

Where can I find help at home to allow me to age in place?

We can help you with tasks so you can remain in your home.



Seacoast Village Project

a NH 501(c) (3) non-profit organization

The Village Vibe

What a different world we are in now!

At the time of our last newsletter, we were preparing to launch our pilot project in New Castle and Portsmouth. We had recruited some members and volunteers and had training scheduled. Then things turned on a dime. COVID-19 and the public health requirements that came with it turned us into a virtual village. But we have not been idle! And due to the generosity of our community and volunteers, we continue to forge ahead.

Why a Village?

Seacoast Village Project is about **ALL of US** — whether you are giving or receiving assistance. Our services will build on other available resources to create a stronger sense of community — and a goal of keeping older adults engaged and involved in our NH seacoast towns.

Like many of you, we've gotten connected online through Face-Time and Zoom. Our Programs & Events team has held three events, and more are planned. Richard Danford has led a group of volunteer Phone Captains in an effort to reach out and see what we could do as a village with minimal risk to volunteers and members. We have been checking in by phone with some who have requested it and running errands for others. In addition to grocery and drugstore runs, we visit pet stores, Home Depot, Michaels – whatever it takes to help people feel comfortable and productive at this challenging time.

We received a grant from Connections for Health (with support from Exeter Hospital) to support membership scholarships for people who may not be able to afford Village membership. We received a forgivable loan from NH CDFA (Community Development Finance Authority) for expenses that we didn't expect that are related to the pandemic – the need to vet additional volunteers (when some of ours fell into a high risk category and cannot be used until things get more settled) and for needed protective supplies.

We are pleased to announce that we will be continuing our free Community Support Membership through the end of 2020.



If you are interested, simply click on the "Member/Volunteer Interest Form" at the top of our home page. Someone will call or e-mail (your preference) to follow up and help you take the next step.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome residents of Dover and the surrounding towns of Durham, Madbury, Lee and Newmarket into our Village. Many have been participating and contributing as volunteers.

Featured Interview

For decades **Richard Danford** has been an advocate for the aging and disability populations of California, Idaho, and New York. Since moving to Exeter with his wife, he now brings his vast experience and training to bear on local populations. We are blessed to have him on our team.

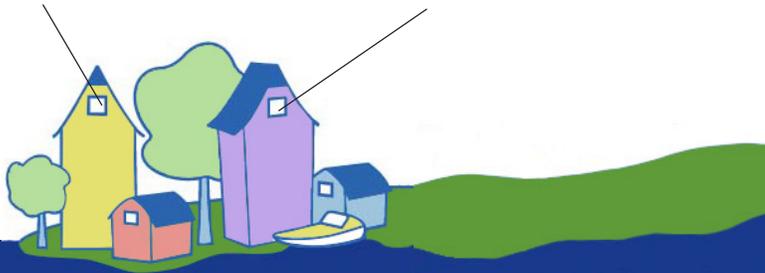
See page 4.

Q&A: Loneliness

This will be a regular column where we will address a question or issue our readers pose. Let us know what is on your mind! Given what we have all experienced with four months of social isolation, loneliness is a topic that everyone can relate to in some way.

I'm starting to feel lonely being at home all the time.

Then you should definitely read this article.



**Thoughts shared by Dr. Sam Marwit,
Clinical Psychologist in Dover, NH**

How do you view loneliness?

Loneliness too often gets lumped together with social isolation. Loneliness is a subjective state, a feeling of being alone. It can arise in people who are connected to others as well as in those who truly are by themselves. It is a known risk factor for physical and emotional non-well-being. Some even suggest there is a genetic predisposition for loneliness, but a predisposition and not a determining factor. There are many ways to counteract loneliness, but these vary from person to person and depend on individual histories, personalities, current and past circumstances, and support systems, to name a few determinants. Constructive intervention and support will vary accordingly.

Share some of your observations in working with older adults.

