

Newsletter for December 2020



Creating Connections in the Time of COVID

We are beginning our year-end campaign! Contributions to the Village are welcome – to support expanded outreach and programs to connect older residents facing extended social isolation, scholarships for those living on limited incomes, and our new iPad Lending Library.

Click [here](#) to view the new video on the Village Movement on our homepage – and donate online if you wish.

We Welcome Carol Appel, New Member Relations and Volunteer Manager



We are delighted to welcome Carol Appel as our newest part-time staff member. Carol brings many years of experience in community building during her 35-year career as the founder/owner of a successful Pilates business and teacher training program, and then as Sonoma County Concierge with the Jewish Community Federation. In this role she built Jewish community and connected people through meaningful activities and programs, producing public events of all sizes. Carol has a remarkably warm and engaging manner, and is well known to several Village folks who have taken her Pilates classes.

Carol and her husband have lived in Petaluma for 25 years, with three children "grown and flown," and a recently adopted rescue puppy named Lucille. She is thrilled to embark on a new journey with the Village, and we are very pleased she is joining our community.

Thanksgiving Celebration a Success!

Our zoom Thanksgiving Celebration on Zoom brought together 44 Village members and volunteers for a gathering to share gratitude, photo memories, a short Pilates exercise - and fun!



SPECIAL PROGRAMS for DECEMBER and JANUARY

Online calendar at www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org

To join us for any of the online programs listed below, please RSVP by calling the office at 707-776-6055 or emailing us at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. We will then send you the online link for that class and details for how to get in. If you are a member needing Tech Help you can make a request and one of our Tech volunteers will call you. Programs on Zoom can be joined by phone for those without computers.

Solstice Gathering for Members and Volunteers



Monday, December 21, 4:00 – 5:30 pm.

Bring your favorite beverage and re-connect with Village friends on this special day celebrating the return of the light – and longer days. We will gather online together and in small groups to reflect on the end of 2020, and our hopes and visions for 2021. Our celebration will also include singing and a short series of movements led by a volunteer. **RSVP by December 18** to register and receive the Zoom link to join online or by phone.

The winter solstice is the shortest day and longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. Cultures around the world have long celebrated holidays around the winter solstice with fire and light, traditional symbols of celebrations held on the darkest day of the year. Humans may have observed the winter solstice as early as the Neolithic period, beginning about 10,200 BCE.

Get to Know the Village Information Meeting

Thursday, December 17, 11:00 – 12:00 pm.

We are creating new ways for members and volunteers to connect with each other, build new friendships, and offer mutual support as we navigate opportunities and realities during the pandemic.

Village membership now offers online wellness programs, interest groups, educational and social events, as well as volunteer services including grocery shopping, prescription pickups, phone friends, computer help, and personalized referrals to community resources. When the shelter-in-place order has lifted, we hope to gradually begin offering in-person programs, driving, and in-person friendly visits, computer help, and minor home repairs again.

This is an online or phone meeting for potential members (ages 50+), their adult children, and those interested in volunteering. To receive the Zoom link, please RSVP to the Village office at 707-776-6055 or email info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. Those with no computer can participate in the meeting by phone.

Navigating the Holiday Season in Difficult Times

Thursdays, December 3, 10, and 17, 5:00 – 6:00 or 6:30 pm, depending on size of group.

How do we find peace and contentment amidst the holiday season, especially during these unprecedented and difficult times? This three-part series will provide a safe space to:

- share our thoughts and feelings,
- discuss self-care strategies for coping with “holiday blues,” and
- explore ideas for making this holiday season enjoyable despite prevailing challenges.

Open to 12 Village members and volunteers. **RSVP** to info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org or 776-6055 to register and receive the Zoom link. All participants must be able to join online rather than by phone for this offering.

Facilitator Tammy Cotter is a retired educator. A Hospice volunteer for 12 years, Tammy co-facilitates Spousal Loss Bereavement Groups and provides one-to-one support. Co-facilitator Sarah Fleming is a retired psychotherapist as well as a Village member and volunteer. Sarah has extensive experience facilitating and participating in groups.

Spark Your Inspiration for 2021



Thursday, January 21, 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

Inspiration comes in many flavors and colors: It can be as small and personal as seeing something anew, or as big and collective as understanding the scope of the times we live in. *What inspires you? Who Inspires you? How do you get yourself into a mindset to be inspired?*

Explore these questions with this uplifting interactive workshop led by Elad Levinson.

Open to the public. **RSVP by January 11** to register and receive the Zoom link.

Elad has 50 years' experience as a psychotherapist. His areas of expertise include applied neuroscience and mindfulness practices. You can download his book Inspire Me! free at <https://www.eladlevinson.com>. Elad asks only that you donate what you can to Village Network of Petaluma.



