

VILLAGE OF TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER, # 2, July 2015



Kickoff event May 9: It's official; the Village of Takoma Park has come of age. We celebrated our formal establishment with a kickoff party at the Takoma Park Community Center supported by music of the band DeJohn (see photo below). Many members of the Village and a number of newcomers joined in the celebration. Mayor Bruce Williams gave a welcome speech noting that too



many senior residents move away from the City. Seniors are valuable assets to the community, and their contributions to the life of the City are extremely important. Therefore all efforts that help older residents to age at home in the community are appreciated. Ann Slayton with Sherman Avenue Elders described how a close-knit community of neighbors helping neighbors was realized in their

neighborhood. The event also brought in new members -- currently, the Village of Takoma Park has 63 members, an impressive number considering we are still in our first year of existence.

Outreach: Spreading the word about the Village is one of our key current efforts. We need members who can help sustain the Village and contribute to formation of the supportive community that older residents need. The Village of Takoma Park also needs volunteers to undertake the tasks involved in delivering our community-wide services. As part of our outreach efforts, once a month we will be at the Takoma Park Farmers Market (see photo at right). Please stop by our table and say hello. We will also participate in Takoma Park festivals and meet with neighborhood associations and tenant associations. We would be glad to meet with any interested local group.



The Website: An important avenue of communication in the website, which is now up and running. It has useful information about the Village and local resources for seniors. Please check it out at <http://villageoftakomapark.com>. Want to join the Village? Willing to volunteer? Look for the website's online applications for membership and volunteering.

Refrigerator Magnets: What's a refrigerator in Takoma Park without a batch of colorful magnets providing information on local organizations and businesses? Now you can add the Village of Takoma Park to your magnet collection. Ours contains essential contact information for "Neighbors Helping Neighbors to make aging in community a reality." The magnet has contact information on how to sign up for and schedule **VillageRides (301-255-4212)**, and how to communicate with the Board and the Executive Committee **or sign up as a volunteer** (301-646-2109 or via the website's volunteer application form). Let us know (villageoftp@gmail.com) if you would like a magnet of your own.

City Council: The Executive Committee presented a report of the current status of the Village of Takoma Park to the Takoma Park City Council on May 4. The presentation was both a reflection on the past development of the Village and an effort to look at the future. The discussion will lay the groundwork of interaction with the Councilmembers in each ward for the benefit of older residents. Members of the

Executive Committee will meet with individual Councilmembers to seek advice on needs of the community. The Executive Committee will also report to the Council on a half-yearly basis.



Support Groups: The Village of Takoma Park supports two interest groups that formed recently: a support group for residents with neuromuscular disorders (Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis) and their caretakers; and a second group for older parents of children with disabilities. Interested residents should contact the Village at 301-646-2109. We also have a visitor program for older residents who are seeking community contact through periodic friendly visits. We can receive confidential information about this option at 301-646-2109 or by email at villageoftp@gmail.com.

Village Rides: From April to June we provided and responded to 130 ride requests in Takoma Park. The requests for rides are increasing, and we are seeking additional volunteer drivers urgently. Look for the volunteer application on the Village of Takoma Park website at <http://villageoftakomapark.com> or call Sandra Egan at 301-452-9408 if you have questions. A brief training is provided and a short background check is required.

Committees: As of June 2015, the Volunteer Committee (Coordinator Sandra Egan) has provided orientation and scheduling for 15 Drivers and 8 friendly visit volunteers.



Volunteers shaping the Village: The Village of Takoma Park exists. It delivers its services to neighbors in the City. Now is the time for members to contribute to and shape the Village. This is the chance to create the organization that members want. One of the best ways to shape the organization and to plan for the future is to join one of the committees.

The options are: (1.) Volunteer managing (Recruit and help volunteers); (2.) Membership Committee (Recruit and keep the connection with members); (3.) Communication Committee (Communicate to the public and the members by newsletter, website, and social media); (4.) Finance Committee (Get and manage the money); (5.) Program Committee (Prepare the program for our monthly meeting); (6.) Services Review Committee (Review and plan the services that are needed and can be supported).

Donations and Grants: The Village of Takoma recently received the following support, in addition to donations from individuals:

- 1) A grant from the Takoma Foundation to support the monthly meeting of "Seniors and Those Who Care For Them"
- 2) A grant from Montgomery County to support the initial phase of acquiring liability insurance and to establish a communication system with members
- 3) A donation from new local business TableTopDC to recognize the contribution of volunteers.

Donations can be made by check payable to Village of Takoma Park, mailed to Gertrud W. Mergner, Treasurer, 104 Tulip Avenue, Takoma Park MD 20912.

Contact us: villageoftp@gmail.com or [301-646-2109](tel:301-646-2109)