



## THE VILLAGE IN HOWARD VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

The Village In Howard  
443-367-9043  
[4info@thevillageinhoward.org](mailto:4info@thevillageinhoward.org)  
[www.TheVillageInHoward.org](http://www.TheVillageInHoward.org)

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 1276  
Columbia, MD 21044

Office Address:  
6061 Stevens Forest Rd.  
Columbia, MD 21045

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## **Welcome Volunteers.....**

Volunteers are the heart of The Village In Howard.....

Almost 5 years ago, about a dozen interested citizens of Howard County started to work on the idea of setting up The Village In Howard (TVIH). Since that time until now, people have come and gone and all left their mark on our Village. We are able to open TVIH to members and volunteers because of these individuals' hard work. We are thankful to each and every one of them.

As we begin our third year of operations, please keep in mind that we are still an adolescent operation, powered almost entirely by volunteers, playing different roles and providing our unique skills to further the TVIH's mission. It's important to honor the time, commitment and competing priorities that come with volunteer power. We all tend to see our work as the most pressing! This calls each of us to behave as supportively and collaboratively as possible and to remember everyone is doing their best and we are striving for common goals.

Volunteers are the "how" to make "Aging in Place" happen. The senior citizens of our county who become members of TVIH are voicing their desire to stay in their own homes/community as they age. You have become a volunteer and offered your services to make this a reality for our community. The Village In Howard is grateful.

Our hope is that the act of volunteering will bring many personal rewards and be in and of itself a fulfilling experience. You will share occasions of joy and laughter as well as some frustrations with those you are helping . Your patience and respect for those you are assisting will guarantee that we will be able to succeed in the long run in helping our members stay healthy, active and connected to the community for as long as possible.

The Village In Howard thanks you again for volunteering. Thanks for joining us on this ambitious journey!

Marie Grunwell

Susan Hailman

Volunteer Co-Managers

## **VILLAGE BACKGROUND**

### **MISSION**

The Village In Howard is a community of members who choose to actively age in place by relying on mutual support, volunteers and community resources.

### **VISION**

The Village In Howard ensures that members receive reliable, personalized, practical solutions and services; delivered in a compassionate, respectful manner. We value internal and external collaboration and inclusiveness while exercising our responsibilities.

### **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE In HOWARD**

In the fall of 2012, several residents who had been reading about the village concept spreading across the country gathered together to discuss the feasibility of a village in Howard County. After several public gatherings, there was sufficient interest to form a steering committee which formed and began to lay the groundwork to create The Village In Howard (TVIH). In 2013, TVIH became an incorporated organization and steering committee members became the founding Board. In July 2014 the Village received its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. TVIH Board members have worked closely with existing community resources such as the Office on Aging and the Columbia Association and other organizations that serve elders in the county to reduce the chances of duplicative services and to assure collaborative relationships. We have been fortunate to receive financial support from the Columbia Association, members' fees and donations as well as the business community which supports our administrative and infrastructure costs. In 2015, TVIH was able to hire a part-time administrative staff person and a bookkeeper. Most of our essential programs and initiatives are still run by volunteers.

### **THE VILLAGE MOVEMENT**

One of the most persistent findings of studies conducted by AARP and others is the desire of Americans to "age in place." That is, people of all regions and economic groups consistently express a preference to remain in their communities, neighborhoods, and homes for as long as possible. Geriatric health professionals have also found that people age most successfully in environments that support their autonomy, sense of purpose and social connectedness.

In response, many communities are launching programs popularly known as “Villages.” These Villages are not physically separated retirement communities, but rather virtual societies in which seniors are connected with one another, with socialization opportunities and meaningful community involvement supported by volunteer service. The common goal is for members to remain safely and productively in their own residences for as long as is reasonably practical.

