



VILLAGES of San Mateo County

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Volume 2020, Issue 1

January/February

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT:

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Strong Bonds Remain, But The Roles May Change

What comes to
mind when you
hear the word
"family"?



(Continued on page 2: Family and Relationships)

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Contact Villages of San Mateo County at: 650-260-4569 or info@villagesofsmc.org

Sequoia Village and Mid Peninsula Village are two local villages under the umbrella
501(c)(3) nonprofit called Villages of San Mateo County

Is it pleasure, pain, comfort, frustration, pride, jealousy, loyalty or love? For most people, it is a mixture of all of these elements, and more.

No matter how these feelings and outcomes are mixed, a huge constant is the intensity of the relationships built on a lifetime of memories and traditions. For most people, family really matters.

As we age, the family relationships and responsibilities endure but are often challenged by the situations of life. This forces them to evolve over time, or change in the blink of an eye. Commonly, this is the case when a family matriarch or patriarch becomes dependent due to frailty, illness or the loss of their spouse. The role of decision-maker can shift from an elder to an adult child or grandchild. Family members may become caregivers. A grandchild you taught to make good decisions may lovingly use that skill to help you deal with the complexity of the health care system or look after your finances. Adjustments to the relationships must be made.

Work At It: Understand The Path

Maintaining relationships can be very hard work, especially if old habits foster (or recreate) old problems. Here are some suggestions for helping to build healthier relationships.

- **Communicate** - be willing to talk now, or agree to talk at another time.
- **Speak The Truth** - it is the foundation of strong relationships.
- **No Blaming** - move toward solutions.
- **No Judging** - again, move toward solutions.
- **Show Respect** - opinions can differ, but respect must remain.
- **Let Go Of The Past** - do not focus on the past or keep making the same mistakes.
- **Practice Empathy** - be sensitive to each person's feelings, situations and losses.
- **Prioritize** - decide the relationship is more important than the differences.

COFFEE CONNECTION

Open to all Sequoia Village and Mid Peninsula Village members, volunteers and guests. Light refreshments will be provided. Save the date!

DATE: Wednesday, January 15, 2020
TIME: 10:00—11:30 am
LOCATION: Veteran's Memorial Senior Center
1455 Madison Avenue, Redwood City



PRESENTER:



ClearCaptions is a federally funded telecommunications company that provides real-time text of phone conversations for people with a hearing loss. **ClearCaptions** is a program available to you under Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Those with hearing loss are entitled to this benefit, at no cost, PLUS a Free Phone. If you have a hearing loss or know someone who does, join us for this presentation which includes an interactive demo.

RSVP: Please contact the Villages of San Mateo County office **no later than Jan. 8, 2020** by emailing us at info@villagesofsmc.org or by calling us at 650-260-4569 if you wish to attend. **Please indicate if you do or do not need a ride AND please indicate if you are bringing a guest.**

VILLAGES: IT'S ALL ABOUT CONNECTIONS

As members of the Villages of San Mateo County (VSMC), we experience daily the many opportunities to build community and connections with our fellow village travelers. What you may not know is that our two local villages (Sequoia Village and Mid Peninsula Village) are linked to far larger and growing networks of villages in the Bay Area of California and throughout the US. Both benefit from our connections to the national village organization, Village to Village Network (VtV), our statewide village coalition, Village Movement California (VMC), as well as an informal network of Bay Area villages called BRAVO. To give you a sense of the scale of the village movement, at the national level nearly 300 individual villages exist. There are about 50 villages just within California and new villages are opening every week! Each of these groups provides networking opportunities for the leadership of VSMC and a way to share best practices regarding village operations.

The Village Movement California mission statement speaks to the importance of working together to rewrite the aging landscape:

“Village Movement California (VMC) partners with stakeholders interested in transforming the experience of aging across the state to strengthen impact, accelerate growth, and ensure sustainability of the Village Movement. Together, we advocate for innovative and community-based solutions to improve the quality of life and expand choices at all stages of aging, empowering older adults to sustain independence through community and remain in charge of their lives as they age.”

The leadership team of VSMC is working hard to build a sustainable, vibrant organization. We benefit greatly from our interactions with VMC and the resources they provide. We regularly speak with leaders throughout San Mateo county who express an interest in starting their own villages. During these conversations we frequently refer to the contacts and material provided by VMC (and the Village to Village Network).

The phrase ‘it takes a village’ may be overused. However, it’s certainly true that Sequoia Village and Mid Peninsula Village continue to benefit greatly from the wisdom and experience of leaders of the total village movement that extends throughout California and across the country.

~ by Patrick Brown, member VSMC Board of Directors and Sequoia Village member

BEST NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION EVER

'Tis the season to set New Year's resolutions. But instead of listing several goals, let's set one that will produce benefits across the total spectrum of physical, mental and social well-being. In 2020, **Boost Your Brain Volume!**



Harvard Medical School's 6-Step Cognitive Fitness Program includes:

1. Nutrition. Research among 27,000 people showed that eating a "Healthy Diet" for five years resulted in major decreases in cognitive decline. A study of 4,000 people showed "healthy eating" increased brain volume – which improved cognitive abilities. An excellent food plan is the Mediterranean Diet.

