

# VILLAGES of San Mateo County

*Neighbors Helping Neighbors*

Volume 2021, Issue 1

January/February

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Scott McMullin

As we approach the new year, I think we all have interesting thoughts about 2020. Some are best left unspoken, but we can recognize many positives.

Even before COVID the Villages had decided to make 2020 the year of being prepared. Our Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) really rose to the challenge.

With articles in the newsletters, refrigerator magnets, preparedness programs in Coffee Connections, Go Bag Starter Kits, the formation of Neighborhoods with Captains, and the

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Contact Villages of San Mateo County at: 650-260-4569 or [info@villagesofsmc.org](mailto:info@villagesofsmc.org)

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

distribution of sanitation supplies, our Village members and volunteers are now better informed and better equipped for emergencies. Many thanks to the wonderful EPC team, led by Craig Branting and Bob DeFranco. Now every Villager should add a final touch by registering for SMC Alert. Registration instructions appear on [page 6](#) in this newsletter.

Another major development this year was the decision by Village of the Coastside to merge with Sequoia Village and Mid Peninsula Village. In previous letters we informed you of the benefits to all three Villages. At that time, we could only hope for the energy and enthusiasm that has been demonstrated by so many Village leaders as they work together to make this union successful. I could not be more pleased, and all of you can be proud of the way this organization is growing. Not just in membership, but in ways where we can partner with others to serve our local population.

We will begin 2021 still under the constraints of the COVID pandemic. We will continue to listen to the health experts, to exercise caution and good judgement, and to be optimistic about the future. Moving forward remember that our care for each other is our greatest strength, and that will not be diminished.

All the best for a safe, healthy and joyful year ahead!

*~ article by Scott McMullin , President, VSMC*

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## **VSMC VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:**

### **An Act of Kindness**

#### **David McAlindon**

With our busy lives it can be hard to find time to volunteer. In 2020, more than ever before, it is important to keep that connection alive with others and provide vital help to our neighbors and communities.

Villages of San Mateo County is fortunate to have so many dedicated, caring and well-organized members and volunteers. The volunteering accomplishments of VSMC are just one of many success stories due to the people who make volunteering a regular part of their daily activities. In a recent interview, VSMC volunteer David McAlindon said he learned about VSMC when Eric Hanson, MPV Chair, came to his real estate office in 2019. David shared his thoughts



David McAlindon

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and philosophy on volunteering: “Life is about not taking anyone or anything for granted. Many seniors and elderly are experiencing great isolation and loneliness, especially at this time of Covid-19. There is a great need in our county to make connections with others.”

David knows what he is talking about. He signed up to volunteer his time for a wide variety of VSMC services, including home repairs, garden/yard chores, grocery shopping, pet care, technology/computer assistance, advocacy and friendly visits. From a number’s perspective, by the end of December, David will have completed 199 volunteer assignments since he joined VSMC in May of 2020!

More importantly, David is very humble. He gets emotional talking about his experiences and he is incredibly people-oriented. When asked about his volunteering, even after so many hours this year, he says, “It’s no big deal.” He talks about a sense of wonder and discovery about our members. “It’s not about me, but about so many special people I’ve met this year. One particular woman, born in 1922, would share stories about her life as I would take her to weekly doctor appointments. Another VSMC member, in his mid-90’s and who was in a bad accident, talks about what life was like for him in the 40’s and 50’s as we would go on walks.” Volunteering with VSMC has changed David. “You see it in someone’s face, when they can’t do something they’ve done their whole life. I’m more aware now and I can help them.” As such, David’s impact on the community is priceless. David encourages others to consider volunteering. It is important to reach out to people who may not say they are lonely but who live in isolation and need help. “Be smart about volunteering. Be mindful of your surroundings, have a good mask, wipes, and sanitize everything.”

David McAlindon is a San Francisco native and has been a peninsula resident for many years. After a military tour serving our country, David brought his knowledge and skills to such companies as Ford, General Motors, Chrysler and Pepsico. When he is not volunteering or spending time with his family, David offers client services to Compass Real Estate Peninsula Living.

You too can sign up to volunteer at Villages of San Mateo County on our website. Visit <https://www.villagesofsmc.org/content>. Click on Volunteer Self-Signup. Like David says, “You just take the step and sign up. The reward is the joy in someone saying, ‘Thank you.’ There is a need and it’s a wonderful experience to help people.”

*~ article by Janice Svendsen, Consulting Project Manager, VSMC*

## A WELCOME TO NEW EMPLOYEES

Villages of San Mateo County wishes to welcome three new part-time employees into our Village family. They are exceptionally talented and creative women who are passionate about serving our adult community in many positive ways. We are honored to have them on board with their wealth of experience. They will only enhance the many existing and future programs and goals we have already set in motion.