The first Village was Beacon Hill Village in Boston, founded in 2001. Since then, Villages have been established in Washington, D.C., Palo Alto, and many other communities. Over 250 are registered with the Village to Village Network.\*

Each Village is uniquely configured around the needs and circumstances of its members and surrounding community. In general, however, Villages operate as non-profit community-based organizations providing members opportunities for social, educational and cultural get-togethers as well as with such services as transportation (especially related to medical visits or grocery shopping); meal preparation and delivery; light home or yard maintenance; and assistance with computers and other home electronic devices. In return, Village members typically pay a regular annual membership fee to support operational costs and staff salaries. Because many activities and services are provided by volunteers, members are an important part of the volunteer network providing services to the extent they are able. Even frail members can help with daily “check-in” phone calls to other members or assuring that members receive cards or calls on their birthdays.

#### \*OTHER VILLAGES -VILLAGE-TO-VILLAGE NETWORK

We learn from and share with other Villages, locally and across the country, adapting and customizing while taking advantage of the advice and experience of others. We’ve referred frequently to longer-established Villages that have good models. The Village In Howard is a member of the national “Village-to-Village” network, <http://www.vtvnetwork.org/> .

#### STRUCTURE/STAFF/ TVIH VILLAGE BOARD

The Village In Howard is guided by a Board of Directors who serve 2 year terms. The vision and the work of the Village are carried out by the Board and Volunteers. With the assistance of a part-time paid Office Manager, members of the Board are coordinating the functions of the

Village. The Village Board has several standing committees: Membership, Communications/Outreach, Finance, Fundraising, Volunteer/Services, and Legal. Volunteers who are interested in joining any of these committees or joining the Board should contact a Volunteer Manager.

Board of Directors – See handout A

Committee Chairs/Structure – See handout B

## GOALS OF THE VILLAGE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Village In Howard is an aging in place membership program. The Village provides support, expertise, and services to members who want to have the practical means and confidence to live safely and comfortably in their own residences and neighborhoods.

Our goals are:

1. To support and implement the mission of the Village by providing effective services and rewarding activities to our members utilizing volunteer talent.
2. To provide a meaningful experience for volunteers.
3. To build community and nurture relationships between and among members and volunteers as they participate in social, service and training opportunities provided by the Village.
4. To sustain the viable management, service, guidance and integrity of the Village.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM POLICIES

*Volunteer service at the Village should not be a burden. Volunteers should feel free to accept or decline particular assignments, depending upon their personal schedules and commitments. Volunteers should not be asked to perform services that require personal care, and such requests should be reported to staff.* (Staff will then work with the member to discuss alternate support options.) Volunteers may serve on a regular or periodic basis. All arrangements for connection and service must go through the Village volunteer program. This allows volunteers control over their personal time and the nature of the requests to which they respond. The Village staff will determine whether a requested service can be handled by a volunteer or whether it requires the expertise of a professional service provider. **Volunteers are covered by the Village liability insurance only while they interact with a member through an official assignment.**

## VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Adhere to the rules and policies of the Volunteer Handbook
- Have an enriching, rewarding and fun experience
- Check your email and phone messages daily for service updates.
- Meet your volunteer commitments.
- Ask questions when you are in doubt about anything. We want to hear from you.
- If for any reason you are uncomfortable with any situation, call the office immediately.
- Accept the guidance of the Village designated Volunteer Manager.
- Follow all Village policies and procedures.
- Report your volunteer hours after each service.
- Say “NO” to an assignment that you are not comfortable performing.
- Seek other volunteer opportunities within the Village if you want to change to another position.
- Participate in opportunities to provide feedback on your volunteer experience.
- Notify the Village if you decide to cease your volunteer work.

## GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Working closely with the Village Board and designated supervisors, volunteers are expected to:

- Attend orientation and ongoing training sessions
- Consult with the designated volunteer manager before assuming new responsibilities



- Be prompt and reliable in reporting for duty
- Perform your duties with enthusiasm and kindness
- Notify the designated volunteer manager as soon as possible when unable to report for a scheduled assignment
- Protect confidential information
- Contact the designated volunteer manager immediately if you are concerned about a member's health or behavior
- Decline any gifts or tips that may be offered
- Treat members and other volunteers with respect and with cultural appropriateness
- Do not administer medicines or medical care, even if requested by the member

## REPRESENTATION OF THE ORGANIZATION

*Volunteers are not authorized to act on behalf of or make statements representing the official position of the organization, unless they have been given permission to do so by the Village Board President. For example, volunteers should not make statements to the press or broadcast media without prior authorization, nor are volunteers authorized to sign any agreement involving contractual or financial obligation.*

