



BETHESDA METRO AREA VILLAGE

Your home. Your neighborhood. Your future.

Meet our new executive director

BMAV board president Gail Shearer introduced Meredith Bowers, Bethesda Metro Area Village's new executive director, at the fall gathering on October 23. (See the "Recent and upcoming events" section for more about the gathering.) For now, Meredith works ten hours a week. When asked why she joined us and what she hopes and expects for BMAV, she said the following:



"I am excited to help create a village here because I believe that everyone, at every age and ability level, deserves to live joyfully and with dignity. I am attracted to the grass-roots aspect of Bethesda Metro Area Village -- neighbors helping neighbors -- as the core of a healthy community. We all have times in our lives when we are in a position to give and other times when we are in need, and the village concept capitalizes on that duality in the best way possible. I'm really looking forward to getting to know all of the BMAV members and learn about why they chose to join the village, what they hope to get from it and contribute to it and how I can help move us from a fledgling organization to the thriving village we all want. I'm so impressed by the work that has already been accomplished so far!"

Before coming to BMAV, Meredith was executive director of Jobs Unlimited, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to employing adults with serious mental illness. She has a law degree from George Washington University Law School. After graduation, she worked as an attorney at a legal services organization and subsequently served as adjunct visiting clinical professor at George Washington University Law School; adjunct professor at Notre Dame School of Law; and Washington College of Law. She volunteers in the community by serving on several nonprofit boards and as a hospice volunteer. She and her husband Keir Lieber live in Bethesda and have four daughters, ages seven to seventeen.

BMAV services to be phased in mid-November

BMAV now has a core group of volunteers who have been through training, which will allow us to begin phasing in three services for full Pioneer members on November 15: transportation, especially for medical appointments; minor handyman tasks; and friendly telephone calls to or visits with neighbors to be sure they are all right. Additional services will be offered down the road as more qualified volunteers become available.

The membership year for pioneer members will begin on February 15, 2017. This means that the membership fee pioneer members paid last summer will count for more than a full year, providing, in effect, a substantial discount on the first year's membership fee.

Want to help build a village resource? Volunteer!

Have you thought about how you can “pay forward” a good deed or kindness that someone did for you in the past? You can do that and help our village build a resource that someday you may benefit from as well by becoming a volunteer.

Our village cannot function without volunteers, whether they are members of BMAV yet or not. They drive members to doctors’ appointments or the grocery store, change light bulbs and batteries in ceiling smoke detectors or check on a neighbor who lives alone. The best volunteers are those who enjoy sharing their knowledge, skills and abilities with others. Volunteering also can be an enriching, rewarding and fun experience for you. Call the village telephone number, 240-630-2628, for more information or to get an application and become a member of the BMAV volunteer team.

Volunteers undergo a background check and orientation session. The next orientation session is Thursday, November 10, 6-7 pm, at the [Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center](#) (4805 Edgemoor Lane, 2nd floor, Room C). Parking is available in the county garage underneath the building.

Fundraising

We know that if we want to build a strong sustainable village, we need to mount a comprehensive fundraising plan, with elements that include community fundraiser events, individual donors, commercial donors, and grants. We have made a good start on laying out a plan and are looking for more people who help with that. Please let us know if you’re interested by contacting us at BMAVillage@gmail.com or 240-630-2628.

Pioneer membership

BMAV held its pioneer membership campaign from July through September 2016. Pioneer members got a 10 percent discount on membership fees, in recognition of their early support. BMAV would not have been able to develop and progress without them.

The membership committee now is focused on welcoming pioneer members and reaching out to potential new members. As members sign up, BMAV will continue to gather information on the types of social and special interest events they would like, and what services they can volunteer to provide or would like to receive. For example, there soon will be a focus group of male BMAV members on what interests they have that BMAV could address

Interview with BMAV’s first pioneer member

Jane, who has lived in her Bethesda neighborhood since 1978, was the very first person to join Bethesda Metro Area Village as a Pioneer member. In a recent interview, she said she joined for two primary reasons. First, she fully backs the concept of a ‘village’ and thought it was important contribute to BMAV at an early stage to help it become firmly established and successful. Second, she loves her neighborhood and doesn’t want to leave it. Although she’s relatively young and very active now with work, sports and family, she figures that down the road she may need some of the services that BMAV will offer to help members stay in their homes as they age.