Here are some of the top "Brain Foods":

- Dark Leafy Greens: kale and spinach are rich in brain-healthy nutrients.
- Fatty Fish: salmon, avocados and walnuts are rich in omega-3 fats for boosting memory and cognitive skills.
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil: benefits the heart and the brain.
- Cacao 70%: contains antioxidants that support cellular aging and reduce heart risk.
- Complex Carbohydrates: are main energy sources for the brain.
- Tea & Coffee: caffeine helps with mental function and helps solidify new memories.
- Berries: are high in antioxidants and flavonoids to help improve memory.

2. Exercise. It is referred to as the "miracle or wonder drug" due to its many benefits. Scientists state that aerobic exercise is a key factor in delaying Alzheimer's Disease. Exercise creates a better blood flow to the brain enhancing learning and memory. Increased blood flow provides oxygen to all other organs as well.

Find activities you enjoy and can do **consistently**. Exercise *moderately* for **30 minutes/ 5 times per week**. **Be sure to speak with your MD before starting new exercises.*

3. Manage your stress. Stress can affect both Memory & Cognitive Functioning. So, adopt a positive attitude. Scientific studies have caught up with Grandma who always said, "Attitude defines your altitude." A positive attitude also produces awesome physical benefits such as better immune function and a reduced risk of chronic diseases.

(Continued on page 6: Brain Volume)

Examples of additional de-stressors include meditation, listening to music, dancing, laughing, being outside in nature, helping others, smiling :-).

4. Get enough sleep. Sleep affects every aspect of your health, including blood pressure, diabetes and other chronic conditions. Consider these sleep tips to get the recommended 7 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night.

- Wake up same time each day.
- Get Outside – sunlight helps regulate your sleep-wake cycle.
- Maintain an exercise program.
- Eat a small dinner.
- Avoid foods and beverages that can keep you awake (caffeine, alcohol, spicy).
- Go to bed when you're ready to sleep.
- Find ways to relax such as meditation, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation or listening to music.

5: Nurture social contacts. National studies show that a range of social actions may enhance cognitive function. Some examples of great social activities are below.

- Play cards and games to help improve memory.
- Volunteer in activities that involve social contacts, which benefit your planning and organizational skills.
- Participate in dancing, group exercise, or team sports for combining the cognitive benefits of social interaction with those of physical activity.

6: Challenge your brain. Participation in intellectually challenging activities can promote the development of new neurons in your brain. It's also beneficial to vary your cognitive or mental workout. Try something new. The options are only as limited as your imagination.

In summary, there is much we can do to keep our minds sharp & memories strong. Launch your Brain Fitness program today and **Boost Your Brain Volume!**

~ by Nancy Evans, volunteer VSMC; also see other resources: Harvard Medical School, "A Guide to Cognitive Fitness: 6 steps to optimizing brain function and improving brain health" 2019; Alzheimer's Association Helpline: 800-272-3900; Education Info & Care Management info Website: alz.org; <https://www.pritikin.com/your-health/healthy-living/getting-fit/81-what-should-i-do-30-minutes-of-exercise-or-10000-stepsq.html>; <https://www.tuw.edu/health/how-stress-affects-the-brain/>

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Bob DeFranco is one of the Villages' busiest handypersons. For 4+ years, he has been diligently working as a volunteer for the Villages of San Mateo County. His passion for problem solving is in his DNA. He finds his role with the Villages "a great way to indulge in the things I like to do."

The Villages is most fortunate to have someone in their volunteer ranks that embraces a wide range of challenges, and all with a sense of humor. Whether the assignment is simply changing light bulbs or general repair, advocacy, carpentry or tech assistance, Bob's passion for problem solving kicks into gear spontaneously.

From Chemist to Handyperson, the journey for Bob has always been both challenging and rewarding. As he has lived in 14 states and moved from Iceland to Brazil, Bob is ready for anything and able to establish a rapport with anyone at anytime. He enjoys meeting all of the exceptional people who are members of the Villages.

Bob believes strongly that everyone should find something they like doing and share it with others. P.S. It also helps to have a spouse like Judy who is much more than just supportive, but also an encourager.

~ by Linda Burroughs, Executive Director, VSMC

VILLAGES OF SAN MATEO COUNTY DONORS

VSMC extends its sincere appreciation for the generous financial support and in-kind gifts received from the following individuals and organizations:

- *City of San Carlos*
- *Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital*
- *Intero Foundation*
- *PAMF Community Health Care Endowment*
- *Peninsula Healthcare District*
- *Peter & Paula Uccelli Foundation*
- *Redwood City Parks and Recreation*
- *Sequoia Healthcare District*
- *Trinity Presbyterian Church of San Carlos*
- *West Valley Federated Women's Club*

A COMMUNITY OF GENERATIONS

It's always a pleasure to see the interaction of teenagers and octogenarians. This was especially true in the recent meeting of Emma and Rose.

Emma is a student of Notre Dame High School, where community service hours are required. Rose is a member of Sequoia Village, living at home with her husband, Richard. Emma went to their home recently to paint a new stair railing. It was useful and fun service work, but the real joy started when Emma and Rose visited afterward. Emma learned about Rose's early life in Sicily, and how she cried when her family moved to the United States: "But now America is my home." Rose learned about the immigration of Emma's parents from North Ireland and England. During that one-hour visit, Emma and Rose became fast friends and Emma is invited to "come over anytime!"

The Village Movement builds community in many ways, and this one is truly special.

~ by Scott McMullin, President, VSMC

