



Village of Takoma Park Newsletter

April - June 2016

Helping Neighbors Age in Community

Message from the President

Dear members of the Village of Takoma Park,

When we started, we decided, after a long debate, on a membership fee of \$10. We did not want money to be a barrier to join. This decision was daring, as we need funds to pay for insurance, to create and maintain a website as a basis of communication, and to cover other administrative costs. The flip side of such a minimal membership fee is that some neighbors have expressed reluctance to request services such as rides, assuming they are only for those who can't afford to pay for taxis, etc. In fact, the Village services are meant to be available to people of all income levels, and to facilitate "neighbors helping neighbors" and foster a sense of community. Members who benefit from the Village's services may want to consider making a donation to the Village in addition to their dues, if they feel able to do so. This will help us to keep the dues affordable.

We also trusted we would find volunteers to drive seniors and people with disabilities, to be visitors, to assist with management and to provide help to neighbors. The Village of Takoma Park is blessed to have dedicated volunteers: 30 volunteer drivers, 11 friendly visitors, 10 Board members, 5 members of the advisory board and committee chairs. There is so much strength in the contribution of volunteers.

May is the month to recognize volunteers: THANK YOU.

- Wolfgang J. Mergner



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Membership Update:

As of June 1, the Village has 114 active members.

Has your membership expired?

Don't forget to log in to the website at

villageoftakomapark.com and

renew. Pay online via credit card or mail your check to:

Village of Takoma Park,
c/o 104 Tulip Ave.,
Takoma Park, MD 20912

We're grateful to the Takoma Foundation for supporting the Village of Takoma Park with a generous grant of \$800.

EVENTS:

The newly named “Aging Well Network,” sponsored by Lifelong Takoma and the Village of Takoma Park, offered three well-attended sessions in March, April and May.

Over 45 people attended the March 29th gathering entitled “Navigating change - managing emotional and physical transitions as we age.” A social worker from the Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA) led the discussion and provided handouts outlining benefits of physical activity, highlighting some key physical issues to be aware of as we age, offering tips for handling the stress that can accompany life transitions, and presenting techniques for fostering an optimistic outlook. To round out the meeting, a physical therapist led the group in a series of physical exercises.

On April 26th, close to 25 attended a discussion of advance directives led by a lawyer from Sandy Spring Trust.

At the May 24th meeting, “Food for Thought,” 30+ attendees gathered for a discussion on nutrition and healthful eating led by Village board member Kathie Baker. Attendees contributed nutritious snacks and shared tips. Here’s what Wolfgang and Gertrud Mergner had to offer:



Wolfgang says: Breakfast is perhaps the most important meal of the day. After a long night of fasting you want to eat food that lasts during the day. A good breakfast keeps you slim, because it lasts. Grains are ideal -- coarsely ground rye, wheat, oat groats, quinoa, Arborio rice, millet, amaranth, teff, sorghum, cornmeal, buckwheat , etc. You can pick what you like. If you have a mill, you can grind the grains yourself; or you can buy them already ground. Make a mixture of equal parts of the grains you have available. The cereal may be supplemented by a bowl of chopped fruits with one tablespoon of honey and juice of ½ lime. Or, a slice of whole grain bread with avocado slices or pesto will make a well-rounded breakfast.

PORRIDGE (Gertrud’s recipe for two persons)

The night before, take 1/3 cup of grains mixture and suspend it in 1/3 cup of water. Let it stand, covered. In the morning add 2 cups of milk. Bring to simmer. After simmering, turn off heat and let sit for 30 minutes in a covered pot. You may add nuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sugar or maple syrup to taste.

Meetings of the “Aging Well Network” are held monthly, usually on the last Tuesday of the month from 10 am to noon, and cover a wide variety of topics of interest to seniors (and those who care for them). They also provide an opportunity for gathering (with refreshments) with others in the community with common interests.

