



Villages of San Mateo County

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS



June 6, 2020

Dear VSMC Members and Volunteers,

As residents of California and San Mateo County, we are fortunate our leaders made good decisions early, limiting the health impact of COVID-19 in our community. While the economic and social effects will last a long time, we will meet those challenges.

Still, as the County starts to open up, we must remain very cautious. In this letter I would like to describe some of what our Village leaders are discussing, and to provide a glimpse of how we think Village activities might evolve. It is important to remember that things continue to change, and we cannot be sure of the future.

In mid-March we made the decision to not perform services or interactions that would bring people within 6 feet of each other. For our grocery shopping service as an example, we have implemented a Social Distancing Protocol.

The County Health Officer has issued an updated Shelter in Place Order that opens up more activities and businesses effective June 1st. This includes routine medical services, but not hair salons.

Many of you are no doubt eager to get out and resume some aspects of “normal” life. However, the County still says “...people at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 ... are strongly urged to stay in their residence to the extent possible, except as necessary to seek or provide medical care...” Most of us are at high risk because of our age or other health factors, so caution is still strongly advised.

When will the Village provide transportation and in-home services? I believe we will have a good answer for you by the end of June. I also expect we’ll adopt strict guidelines that will likely include the following:

1. Rides only for essential services at first, primarily medical.
2. COVID-19 liability waivers signed by both volunteer and member, saying they won’t hold the other party responsible if they get the virus.
3. Hands sanitized frequently.
4. Face covering worn by both parties.
5. Surfaces in the automobile sanitized before and after each ride.
6. Both parties attest to not having COVID-19 symptoms or having been in contact with sick persons.
7. Fresh air in the car, not recirculating.

In-home services (handyperson, organizing, etc.) will require a similar protocol, with 6 feet of separation whenever possible.

We are all feeling restless and constrained. Let's continue to be patient and wise, and we'll make steps forward when the time is right.

Now, on to happier and more interesting topics! Sequoia Village was launched in July of 2015, and Mid Peninsula Village in September of 2016. So we have a couple of 5-year anniversaries coming up, and we'll start by having a big celebration in late July. Stay tuned as our leaders prepare some special excitement for all VSMC Members and Volunteers! And if ever there was a time for you to learn how to Zoom, now is the time! Call the office if you need help getting trained or getting your equipment set up.

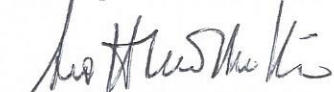
When Shelter in Place began in March everything was up in the air, and we had no idea how Village connections and services would continue. With that uncertainty we made a decision to extend by 4 months the expiration date for every member, effectively providing 4 months of free membership. Since then we've discovered many new ways of providing benefits, making it clearer than ever that "we are here for each other!" Beginning August 1st we will start collecting membership dues again. When your new expiration date approaches you will receive a letter as usual asking you to renew your membership. I trust that you are continuing to feel the love, and that you will joyfully renew when the time comes.

During COVID-19 our office staff have all been working from home, with only rare visits to the office at 711 Nevada Street. Redwood City Parks & Recreation has generously provided that space since 2015, but the building will soon be demolished to make room for construction of a new facility during the next 2 years. In the interim, we are extremely fortunate to have been offered an office in Belmont in the McGovern Insurance building on El Camino. Many thanks to Sylvia McGovern for that wonderful donation of space. While our staff will continue to work at home for the foreseeable future, we will be moving our files and equipment to Belmont, and we hope to welcome you there someday for a visit. As before, our mailing address is P.O. Box 813, San Carlos, CA 94070, and our phone number will remain 650-260-4569.

As a final bit of news, I want you to know that your Board of Directors and Village Leadership Team will hold Zoom meetings in June to conduct strategic planning for the coming years. Important outcomes and goals will be communicated to you in July.

Our Village is blessed with outstanding volunteers and leaders, great community support, and an amazing group of dedicated and vibrant members. I am so proud to be part of this organization, and I am very confident in our future.

Blessings and best wishes to all of you,



Scott McMullin, Board Chair