## PRIVACY POLICY

*Personally identifiable information is defined as anything that can be used to identify someone and may be neutral (name, address, etc.), sensitive (medical, financial, legal) or contextual (part of larger information). Volunteers are responsible for maintaining members' privacy. Such information should not be shared inside or outside the organization. If volunteers have questions regarding whether or not personal information should be shared, the designated volunteer manager or Board President should be consulted.*

- Personal information will be accurate, relevant and current and will be deleted once it is no longer needed. Members will be able to access and update their personal information.
- The Village will request only the personal information that is necessary to accomplish the purpose for which it is intended.
- Individuals will have a choice in how their information is used or disclosed.
- Personal information will be protected from loss, damage, theft or improper disposal.
- Unauthorized people will not have access to the information.

- Personal information will not be discussed in a public area with unauthorized people or for reasons other than what is necessary to meet member needs and/or vetting purposes.
- The Village prohibits the sale or rental of personal information to third parties.

TVIH also has a privacy policy concerning how the volunteer's personal information is kept confidential and the policy is posted on our website at [www.thevillageinhoward.org](http://www.thevillageinhoward.org).

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

*Volunteers should not discuss, offer, or attempt to solicit members in purchasing goods or services of their personal or company businesses without the approval of the Board.*

Volunteers with business interests in the service of members should discuss their volunteer commitment and business involvement with the designated volunteer manager or board member. There are opportunities for members to market their business services through Village sponsorships on an on-going or event-specific basis. Violation of this policy will result in termination of volunteer status and forfeiture of sponsorship opportunities.

## VOLUNTEER DISMISSAL

- Possible reasons for dismissal may include:

- Failure to adhere to any Village policies, guidelines or procedures.
- Any inappropriate behavior.

## INTERACTING WITH MEMBERS

### KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL VISIT

Members join the Village as full members because they want support to live independently in their own homes and communities. As a volunteer supporting that goal you are representing the Village as well as yourself. Visiting with a member, whether to assist at the home or to provide transportation will be 2 primary ways for volunteers to interact with members. The following are some things to ensure your interaction goes smoothly, both for you and for the member.

- ✓ Check your email and phone messages daily for updates and sign up for services based on the requests you receive.
- ✓ Once you are confirmed to provide the service, call the member the night before your visit to confirm the time and any details about your visit.
- ✓ **Have your cell phone charged and on when you provide a service.**
- ✓ Be on time and appropriately dressed. Please do not wear perfume or after shave or smoke while interacting with a member.
- ✓ Ask the member how you can be of assistance.
- ✓ Once you have connected with the member, silence your mobile phone. Try to limit personal calls except in critical situations.
- ✓ Respect the member's personal space. Be patient.
- ✓ Do not share your own frustrations with members. Listen, but do not add your own worries to theirs.
- ✓ Do ONLY what the member asks you to do. Your role is to support members to feel in control of their lives as much as possible.
- ✓ Do not make value judgments about the "right" way to take care of a house or how to solve a problem.
- ✓ If you make subsequent visits –after you have built a feeling of trust and safety – a member may ask for more assistance.
- ✓ In case of requests for recurring visits, schedule them through the Village office.
- ✓ Respect a member's privacy: What you see and learn when you visit a member must remain confidential. Please notify the Village office of any changes in the member's condition, but do not share that information with friends or other volunteers.
- ✓ After your visit, send a note to [services@thevillageinhoward.org](mailto:services@thevillageinhoward.org) to confirm the time spent, miles traveled and any relevant details.

## What Members Sometimes Think

- “I am not helpless – maybe discouraged and faltering, but I am not helpless.”
- “When you do something for me that I can do for myself, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.”