Once BMAV is operational, Jane expects to be able to volunteer from time to time, such as grocery-shopping, taking someone to a doctor’s appointment or visiting members who would

welcome the company. In the meantime, she looks forward to enjoying some of the social aspects of BMAV – wine and cheese gatherings, lectures and shared-interest activities, such as bird walks and bridge.

Jane concluded by saying that she admires those who came up with the BMAV idea and have put so much effort into getting the village off the ground.

Joining or starting a shared-interest group

This is your village for sharing your key interests with neighbors and new friends nearby. As noted in the recent-events section above, we have one already – bird walking. Two others are in the offing, if there is enough interest, as follows:

Village Knitwits. Do you have stashes of yarn, an abandoned knitting project or just want to take up knitting again? If so, send an email to hcaraher@verizon.net.

Bridge. If you've always wanted to learn to plan bridge or are looking for others to play with, send an email to elysejacob@gmail.com.

Anyone who'd like to start or work with a shared interest group (e.g., chess, book club, dining out or you-name-it), please contact us at BMAVillage@gmail.com or 240-630-2628.

Recent and upcoming BMAV events

September 9, wine-and-cheese for Pioneer members. About 35 Pioneer members enjoyed wine, cheese and tidbits at the home of Marilyn Kerst and Sam Sipe. The room buzzed with the voices of people meeting new or long-time neighbors and friends. Board president Gail Shearer cheered everyone with a progress report on the successful search for part-time executive director, the new BMAV office, programs and events, the newsletter, website and the start of service volunteer selection and training.

September 13, resources at the library. BMAV members learned how to download eBooks, access *Washington Consumer Checkbook* and *Consumer Reports* and about the many other resources the library offers.

September 22 bird walk. Veteran birder and BMAV Pioneer member David Moulton led BMAV members and friends on a bird walk in Greenwich Forest, where they saw nearly 20 varieties of birds, including a cooper's hawk, three varieties of woodpeckers, finches and some wonderful surprises, including a soaring bald eagle, hooting great horned owl and Cape May warbler. This was one of a series of walks David has led in nearby neighborhoods, and he encourages BMAV members to join him. If you're interested, contact him at moulton.davidh@gmail.com or 301-913-9535. He'll alert you to upcoming bird walks and other local birding news.

October 23 fall gathering. BMAV board president Gail Shearer introduced our new executive director, Meredith Bowers, who spoke about why the village concept, and BMAV in particular, is important to her (see the lead item on page 1 for more about Meredith). Gail also announced that village services are being phased in beginning November 15 for full pioneer members, training of volunteers is well underway, a fundraising plan is in process, and shared-interest groups are being formed. Gail gave special thanks to those who have contributed their time and talents to bringing BMAV to where it is today.

November 7, 4 pm, training session on Medicare Part D prescription drug plans during open enrollment. This is a walk-through of Medicare's online tool so that you'll be able to find the best plan for you, with time for Q & A. Gail Shearer, who developed a self-help guide for our local

Medicare SHIP program, will lead the training session. The address will be provided when you RSVP to gail.e.shearer@gmail.com.

November 18 pre-holiday social gathering at the home of a BMAV member. [RSVP here](#) and the location will be e-mailed to you.

Check the [BMAV calendar](#) often for other interesting events coming up.

News you can use

Have you noticed? The Giant on Arlington Road now offers a 5 percent discount on purchases by seniors 65 and older on Tuesdays. That's probably in response to the newly opened Harris Teeter on Battery Lane, which has a 5 percent discount for seniors on Thursdays. [In fact, other Harris Teeters in our area have the discount, too.]

Keeping in touch

If you change your email address, street address or telephone number, let us know so that you'll continue to receive the newsletter and other BMAV mailings. Here's how to contact us: by email (BMAVillage@gmail.com); regular mail (Bethesda Metro Area, Village, PO Box 30525, Bethesda, MD, 20824); or phone (240-630-2628).

Suggestion box



If you'd like us to include something in the newsletter that you don't see, have an idea for an article, a suggestion or question about BMAV or our community, send an email to Lynn Barclay at barclaylg@earthlink.net or call her at 301-320-4962.

The Bethesda Area Metro Village is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation founded by residents to help village members thrive as they age in their own homes.