



News

from the Villages of Kensington

Enhancing the quality of life in Kensington, one neighbor at a time!

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Member Highlight: Selma



Member Selma gets a ride from Volunteer Jeff

Selma moved to the Hammond Wood neighborhood in 1951. She has four grandkids, three of whom live nearby and one who lives in the San Francisco Bay area. She was a stay-at-home mom until her kids were grown, and was active in the Pleasant View, Newport, and Einstein PTAs as well as in Democratic politics. While her kids were still in school, she was the Office Manager for the County Council of PTAs. Later on, Selma became a potter and was a member of the Montgomery County Potters and the Ceramic Guild, which shows in the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria.

At 90+ years old, Selma was still driving. Then one stormy day, a neighbor's tree fell on her car; fortunately, Selma was not in it! But the car was a total loss and she decided that, rather than buy a new car, she would take this 'opportunity' to give up driving.

"Now that I am 95 and without [my own] wheels," Selma explained, "I mostly read, am interested in politics, and worry about the state of the country. When I can, I enjoy cooking and gardening." About Villages of Kensington, Selma says, "VoK has been a godsend for me. Besides helping me get to doctor appointments, I've met so many great and generous people."

VoK's Mission

"The mission of the Villages of Kensington is to build a supportive, diverse, and inter-generational network of neighbors helping neighbors to remain in their homes and to be engaged in their community."



Volunteer Sharon discusses VoK's finer points!

Volunteer Highlight: Sharon

(Note – Volunteer Sharon provided VoK's very-first service!)

Signing up last February to provide a ride to two VoK members proved to be a day of firsts for me:

- First VoK Volunteer driver to accept and fulfill VoK's first ride request
- First chance to drive a large wheelchair-accessible van
- First opportunity to meet these new VoK members, a couple from the Rock Creek Hills neighborhood....the best part of the day!

One spouse uses an electric wheelchair for mobility and the other was recovering from recent surgery and could not drive. They needed a driver to transport them roundtrip in their own wheelchair-

accessible van from their home to a concert at Strathmore Hall.

I must admit, I was a little nervous about driving a large vehicle that I'd never driven before. I arrived at their home a few minutes early, so we could get acquainted. They showed me the van's special features and were so helpful with advice (cont., p. 2) about driving their vehicle. My riders got the wheelchair up the electric ramp and secured in the van. It was a quick trip to Strathmore, where we pulled right up to the door and my passengers disembarked. Then I drove back to my home to complete some chores until it was time to return at the end of the concert to take them back home.

It was a delightful experience, made so because my passengers were such interesting and kind people. In addition to feeling so good about being able to help, I felt even better about making two new friends who needed just a little bit of assistance to keep to their regular schedule.

For me, this first experience illuminates the value of the Villages of Kensington for our members and our community.

I had a great first ride, too.



VoK Events!

ONGOING EVENTS

VoK Lunch-Around. On the first Friday of every month at noon, we gather at local restaurants or, in February, for a potluck at a Member's home (on Fri., Feb. 10). Fun, good company, and we get to check out various local culinary delights. March will likely be at the Limerick in Wheaton, in honor of St. Patrick's Day! Check the VoK website calendar.

We send out at least two email reminders per month. Contact Membership Coordinator Donna Savage at members@villagesofkensingtonmd.org.

Monthly book club. The Rock Creek Hills Book Club is a well-established group of book-loving residents in the Kensington area that meets once a month in the evening to discuss current and past releases of all genres – fiction, nonfiction detective stories, anthologies, world award winners, etc. Our members are an eclectic group, and we welcome to our meetings anyone who has an interest in lively discussion, meeting new and interesting people, and general camaraderie. We gather at different homes and refreshments are provided. Several VoK Members have joined this group.

Interested? There *may* be a waitlist for this popular book group, but contact Member Arlene Horelick at arlene.horelick@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

VoK Plays Games! We are planning a Gaming Social on February 23 – to break those winter doldrums! Featuring Bingo and other games plus a light dinner. FREE for Members and Volunteers! For info and to RSVP, contact VoK's Community Coordinator Liz Brennan at lizb@villagesofkensingtonmd.org. Additional game socials in future months!

Thinking about June! We are thinking it might be fun for VoK to have an outing in the Spring to Great Falls (Maryland) to take the narrated canal boat ride. Have you ever done that? Cost is minimal and there's a senior discount (62+); you get an hour of narrated ride on the canal boat pulled by mules with narrators dressed in 1800s costumes. Tentative date for us: Friday, June 2 or June 9. 'Twould be great fun and a wonderful shared adventure! Mark your calendars!! Here is the website: <https://www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit/great-falls-canal-boat-rides.htm>

Got an idea for a one-time event or ongoing program? We're all ears! Contact us at villagesofkensington@gmail.com or by phone at 301-509-0191.