Older adults congregate in many settings. Some “live in place” and counteract loneliness by remaining involved with family and friends and joining organizations that provide social contact based on

mutual interests, like the Active Retirement Association, or taking free courses at the University or joining a “Village.” Others live in community settings like continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) or co-housing that purposefully build in venues for congregating and socializing. Still others, because of health issues, live in assisted living facilities which provide communal meals, activities, outings, etc. The pandemic, of course, has impacted all of these and has forced people to be more inventive in combating isolation.

What are some ways in which people manage loneliness?

In addition to the generalized ways of combating loneliness mentioned above, we can name some specific ways such as (but not limited to):

- **Pets.** The literature amply documents the physical and emotional benefits of interacting with, and caring for, pets.
- **Engagement.** There are great gains to be had in motivating one's self to invest or reinvest in valued activities and hobbies, and some-

times to do so with others of like mind (e.g., gardening, hiking, music, book clubs).

- **Adjust for limitations of aging.** Stay involved in what you value but adjust for aging. Play simpler piano pieces, but play. Work smaller puzzles but do puzzles. Grow plants and veggies in raised beds but keep gardening.

- **Stay active.** For an introvert, a walk alone can be very satisfying. For an individual who needs to be around others, walking with a friend (with appropriate distance) will make a difference. Now that the weather is nice, there are more opportunities to meet with friends and family comfortably outside.

- **Technology can be helpful.** Video chatting and Zoom meetings, including meals together or spiritual gatherings, can reduce loneliness. However, for some, the technology may not be enjoyable or easy to manage so, once again, be sensitive to individual differences.

- **Professional counseling.** America is “greying.” Those over 65 as well as the oldest old (i.e., those over 85), are the fastest growing segments of the population. With aging comes increased risk of loneliness. Friends move; friends die; retirement can decrease one's social circle; driving privileges may be removed, increasing social isolation; chronic medical conditions might keep one isolated, etc. It therefore becomes more important than ever to find creative solutions for meaningful engagement.

**NO SINGLE SOLUTION
FITS ALL.**

5 simple steps to getting help at home

Interested, but don't know exactly how you fit in? Here's a simple step-by-step guide to help with your decision process.

1. Curiosity:

Okay. You're reading this, so we've piqued your interest. You've already completed the first step. Keep reading.

2. Your needs:

Think about what you might need help with at home. Simple tasks? Yard work? Rides? Or just companionship?

3. Current help:

Who helps you when you need help at home? Family? Neighbors? Do you need more?

4. Trust:

To assure you of a high comfort level, each of our volunteers must pass our strict vetting process. So you can be sure the people helping you are good, trustworthy neighbors.

5. Join:

Just call 603-610-8430 to sign up. Or go to www.SeacoastVillageProject.org. That was easy! Welcome to the community of neighbors helping neighbors!

We have been ZOOMing!

Aside from offering non-contact store and pharmacy deliveries during the health restrictions, we convene fun, virtual get-togethers to reduce isolation and keep us connected. We look forward to in-person gatherings when that is possible.

One recent one in May was "Around the World Show & Tell." Everyone was asked to share a special souvenir and a meaningful story that captured their trip. Each story was captivating. Karl toured Canyon de Chelly in Mesa Verde where he saw how the native people lived. He showed us a handcrafted weaving of a woman figure and loom that reminded him of the native people and their crafts. Maxine took a trip to Rwanda. She met the friendly villagers, but knew their daily lives were extremely hard.



She shared a handwoven basket and wonderful video that she took with her iPhone of children singing and dancing.

For another event, everyone shared a good book over a cup of coffee. Each person provided a brief book summary and recommendation. We will build up book recommendations from our volunteers and members and post them on our website. Let us know your ideas about events that would interest you.



To Volunteer or Donate

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A special thank you to individuals who supported us!