## LISTENING GUIDELINES

It is important to realize that it may be easier for members to speak to volunteers than it is to share with family members. Even in a caring family one can feel guilty about imposing troubles on children or relatives. Do not make members feel ashamed sharing their worries with you. If you become uncomfortable, please discuss this with the designated volunteer manager

- Listen respectfully if members talk about their spiritual or political beliefs. Never argue with them, rather, show respect for their views.
- Let members talk, but do not feel you have to come up with solutions to their complaints or problems.
- Talk about what interests the member – even though it may not be what interests you.
- Simply repeating back to the member what you heard them say can help them feel heard.
- Examples of what a member might say and when you should call the Village office: “I’m eating just fine. I have a sandwich and a glass of milk every day. “ or “I got this bruise when I fell the other day. I was lucky I could pull myself up on the kitchen cabinet door.”

## IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTICE THESE RED FLAGS

The following information will help you decide if you need to consult the volunteer manager about referring a member for additional help. Trust your intuition. As an outsider, a volunteer may be the first to notice a member’s uncharacteristic behavior. These may indicate serious underlying problems. Below are some of the changes in behavior that may indicate a member is in need of additional help. Consult with the designated volunteer manager if you notice any of these.

We anticipate that these situations will occur infrequently, but it is necessary to be prepared if you encounter any behavior you are concerned about.

Notice these signs of potential trouble:

- Changes in mood or extreme anger, hostility and agitation
- Confusion or disorientation
- Neglect of environment
- Changes in physical health
- Neglect of personal hygiene
- Asks you the same question six times in an hour
- Doesn't understand what you are saying
- Concerns about member's safety in the house

## EMERGENCY GUIDELINES

If an emergency occurs when you are providing a service for a member, it is important that you remain calm. Focus on helping the member and on notifying the proper authorities who can provide appropriate assistance.

- If a Member Does Not Answer the Door: When you arrive for the service and the member is not at the door or outside, act quickly with the following progression. You are expected to stay until the member is found or the emergency response team say you may leave.
  - Try to contact the member - ring the doorbell, knock on the door, call the member's phone (home and cell). Do NOT enter the home if no one answers the door.
  - If no answer, contact the member's emergency contact. (This number should be on the service confirmation you received.) The contact should know if the member is elsewhere and just neglected to inform us. If the contact does not know where the member is, tell the contact that you will call 911 and will provide the EMS with the emergency contact's information.
  - If emergency contact information is not available or the person contacted is not available, call 911. In the phone call, include the following:
    - State that this is a case of elderly person who is not responding to calls.
    - Your name, a TVIH volunteer
    - You were assigned to provide a TVIH service to this member
    - The member's name, address
    - [A firetruck/ambulance should be dispatched to the member's home to gain access and verify if the member is in medical need.]

## **MAINTAIN BOUNDARIES**

Boundaries are what make volunteers different from best friends or family. Of course, it is important to be compassionate and concerned about a member's status or situation, but not at the cost of your own psychological health. As a volunteer, you care about a member's welfare, but you are not as emotionally attached or involved with the member as you would be with a family member. Volunteers are sympathetic but should also be objective and realistic. Volunteers are caring but should try to limit the degree of connection to what a "good neighbor" would do.

### **HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM CROSSING BOUNDARIES?**

- You lose objectivity, become resentful, are easily hurt by a member's comments, or you become overly attached.
- You feel that the member is your responsibility. You feel overwhelmed by the member's needs.
- The member's requests for help are beyond what you and the Village can provide.
- You are offering counseling.
- You have difficulty saying "no" or feel obligated to spend time with the member.
- You engage in activities or behavior with the member that you keep from the Village.
- You make commitments to the members that have not been scheduled through the Village office.
- You accept gifts or tips from the member other than cookies, coffee or tea.

The Village will offer support to volunteers who may have questions or concerns about boundaries. Don't hesitate to ask your designated volunteer manager. This is hard sometimes! We want to help you keep your balance.

## WHAT WE DO AND WHAT WE REFER TO OTHERS

We know you volunteer out of compassion and caring. However, as a volunteer, there are situations where your role shifts from being the appropriate helper to getting the appropriate helper. Even if you have a professional background that would qualify you to do more, unless this is your approved job for the Village, you should not practice these skills in your capacity as a Village volunteer. Here are a few instances where the correct response is to get the experienced professional who can help:

- Never administer any type of medical care. Do not administer any medication even if asked to do so.
- Do not lift a member who has fallen without professional help. Call 911 and then let the Village know.
- Do not offer legal advice
- Do not offer investment or financial advice.
- Do not encourage members to call you directly. All members' calls should go through the Village Office to be screened and evaluated.
- Do not refer members to professionals you have used. Requests for referrals should be made through the member to member forum on the website.
- Do not share confidential information or gossip about members, staff or other volunteers. You may, however, discuss members with the designated volunteer manager when seeking guidance or advice.