Look for more details in emails to members and on the Village’s website (villageoftakomapark.com), Facebook page (facebook.com/villageoftakomapark), and the Lifelong Takoma website at takomaparkmd.gov/government/lifelong-takoma/.

Have ideas for topics or potential speakers? Email Karen Maricheau at kmaricheau@takomaparkmd.gov.

VOLUNTEERS / SERVICES:

Friendly Visitors/Callers

Since September 2014, the Village of Takoma Park has been helping neighbors age in the community by providing rides to the grocery store, church, or doctor's appointments. A newer service is the Friendly Visitors program, run jointly by the Village and the Mental Health Association of Montgomery County. Each Friendly Visitor volunteer is matched with a senior in Takoma Park, visiting once a week for an hour.

The Village currently has 11 volunteers providing visits to Takoma Park seniors or homebound residents. Do you know someone who might welcome this service, or would you like to volunteer? If so, please contact the Village of Takoma Park at [301-646-2109](tel:301-646-2109) or email Sandy Egan at sandyeganretired@gmail.com.

"We have so much fun! We meet each week to play cards and she beats me every time."
- a Volunteer matched with a 92-year old woman

VillageRides

Have you wondered how riders like the VillageRides service? Thanks to the Jewish Council for the Aging, we have some answers. Last February, JCA distributed a 17-question survey to 19 riders; 15 responded. Most questions had four possible responses: Always, Usually, Sometimes, or Rarely.

All 15 riders who responded to the survey reported their drivers are "always" friendly and punctual, they "always" receive excellent service, and "always" feel safe. All said they would recommend the program to others, and all but two have already done so.

Here are more highlights of the results, showing the number of responses out of those received:

- When I call, the service is friendly:
Always 14/15; Usually 1/15
- When I call, I feel listened to:
Always 14/15; Usually 1/15
- When I call, I receive clear information:
Always 14/15; Rarely 1/15
- The ride request process was easy for me:
Always 14/15; Sometimes 1/15
- My drivers call me to confirm my rides:
Always 14/15; Usually 1/15
- I receive a timely response to my ride requests:
Always 13/15; usually 2/15

"I have used VillageRides of Takoma Park on a number of occasions. The program provides an essential service. The volunteers fill a transportation need that ensures the passenger arrives at their destination in a timely manner. An added benefit is meeting helpful neighbors and sometimes even making new friends."
- Lillian F.

The Village's 31 volunteer drivers gave 596 rides to 54 members April 2015-May 2016.

Many thanks to Sandy Egan, Village Rides Coordinator, and all of the drivers for providing the level of service, convenience, and trust that makes this kind of feedback possible. We're also indebted to the Jewish Council for the Aging for their invaluable support in the form of training, ridesharing software, outreach, and the magnets for drivers' car doors.

To learn more and to register for rides, call 301-646-2109. To request a ride, call 301-255-4212. To volunteer or for more information, call 301-646-2109 or email sandyeganretired@gmail.com. Village membership is required for both drivers and riders, due to insurance regulations.

DID YOU KNOW?



Transportation tips

In addition to the VillageRides program, a number of other transportation options are available to Montgomery County residents, including the following:

Connect-a-Ride is a free program for adults 50+ and/or with disabilities. Call 301-738-3252 Monday to Friday (9:00-5:00) or email ConnectARide@accessJCA.org. Trained staff will provide information about both public and private transportation resources. Please be aware that specialists often speak with callers at length, so you may need to leave a message and get a call back.

Metro and Ride On: Anyone 65 or over can purchase a Senior SmarTrip card to ride Metro (rail and bus) and Ride On buses at discounted rates. **Note:** Bus trips (Metrobus and Ride On) are **free** between the non-peak hours of 9:30 am and 3:00 pm! A valid government-issued picture ID and a \$2.00 fee are required to obtain a Senior SmarTrip card. The closest location to purchase a card is the Paul Sarbanes Transit Station, Level 2, at 8404 Colesville Road, by the Silver Spring Metro. For more information and a link to additional locations, go to wmata.com/fares/smartrip/senior.cfm.