NEW INTEREST GROUPS

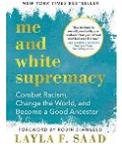
Me and White Supremacy



Orientation session January 10, 3:00 – 3:45 pm. Series on consecutive Sundays, January 17 through April 25, 3:00 – 4:30 pm.

We will work with Layla Saad's remarkable book, *Me and White Supremacy*, to elicit examination of our internalized and unconscious biases and to find a way forward to a more just and inclusive society. The group is open to 12 Village members and volunteers and requires a 15-week commitment.

The book is available at the library, Copperfield's Books, and Amazon. (If you choose to order from Amazon, [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) allows you to donate 5% of the profit to Village Network of Petaluma.) **RSVP** to register and receive the Zoom link.



Convener Sarah Fleming is a Village member and skilled facilitator who finds this discussion enriching and long overdue.

"This group made a big difference in my awareness of the white privilege I have enjoyed my whole life, without understanding so many realities of life as a person of color in our country. Sarah is a wonderful facilitator who gently guided our small supportive group discussion." – Anne Greenblatt

New Mindfulness-Based Meditation Group

Consecutive Saturdays, January 9 through March 6, 2021, 10:00 – 11:30 am.

A new 9-week series for Village members and volunteers begins early next year. Our goal is to foster compassion, equanimity, gratitude, and non-judgmental awareness through guided meditation and shared insights. **RSVP by December 30** to info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org or 707-776-6055 to receive the Zoom link before January 9.

Facilitator Freeman Humphrey is a retired psychiatric social worker who has led mindfulness-based guided meditation groups for over twelve years.

Bocce Ball Returns!

Wednesday, December 16, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, Leghorn Park (Meets third Wednesday of the month).

The game anyone can enjoy. We have a lot of fun, and our new venue means you can have a beer or other refreshments while playing! No experience necessary. Newcomers welcome; feel free to just show up and join the fun. RSVP to George Beeler at agbcomm@sonic.net. Besides wearing mandatory masks, gloves would be a good additional precaution. George will bring latex gloves for anyone who does not bring their own.

Online Workshops, Classes, and Interest Groups

Gentle Chair Yoga – Stay Healthy During Stressful Times!

Mondays and Thursdays, 11:00 am – noon.



We practice yoga asanas, Eden Energy exercises, breath work, and meditation to improve strength, flexibility, and inner calm. Beginners welcome. The class is currently conducted over Zoom, and you will have the option to be seen or only heard, if you choose. Donations by non-members welcome.

Pat Martin, CMT, EEM-CP, CYT, is a State Certified Massage Therapist, Eden Energy Medicine Certified Practitioner, and Certified Yoga Teacher.

The Joy of Writing Group

Tuesdays, 10:00 – 11:00 am.

 We write for fun, in fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry, etc. We write original stories in a noncritical environment. Come have fun with us, whether you are a veteran writer or a nervous beginner. All are welcome. Members free, non-members \$5 donation.

Men's Discussion Group

Alternate Tuesdays, 11:00 am.

We get together with other men via Zoom to discuss our lives in a spirit of fellowship. The group is limited to eight Village members and volunteers. Let us know if you want to be on the waitlist.

The Village Garden and Chat Group

Tuesday, December 8 and 22, noon – 1:00 pm. (Meets on alternate Tuesdays).

Let us know if you want to join this group interested in gardening and many other topics.



Retired Nurses Group

Wednesday, December 2, 10:15 – 11:45 am.

We discuss our nursing practices, education, and favorite stories, among other things – and get to know one another.

TED Talks Discussion Group

Friday, December 11, 11 am – 12 noon.

Join us for the last TED Talk of the year. The subject will be announced a week ahead of time. RSVP to receive the new Zoom link to attend online or by phone.

Shopping Online: Individual consultation for members needing assistance with Instacart and other delivery options.

Staying Connected with Zoom: Individual consultations for members on how to participate in programs via Zoom.

ONLINE EVENTS AROUND TOWN

Thursday, December 3, 9:00 am.

OLLI Coffee Hour. Zoom Link available at www.oli.sonoma.edu.

Medicare Changes & Choices

Thursday, December 3, 11 am – noon.



Medicare's open enrollment ends Monday, December 7. Get your last-minute questions answered by a state-certified HICAP counselor trained to provide free, up-to-date, and unbiased information. This online seminar will cover options for original Medicare, Advantage Plans, and Part D Plans taking effect in January 2021. To reserve a space and receive the link to attend this presentation, visit the

Senior Advocacy Services website at <https://senioradvocacyservices.org/event-calendar-public/>. Free and open to the public.

