OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) of Dominican University to offer discounted prices for Marin Villages' members each session of the academic year 2016-2017. OLLI offers challenging, non-credit liberal arts courses for adults over 50 years old, which are taught by experienced professors in the discipline. Homework is not required. Visit the Olli website at www.dominican.edu/Osher or call 415-458-3763.

Community Impact – Year in Review

Marin Villages ended its sixth year of operations on June 30, 2016, our fiscal year end. And what a year we've had. Did you know that we:

Hosted more than 430 activities and events

- Gave close to 4,400 rides
- Answered 320 requests for handyman, gardening and other home chores
- Assisted with pets 250 times
- Served as companions on 300 walks and visits



Matt Masson with Judy Webb

Volunteers donated over 6,500 hours of their time directly helping our members. This does not include the time planning and hosting programs and activities!

Marin Villages is now a community of over 650 individuals, with more than 400 members and 250 non-member volunteers – and growing!

Activities + Socializing = Longevity?

It's no secret that there is no secret to a long life. It could be diet; it could be genetics; it could be socio-economics. There have been many articles written on this subject, so after attending my first 100th birthday party, I spoke with three of our most senior members to see if there were any commonalities – and surprisingly a trend seemed to appear.

Arlene Pinkerton - Born in 1916, Arlene grew up in a small town in Minnesota. Arlene went to nursing school and got her RN in 1938 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. As she told it (with a smile), "I cried when they handed me a stack of books. I thought I

was just going to get to hold the hands of patients in need of comforting!" Arlene worked as a nurse in Chicago until she broke her knee and was forced to resign.



Arlene Pinkerton

But that broken knee didn't slow her down for long. Arlene and her husband lived in Palm Springs for a while, where he worked as a golf pro and course designer. It wasn't her favorite place, though, because at that time "there was nothing but sand." Arlene was an avid tennis player, golfer and dedicated volunteer in the community. She is a regular visitor at the Tiburon Library and has gone through so many of the books and movies that she developed her own indexing system to track the ones she's already read and seen - an ingenious one at that!

At her birthday celebration, hosted by Tiburon Peninsula Village, I asked Arlene what the secret was to a long life... and she replied "I'm still looking for it!" Obviously, a sense of humor is important.

Shayne Bialkin - Born in Minnesota in 1918, Shayne's family moved to Los Angeles where her father ran a successful clothing store. Shayne Bialkin has been living in Marin County since 1969, moving from San Francisco after learning that her young son was going to be bused across the City - and Shayne wasn't having it!



Shayne Bialkin

Her hobbies include ballroom dancing, listening to music, eating rocky road ice cream, and enjoying princess cake for dessert. Her secrets to longevity are to "have fun, eat chocolate every day, get as much quality out of life as you can, avoid arguments, and don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today."

A member since 2014, Shayne says that since joining Marin Villages "a whole new chapter of life has opened up, thanks to the many wonderful, caring, kind and sweet volunteers, all of whom have become great friends over the years".



Ruth Wosser

Ruth Wosser - Hanging out with Ruth you'd never guess that she is midway to 99 years old. Born in Chico, Ruth has been a very long-term resident of Tiburon. "When we bought our house, the railroad tracks ran in front!" Ruth taught in Tiburon, often riding her bike between her classes, when

the morning sessions were at one school and the afternoon ones at another.

Ruth keeps active - tending to her garden, planning bridge and dominoes games with friends, and volunteering on the San Francisco Yacht Club historical committee. Ruth most recently was pictured presenting a trophy to the winners of the Wosser Cup (named after her late husband), an annual sailing race on the Bay. "I've met new friends through Marin Villages, which is important as you get older, and I wouldn't be able to stay in my home without their volunteers."

What I've learned from observing Ruth: Keep busy and stay active; get together with friends and family whenever you can and don't let worries get the best of you.

Spring Fundraising Success Story

Our recent spring fundraising drive was a major success thanks to the most generous \$10,000 matching grant from the Gruber Family Foundation. To date we raised \$21,000 dollars thereby doubling the amount of the grant.