Metro Access provides shared-ride, door-to-door transportation for people unable to use public transportation due to a disability, and is available seven days a week. Call 301-562-5360 or go to the website at wmata.com/accessibility/metroaccess_service/ for details about eligibility and service.

Call-n-Ride offers discounted taxi trips for residents age 67+ and adults with disabilities who meet income eligibility requirements. For information, call 301-948-5409.

Senior Connection provides free rides to those 62 and older, primarily to medical appointments, using volunteer drivers. Call 301-962-0820, go to seniorconnectionmc.org/learn-more/, or email info@seniorconnectionmc.org.

Free Transportation to Senior Centers: Seniors of any income level are eligible to use curb-to-curb transportation to the five Montgomery County Recreation Senior Centers. Riders must live within a defined service area of the center. Call 240-777-4924 for details.

For more details on transportation options for older adults, those on Medicare and Medicaid, and people with disabilities, go to montgomerycountymd.gov/senior/transportation.html or montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/Transportation/Directory.html.

Trash and Recycling Pickup “At the House”

If no one in your residence is able to carry trash and recycling bins to the curb, contact the City of Takoma Park Department of Public Works at 301-891-7633 or publicworks@takomaparkmd.gov to request an exemption from curbside pickup for trash and recycling (but not yard waste). Public Works staff will work with you to clarify details about where your bins will be located for pick up, and possible placement of a marker in your yard.



Fire Safety

Smoke detectors save lives! Do you have them? Are they in the best locations? Are they working properly?

The Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department wants to help ensure that you have adequate smoke detectors in good working order. If you do not have smoke detectors, if you have questions about whether you have an adequate number in the best locations, or if changing the battery is a physical challenge for you, call the Fire Department at 240-773-4702 to request assistance or to schedule a free home visit by one of their firefighters.



Battery-powered smoke alarms will usually begin to “beep” or “chirp” when the battery is getting low, to warn that it’s time for a replacement. What if your alarm begins to make a noise you don’t recognize or are unsure of? Does the battery need to be replaced? Is the smoke detector malfunctioning? You can call 911 and speak to the dispatcher, who will help you sort out what is happening and can send assistance as necessary.

Remember – if your smoke alarm goes off, get to safety and call 911!

Pill identification

Do you or others in your family who take multiple medications ever lose track of which pill is which? The National Library of Medicine offers links to several websites offering tools for identifying pills by color, shape, size and imprint. See nlm.nih.gov/services/drug_id.html.

Property Tax Increase Deferral for 65+

The Montgomery County Council unanimously approved a bill this May designed to help seniors stay in their homes by deferring property tax increases. Expedited Bill 10-16 will enable seniors of at least 65 years of age and individual or combined gross incomes of \$80,000 or less to defer increases on property taxes on their principal residence for as long as they own their homes. Under the income threshold of \$80,000, the eligibility criteria would capture roughly half of senior households in Montgomery County. More information about Bill 10-16 is available at tinyurl.com/zfz4jg9.

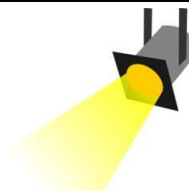
SUPPORT GROUPS:

The Village of Takoma Park has fostered the development of two support groups and helps to promote them.

The Movement Disorder Support Group was started in response to interest from Takoma Park residents with Parkinson’s disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and similar conditions. Members, ideally together with the caregiver, meet once a month, usually at 2 PM on the second Wednesday of the month (with some variations), to exchange information, and hear from guest professionals. For more information, contact wolfgang.mergner@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.