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SeacoastVillageProject



Featured Interview with Richard Danford

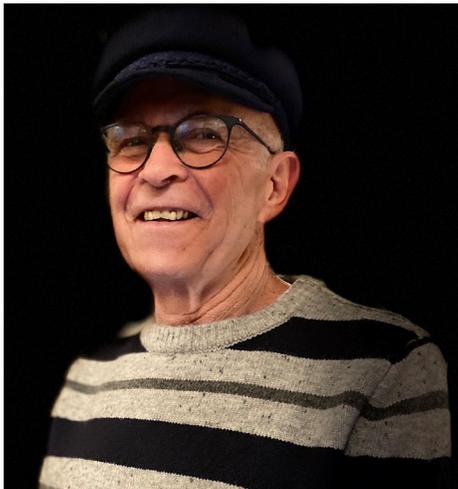
How did you become involved in SVP?

“When I moved up here, I started networking with a variety of folks around the state that serve the aging and disabilities populations. The last person I met with was Nancy Euchner and during our conversation, she said, ‘Well, we have this nonprofit called Seacoast Village Project. We have a lot of great energy going forward, but we could use help organizing and operationalizing our pilot program.’ I said, ‘Well, looks like I’m here for a reason because I’ve done exactly that!’ I’m very happy to be involved.”

What do you see as your greatest challenges or obstacles?

“I felt like I came into the game in the fourth quarter without a playbook! I had to examine all the efforts that had already been made. So many people were involved, and a lot of planning had been done.

“Another challenge was launching the pilot program at the end of February. We identified a core group of volunteers and began the vetting process. (Our) new training program was scheduled for the week before the Coronavirus shutdown. So, the virus



Richard Danford

then became the biggest challenge. Everything stopped, but at the same time there was a sense of urgency because the primary population of the SVP is the most affected by the virus. We couldn’t start the pilot program, but we quickly offered non-contact services such as grocery and medicine shopping and delivery, phone call check-ins, etc. to seniors who are isolated and interested in our services.”

What qualities are you looking for in a volunteer?

“One of the beautiful things about the Village is that we have such a huge array of services. It really offers opportunities to many people to get involved, from volunteers who would like to make member phone calls from home, to those who prefer to work in the office and to those who can do yard work, provide transportation, etc. We also need people to serve on some of our planning teams.”

“There’s really nothing in terms of education or background that would qualify or disqualify you to be a volunteer. Volunteers who will have member contact do have to partake in an intake process which includes a 2-step vetting process. The first is a formal vetting that must occur for anyone that’s going to have direct member contact. (We have a professional organization to carry out this step.) The second step is a conversation to explain the mission of SVP and talk about what activities the volunteer is most interested in.”

“So, the basic qualities necessary for a volunteer are:

- 1) interest in SVP**
- 2) availability to be of service should we need you**
- 3) reliability and**
- 4) responsiveness.”**

Once volunteers are vetted what kind of training and support is offered to them?

“Training covers different areas. We familiarize the volunteer with how SVP works, our ethics, our belief sys-

tem, our goals, our internal policies and procedures. We discuss (our) expectations of the volunteer and the volunteer’s expectations of SVP. We’re very grateful for our volunteers. As a supportive measure we make sure that SVP is a good fit for them. We want our volunteers to get the maximum benefit out of serving our members.”

How are you adapting the volunteer training to address the Coronavirus so that, if we can’t have direct contact for a while, we can still move forward?

“We’ve incorporated many issues concerning the Coronavirus into the training program. We’ve gathered additional information about the protocols to follow that will protect the volunteers as well as our members. We’ve also included information on how to identify symptoms. Training sessions will be conducted over Zoom which will allow the volunteers to ask questions.”

How has the Coronavirus changed the types of services currently offered?

“We’ve had to alter the services we offer. We’ve separated the types of services into three categories: low contact, moderate contact, and then the full array of services.

“Examples of low-contact services are grocery deliveries, medication pickups, phone check-ins and any other small tasks that do not require person-to-person contact. We’re also providing events on Zoom. We’ve had a coffee hour meeting and then an event where participants shared travel experiences. These were very successful! We also are helping members find local resources, helping navigate Zoom and SVP’s website or generally helping members use the Internet more effectively.

“Examples of moderate-contact services are yard work, handyman services inside the home. When it is appropriate and safe, we will then offer a full array of services.”