A very warm thank you to all the members, volunteers and donors that reached into their pockets and helped us not only attain our goal but also exceed it. These much needed dollars will be put to work immediately as we stretch to serve more and more requests, work to develop new villages and help stabilize existing villages.

Because membership dues have only covered about 35% of our costs, we rely on these twice-yearly solicitations to keep us afloat and growing. Trying to balance demand for our services with our capacity to fill that demand is a daunting task. But thanks to

our wonderful donors large and small we are up to the challenge. Thank You!

Spotlight on our Volunteers

While our volunteers do a myriad of services, there are always some that are a bit more unique. We thought we'd share a few in this edition of the VOICE:

Rita Wengler - When Rita signed up to help out in the office, little did we realize what an incredible resource we were about to receive. In a very short period, Rita helped cull our files, reorganizing active member, volunteer and donor information



Rita Wengler

AND digitizing files of those no longer active in Marin Villages. Thanks to Rita, we have been able to convert boxes of paper files to a small flash drive! When Rita is not helping us out, she is assisting Novato Village members providing companionship and dog walking assistance.

Ed Greenberg - When we received a request for a ride to the Harry Potter book signing from 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. at Book Passages, we quickly informed our member "you probably should find another way to get there. There is a very low probability of finding a volunteer to assist." And then Ed responded! Ed has been a dynamo volunteer, sometimes coordinating two and three rides for Ross Valley Village members in his daily loop! But the ride to Harry Potter was magic!

Joe Friedman - One of our Mill Valley Village members recently called to ask for help downloading Skype to her iPad and showing her how to work it. At 90+ years of age, she was no longer able to travel, but with Joe Friedman's technical assistance, she could virtually enjoy her granddaughter's wedding in Hawaii!

Joan Levison - Did you ever wonder where the little jars of honey in the new member bag come from ... or why they were there? We can thank Joan Levison, both a member and volunteer of Mill Valley Village. Joan doesn't need security around

her home in Tam Valley. She has bees . . . and lots of them. While in grade school, Joan and a friend decided it would be more interesting to study bees than dissect beetles in their biology class. Little would she know how that interest would transition into a lifelong passion. Joan now “hosts” over 500,000 bees, harvesting the honey and sharing it with our lucky members.

Volunteering is simple – you can help when you have time doing the things you enjoy – and making an impact in the life of a neighbor! We are always looking to add volunteers to our network, so if you haven’t already, consider applying . . . and tell a friend!

Executive Director Corner

The simple things in life – those are the little everyday experiences that pass quietly, but leave a lingering impression that we often don’t realize until they stop occurring or we slow down long enough to notice. Seeing Mt. Tam peak out of a blue sky after days of fog . . . waving to a neighbor at the local grocery store . . . biting into the perfect apple or a juicy slice of watermelon.



I would like to acknowledge what for some might seem simple, but to others are lasting impressions, namely the many volunteer tasks that are completed each and every day. And it’s not the task itself that makes the impression; it’s the willingness and goodwill that accompanies the action. Just recently I was speaking with the family of a member who had been admitted for rehab. They said, “you have no idea how reassuring it is for us to know an organization like yours is available to help our family member. She speaks highly of your volunteers and has enjoyed meeting every one of them. . . . and that gives us unbelievable peace of mind, especially with our being so far away.”

It’s the simple things that make life fun – picking out your own tomatoes at the farmer’s market, having coffee with new-found friends or watching the sliding closet door finally stay on its track. Our

volunteers make lingering impressions possible, each and every day. For that, I gratefully say ‘thank you!’

Save the Date – October 9 Volunteer Recognition Party!

It’s time to take the opportunity to recognize and thank the powerhouse engine that drives this organization – our network of volunteers. Please join us in acknowledging the contributions of these very special people.

Mark your calendars for October 9th at 4:00 p.m. at Jason’s Community Room in Greenbrae. RSVPs will be taken at the office 415-457-4633.

Join, Volunteer and/or Donate!

Get involved!! To become a Marin Villages’ member, volunteer and/or donor, contact us at 415-457-4633 or info@marinvillages.org.

Cartoon of the Day