Welcome new VoK Board Member Laurie Pross! Laurie lives in Rock Creek Hills, and we are excited that she is adding her energy and ideas to the VoK Board of Directors. Welcome, Laurie!

VoK By the Numbers!

Services Requested by VoK Members in 2016 (beginning Feb. 28, our first “year”!)

of services = 131 (most were for rides)

Percent of service requests fulfilled = 97%

WOW!!

Members and Volunteers as of Dec. 31, 2016:

of Members = 44

of vetted & trained Volunteers = 35

- Participate in activities and suggest activities you'd like to see!
- In the spirit of VoK, help your neighbors in any way you can!
- Appreciate VoK Volunteers (no financial remuneration or tips, please)!
- If you're a VoK Member, let us know how we can assist you; please do not be bashful! If not yet a Member, tell us how we *could* assist you.

Thank You to Our Partner Organizations!

We thank our partner organizations with whom we've coordinated during our first year of operation:

📍 VillageRides

sponsored by Jewish Council for the Aging, www.accessjca.org. A 60-second PSA about VillageRides is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dXcvUx65sq&feature=youtu.be>

📍 Kensington Park Senior Living

www.kensingtonparkseniorliving.com

📍 Suburban Hospital

www.hopkinsmedicine.org/suburban_hospital (click on Community Health)

📍 Jewish Social Service Agency, www.jssa.org

And thanks to the Town of Kensington and Kensington-area civic associations and businesses for their ongoing support of our mission!

How Can VoK Assist Y-O-U?

VoK Full Members are eligible to receive assistance from our vetted & trained Volunteers. If you can think of it, we can probably help! For example:

- Rides to shopping, social outings, worship, or medical appointments
- Small household or yard tasks, repairs, or other assistance
- Carrying large items to the curb for pickup
- Meal assistance while recovering from hospital stay or illness
- Picking up groceries or prescriptions
- Friendly visits and check-in calls
- Computer and electronics help
- Occasional or one-time, non-emergency assistance – just ask!

To join VoK and benefit from our Volunteers' expertise and friendliness, call us at 301-509-0191 or go online to www.villagesofkensington.org and click JOIN.

How You Can Help VoK!

- Tell your Kensington relatives, friends, & neighbors about VoK – who we are and how to sign up as a Member or Volunteer. (Best way: go to our website at www.villagesofkensington.org)



New Membership Fee Policy for Members 90+ years old!

As of July 1, every Kensington resident who is at least 90 years old or who will turn 90 during the member year will receive an individual **FREE FULL MEMBERSHIP** for the year!
For new *and* renewing Members!

VoK in Pictures



The VoK Board as of January 2016



Attendees discuss membership at opening party, 1/31/16



Opening Party attendees hear about volunteering opportunities, 1/31/16



VoK at Kensington Day of the Book, April 2016



"VoK Day," October 2016



JennyCakes made a cake for us!



Volunteer Appreciation Picnic, September 2016

VoK in Pictures (cont'd.)



Brookside Gardens Docent Tour, April 2016



St. Patrick's Day party, The Limerick, March 2016



Wine & Cheese Party, May 2016

Where Do Your Donation Dollars Go?

VoK is a very cost-efficient nonprofit organization! We are 100% volunteer-run, we have no paid staff or contractors, and we are a federally registered 501(c)3 nonprofit. We do, however, have operating expenses, which is why we must charge a membership fee. Those expenses include insurance, background checks, website, telephone, and PO box, training costs, printing & copying, and supplies.

A certain amount of donations is part of our annual budget; significant amounts above that number can help reduce the membership fees in the following fiscal year. We also have a "reduced fee fund" so that we can offer reduced fees for Full Membership to Greater Kensington residents who cannot afford the full fees.

If you'd like to help with our operating expenses or contribute to the reduced fee fund, contact us. Or you can donate online directly at www.villagesofkensington.org and click on DONATIONS. **VoK is a 501(c)3 organization**, so all donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. **Thank you!**

Contact VoK:

...on the web: www.villagesofkensington.org

...by email: villagesofkensington@gmail.com

...by phone: **301-509-0191**

...by U.S. mail: P.O. Box 118, Kensington, MD 20895-0118...or,

...on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/KensingtonVillages

To volunteer with VoK and offer services to your Kensington neighbors, call us at **301-509-0191** or go online to www.villagesofkensington.org and click on **VOLUNTEER.**