Parents of Special Needs Adults (POSNA) is a Takoma Park advocacy and support group for parents and other loved ones of adults with developmental and/or chronic psychiatric challenges. The group is especially interested in securing jobs, supportive housing, safety and recreation opportunities for their loved ones. They meet monthly (usually on the 4th Thursday evening of the month) in Takoma Park. If you have questions and/or would like to join, email Mary Jane Muchui at muchui@aol.com.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE BOARD:



Ken Flemmer:



Ken Flemmer has a long history of commitment to the welfare of others, with 30 years experience working for the Adventist Development & Relief Agency HQ (ADRA). During those years he was very engaged in food security issues, with a focus on assisting communities and individuals to improve food access, availability, utilization, and resilience. Ken lived in Liberia and Singapore, where he served as Asia Regional Director.

In 2014 Ken was appointed Executive Director of the Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington (ACSGW) in Silver Spring, MD. ACSGW provides food and clothing assistance, a range of job skill preparation/enhancement trainings, out-of-school programs for youth, and social counseling.

Doris Duarte:



Doris Duarte has been a resident of the City of Takoma Park and a federal government employee for over 20 years. In her journey as a community activist, she has been involved with several boards and organizations, and is a mentor and advocate for assisting the youth and seniors of Takoma Park. She has worked with organizations such as Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington, Educare, and Capital Area Food Bank to distribute food to families, those with disabilities, and seniors. For over two years she has also played a key role in ensuring the success of the Lunch and Learn Camp, a service providing enrichment activities and nutritional lunches to low-income youth in Takoma Park. Doris has been on the Village of Takoma Park Board since 2014

Watch the website and future newsletters for more board profiles.

UPDATED BROCHURE:

We're pleased to announce an updated brochure highlighting contact information for the Village, services offered, partnerships, a selected list of neighborhood groups, and how to get involved. Look for the brochures around town and at community events. Special thanks to the Jewish Council for the Aging for providing printing.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

JOIN:

Sign up online at our website – villageoftakomapark.com.

Don't have access to a computer? Call 301-646-2109

to request a membership form.

Membership dues are \$10 per year per member.

VOLUNTEER:

Volunteers are essential to the success of the Village.

There are two types of volunteering, both important:

- Direct service to members
- Volunteering to help the organization

In most cases you may serve on a regular or periodic basis, giving as much or as little time as fits your schedule. Anyone age 18 or older is welcome.

Note: Our insurance coverage requires that all volunteers join as members as well. Let us know if the \$10 annual dues are a hardship.

To volunteer, go to villageoftakomapark.com, **Join** and **Member Signup**.

Or email Sandra Egan at sandyeganretired@gmail.com.

SUPPORT:

Village of Takoma Park is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization.

We rely on grants and donations to supplement income from dues.

All contributions are tax-deductible.

Donate online by credit card at villageoftakomapark.com or send a check payable to Village of Takoma Park c/o 104 Tulip Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912.

We greatly appreciate your support.

Mission Statement:

Village of Takoma Park's mission is to provide intergenerational support to seniors and persons with disabilities who wish to live actively in the Takoma Park by:

- providing assistance, advice and neighborly support;
- facilitating access to needed service providers;
- advocating on behalf of Village members and informing them about relevant issues and policies;
- organizing and managing Village volunteers who provide services and assistance; and
- collaborating with the Lifelong Takoma program, Montgomery County, and other organizations

Officers

President: Wolfgang Mergner

Vice-President: vacant

Secretary: Martha Feldman

Treasurer: Gertrud Mergner

Additional board members

Pazit Aviv

Kathie Baker

Doris Duarte

Kenneth Flemmer

Andy Kelemen

Erwin Mack

Elizabeth Wallace

The Advisory Board

Bruce Baker

Seth Grimes

Peter Kovar

Moses Wilds

Deborah Zuckerman

Ex Officio

Paula Lisowski

Karen Maricheau

Committee Chairs

Communications: Linda Carlson

Finance: vacant

Membership: Wolfgang Mergner

Programs: Karen Maricheau

Service Delivery: vacant

Volunteers: Sandra Egan

Newsletter editors

Linda Carlson and Paula Ottinger