For more information, contact the HICAP office at 707-526-4108 and ask to speak with a HICAP counselor.

Sunday, December 13, 3:00 pm.

Live online from Weill Hall at the Green Music Center, the Santa Rosa Symphony conducted by Francesco Lecce-Chong performs: JESSIE MONTGOMERY: *Source Code* for String Orchestra; VIVALDI: Concerto Grosso for Violin, Two Oboes, Two Horns and Continuo; VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Fantasia on *Greensleeves*; BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 3, *Eroica*

Beginning at 2:00 pm, conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong offers an enthusiastic discussion of the program. Tune into the YouTube SRS@Home channel on your smart TV, computer, or other device for this and other virtual performances. For more information and quick links, go to <https://www.srsymphony.org>.

Holiday Gifts That Keep on Giving

If you sign up to use AmazonSmile (<https://smile.amazon.com>) for your Amazon gift purchases, selecting the Village Network of Petaluma as your charitable organization of choice, Amazon donates a small portion to the Village.

You Could Save Taxes by Donating to the Village Network Directly from Your IRA

After we reach age 70 ½, those with IRAs are required to take an annual withdrawal, called a Retirement Minimum Distribution (RMD). However, if you are in the fortunate position of not needing your distribution for living expenses, you can avoid income tax on your required withdrawal by donating your money directly to a qualifying charity, which must be a 501(c)(3) organization. These kinds of charitable contributions, called Qualified Charitable Distributions (or QCDs) can be made without itemizing your taxes. However, if you do itemize, you cannot additionally claim a charitable contribution tax deduction on a charitable distribution from your IRA. Funds must be transferred directly from your IRA

to an eligible charity by the IRA trustee in order to qualify for the tax break. If you withdraw the money from your IRA and later donate it, it won't qualify as a tax-free qualified charitable distribution. You have to make the distribution check payable to the charity directly.

The CARES Act temporarily waives required minimum distributions (RMDs) for all types of retirement plans for calendar year 2020. However, you can still make a QCD and exclude the amount from your taxable income, if done by December 31, 2020. For more info, see <https://www.fidelity.com/building-savings/learn-about-iras/required-minimum-distributions/qcdis>

Village iPad Lending Library Project

We are starting to build our iPad Lending Library. A donation of your old (or new!) iPad would be very welcome, and would gladden the heart of a Village member who can't afford one and wants to connect with friends, family, and the Village.



Practice Mindfulness Meditation for Peace of Mind and Better Health



Mindfulness meditation, simply put, is paying attention to the present moment and withholding judgment. It encourages us to become a witness to our own experience -- to notice bodily sensations, emotions, and the constant, unrelenting chatter of our minds. It allows us to notice and let be.

The reported benefits of mindfulness meditation are many: It can lower blood pressure, improve the immune system, aid in combating insomnia, and increase energy levels. The mental benefits are substantial as well. Meditation reduces anxiety, promotes calmness and relaxation, reduces stress, helps cope with symptoms of depression, reduces impulsive behavior, and promotes compassion and acceptance of self and others. It also helps us notice painful emotions and problem-solve how best to respond to them.

By resting on the breath we bring ourselves to the present moment and begin to witness a softening of the heart, with compassion for self and others. As these feelings arise, we can begin to move from doing to being and to simply notice that we are alive and are the author of our own story. Moreover, we begin to notice and appreciate what gives us joy, meaning, and substance and to ponder how and when to bring these experiences into our moments and our lives.

- Freeman Humphrey

Watch Out for These COVID-19 Scams

Today's COVID-19 scams run the gamut from crooks hawking fraudulent coronavirus cures and websites selling fake vaccine kits to phishing emails trying to steal personal information. The common thread is perpetuating fear and using the uncertainty we are all feeling to force people to make a decision quickly -- whether that's sharing personal information, buying something, or sending money.

Between January 1 and August 23, 2020, the Federal Trade Commission received 31,875 financial fraud reports related to COVID-19, amounting to \$60 million in losses. About 24% of these involved scams against people 60 and over. Americans 70 and older reported the highest median losses.

Common COVID-19 scams to watch for:

- Ads for products that allegedly prevent coronavirus and websites offering "vaccine kits" from scammers posing as the World Health Organization (WHO) or other legitimate agencies.
- Persons pretending to be a grandchild and saying they have tested positive for coronavirus and need money now!
- Demands for money or personal information for supposed quicker access to stimulus checks or higher Social Security benefits, neither of which is true.