The Village is developing a list of contractors whom other members have used and are willing to recommend. This is not a list that has been vetted by TVIH, and TVIH does not guarantee their work in any way, but it is a reflection of other members' experiences.

It is important to use this mechanism to help members find appropriate services and to be clear about what it is and is not!

Remember if you are providing a service to a member, you represent the Village, regardless of how you frame your recommendation!

If you are a Village member, you may use the Forum to recommend any contractor you have used, but if it is your business, or that of a close relative, and you do not disclose it, the Forum administrator may refuse to post your message or remove you from the Forum.

## IN CONCLUSION

We know this is a lot of information. We are blessed with such talented folks in our county, that we know much of this will be very familiar to many of you. Or you may have experience with other groups whose rules are different. The Village In Howard is a relatively new organization and we hope that setting standards and guidelines that we all agree to adhere to can make the volunteer role clearer and more manageable. Please share your experiences and questions and concerns when they arise. We will listen and support you with the wisdom of our team and a network of community resources. We are open to your feedback and we hope to improve over time with increased person-power and experience. We look forward to learning with you and from you as we make The Village In Howard a growing, thriving community!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our sincere thank you to: PNA Village, Beacon Hill Village, Silver Spring Village, Cleveland Park Village, Nauset Neighbors, Chevy Chase at Home, East Falls Village, and Northeast Seattle Together (N.E.S.T.) for their willingness to share their training manual information.



## Volunteer Agreement

### Please read carefully before signing:

#### **Confidentiality Agreement:**

I understand that The Village In Howard, Inc. volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all private and personal information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Such information should never be shared except when it is reasonable and necessary to provide services to Village members and should never be shared outside the organization. It is appropriate to discuss a volunteer experience with the designated Volunteer Supervisor or Executive Director, but not with others. Volunteers are required to comply with the Privacy Policy for The Village In Howard, Inc.

#### **Conflict of Interest Policy:**

I shall not use any information acquired by virtue of my participation in the program for financial, material, or professional gain or advantage. I understand that if it is discovered that I have done so, or it appears evident that I have done so or have attempted to do so, this will disqualify me from further consideration for volunteer service or result in my dismissal as a volunteer.

#### **Representation of the Organization:**

Volunteers are important ambassadors for The Village In Howard within the community. I understand that as a volunteer I must not act on behalf of or make statements representing the organization unless I have been authorized to do so by the Executive Director or an officer of the Board of Directors; I must not make statements to the press or media without prior authorization; and I am not authorized to sign any agreement involving contractual or financial obligations of The Village In Howard, Inc.

#### **Liability Waiver:**

I acknowledge that as a volunteer, I am not an employee of The Village In Howard and understand that I will not be paid for any work I perform. I consent and agree to assume all responsibility for any and all risks or events of damage or injury that may occur in the course of my volunteer work and that I am volunteering at my own risk. I fully release and discharge The Village In Howard, its officers, employees, agents, and successors from any loss, cost, injury, damages or other liability which I may incur in the course of my volunteer work.

#### **Verity of Application Information:**

I certify that all information I have provided about myself is true and complete. I understand that any false information or omission may disqualify me from further consideration for volunteer service and may result in my dismissal, if discovered, at a later date.

#### **Confirmation of Understanding & Receipt of Volunteer Handbook(s):**

I understand that volunteering with The Village In Howard should be a joyful and positive experience. I acknowledge receipt of the Village Volunteer Handbook. I have read and I understand the contents of the Handbook and agree to abide by the expectations the Village has of its volunteers. I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE ABOVE, HAVE HAD MY QUESTIONS FULLY ADDRESSED, AND HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR MY PERSONAL RECORDS.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_