Tips to help avoid COVID-19 fraud:

- Ignore offers for products that claim to cure or treat coronavirus. There is currently **no** Food and Drug Administration-approved cure or treatment.
- Before contributing to any charity claiming it will help COVID-19 victims, check the IRS site for Tax Exempt Organization Search and the Better Business Bureau's Give.org site.

- Never click on links in emails from sources you don't know.
- Don't give money or financial or personal information to anyone you don't know or don't trust.
- If you answer the phone and hear a recorded sales pitch, hang up.
- Before you agree to a free product trial, research the company and read the cancellation policy.
- Don't make an immediate financial decision. Talk it over with friends and family.
- Trust your gut.

This information is based on reporting found at <https://www.nextavenue.org/covid-19-scams/>. Additional news about COVID-19 scams is available at <https://www.nextavenue.org/covid-19-scams-identity-theft-to-bogus-contact-tracers/>

- Jane Merryman

'Pods' May Ease Social Isolation

Forming a social bubble or "pod" with a group of trusted family members or friends could help alleviate the loneliness and depression many older people are experiencing as a result of COVID-imposed distancing. A recent article published on the Kaiser Health News website (<https://khn.org/news/seniors-form-covid-pods-to-ward-off-isolation-this-winter/>) describes how a number of older individuals and couples are handling the conundrum of staying safe vs. the need for social interaction. Some, such as a Boston couple in their 80s, visit daily with four others in their apartment building, all of whom are members of the Beacon Hill Village Network. They take walks together and share weekly meals. All feel safe because they "know where everyone goes and what they do: we're all on the same page," says one member of the group.

But a couple in Richmond, CA, are reluctant to socialize indoors and intend to become more isolated as winter approaches. To that end, they hosted an early Thanksgiving celebration while the weather was still mild enough to remain outdoors. Now, however, they say they will see their friends only on Zoom.

As the article demonstrates, deciding whether to form a pod, as well as how to structure it, is fraught with pros and cons. With weather making outdoor gatherings less feasible, the depression and sadness resulting from social isolation can have serious negative health effects. At the same time, as the number of virus cases continues to grow, sensible precautions are ever more critical. The ultimate decision is a very personal one, and not to be taken lightly. However, in all cases, avoiding crowds, wearing masks, and frequent handwashing remain common-sense measures that help protect us all.

- Kathy Lawrence

Online Driver's License Renewals for Those Over 70

Noncommercial Driver's Licenses with an expiration date between March 1, 2020, throughout the COVID-19 emergency are eligible for online renewal, eliminating the need to visit a DMV office.

Beginning December 6: License holders over the age of 70 – with March-December 2020 license expirations – are eligible for extensions valid for one year from original expiration date. For more information, go to dmv.ca.gov and click on Driver's License or ID Cards.

I'm so grateful for the Village training on Emergency Preparedness. As a result, I gathered a team of neighbors to get ready and be safe. We walked our properties to map our utility locations. We documented our equipment and skills, added emergency contact preferences, and chose our emergency event meeting place. I also recruited four other team captains to do the same with their near neighbors. Rancho Adobe Fire department gave us the COPE booklets to guide our process. And we all have the online link to COPE from City of Petaluma fire department: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/documents/cope-booklet/>

Thank you, Village, for kickstarting us!

Lyndi Brown

More Resources for Thriving at Home

Qigong Online Teja Bell, Zen Master and committed practitioner of Qigong, offers a 12-minute guided Qigong practice at <https://vimeo.com/qigongdharma>

Window Swap: Videos shot from people's windows around the world. Captivating! <https://window-swap.com/>

More books Village people are reading:

Waking Up White, Debbie Irving; *White Tears, Brown Scars*, Ruby Hamad; *Recipes for a Sacred Life: True Stories and a Few Miracles*, Rivvy Neshama; *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*, Lisa See; *Across the Nightingale Floor (Tales of the Otori, Book 1)*, Lian Hearn; *Where the Forest Meets the Stars*, Glendy Vanderah; *A Better Man: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel*, Louise Penny; *The Vanishing Half*, Brit Bennett; *Our Wild Calling: How Connecting With Animals Can Transform Our Lives – and Save Theirs*, Richard Louv.

TV Shows We're Streaming:

The Crown (Netflix); Self Made (Netflix); Connected (Netflix); Our Planet (Netflix); Dash and Lily (Netflix); Indian Matchmaking (Netflix); Becoming (Netflix); My Octopus Teacher (Netflix); The Americans (Amazon Prime); Life in Pieces (Amazon Prime); Small Axe (Amazon Prime); London Hospital (Amazon Prime).



As part of a national movement, the Village Network of Petaluma is a nonprofit membership organization empowering adults 50+ to live active, independent, and connected lives in the places we call home.

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