**Cathy Conry** has been associated with Village of the Coastsides (VOTC) for 18 months as Administrative Assistant. She manages the scheduling for the volunteers and has direct involvement with Coastsides members by helping them navigate through the organization. Cathy joined VOTC because she liked the concept of seniors staying in their own home as they aged rather than being moved to an assisted living facility. Furthermore, Cathy felt her varied background experiences of having served with the military for 21 years, both in the Air Force and Navy Reserves, would be an asset for VOTC.

Cathy has been a resident of California for 35 years and has lived in El Granada for 25 years with her husband and three children. She loves the outdoors where she can be one with Nature and keeps herself fit by running and riding her bike on the numerous trails. Family vacations consist of spending time in the mountains camping and hiking. Cathy says she is looking forward to the future of working with our “new” Villages of San Mateo County and managing some of its diverse projects.

**Devora Kothari** resides in San Carlos with her husband and two adolescent children. Devora found her way into the Villages of San Mateo County six months ago through the San Carlos Day of Service (SCDS) program of which she was one of the founders. She volunteers as one of our “Touch Base” callers. “It is a true delight,” she says, “meeting with the members over the phone.” This experience provides her with a greater understanding of the importance VSMC plays to its members and the community. Devora now oversees VSMC’s Social Events programs and is involved in other “fun” projects she hopes will attract future members and volunteers, as well as form more community partnerships.



*(Continued on page 5: New Employees)*



## **VILLAGES OF SAN MATEO COUNTY CHAIRS AND COMMITTEES**

### **VILLAGES OF SAN MATEO COUNTY:**

#### **PRESIDENT**

*Scott McMullin*

#### **BOARD CHAIR**

*Randi Kutnewsky*

#### **MID PENINSULA VILLAGE CHAIR**

*Eric Hanson*

#### **SEQUOIA VILLAGE CHAIR**

*Linda Thomas*

#### **VILLAGE OF THE COASTSIDE CHAIR**

*Maureen Szostak*

#### **SOCIAL EVENTS CHAIR**

*Devora Kothari, VSMC*  
*Nancy Nadler, VOTC*

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

*Deborah Flaherty, VSMC*  
*Cynthia Ford, VSMC*  
*Emily Glines, VSMC*  
*Sandra Neff, VOTC*

#### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

*Wani Wynne*

*(New Employees: continued from page 4)*

Devora's background has been in marketing and outreach. After graduating from college, she worked as a company account manager providing clients with marketing and outreach expertise. Her most recent position was as Executive Director for the Bay Kids Studios, a nonprofit program that taught the art of filmmaking to children who were coping with long-term hospitalizations. Apart from her creative career, Devora says she is a "nature girl at heart" and you are likely to see her with her family hiking and biking throughout the Peninsula area and Half Moon Bay.

**Janice Svendsen** lives in Belmont with her 94-year-old mother who is a member of Sequoia Village. Janice had joined her mother on several day trips and social events where everyone seemed to be very gracious and welcoming. Now, Janice feels even more blessed to have the opportunity to work part-time for VSMC as Consulting Project



Manager. She will be able to apply her administrative skills as she engages in various Village projects.

Janice's creativity can be seen through her watercolor paintings, interior decorating and gardening. Even so, Public Safety and Law Enforcement have always been of significant interest to her. Presently, she is the president of the San Francisco Chapter of the FBI Citizens Academy Alumni Association. Although the organization is separate from the FBI, she has the unique opportunity to work with the FBI to organize community education events focused on topics such as human trafficking, opioids and prescription drug abuse. For the past three years, Janice also has had the privilege to coordinate the annual Veterans Day event for the City of Palo Alto. This event was her "passion project" that said "Thank You" to all who had served (or will serve) in our armed services.

*~ article by Victoria Kline, Board member VSMC*

## SIGNING UP FOR SMC EMERGENCY ALERT

**SMC Alert** is a free service provided by the San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services. After you register, it will notify you of important information for your location concerning floods, fires, traffic conditions, mountain lion sightings and more. We strongly encourage you to sign up for this valuable service. It would be well worth your effort.



You will need internet access to sign up, or someone with internet service can do it for you. Using your computer or a tablet (like an iPad) search for **SMC Alert** to get to the website. Alternatively, click on this link <https://hsd.smcsheriff.com/smcalert> to go to the website and then click on **Register Now**. Follow the signup instructions all the way to **Create Your Account**. If everything is OK you will be directed to a new page where you provide information about how and when you wish to be contacted. Then click on **Save & Continue**. On the next page you are asked to provide information on each location for which you want alerts, starting with your **Home**. Enter your address, then click on **Verify This Address**. After confirming it, you can add other locations for which you want emergency notifications.

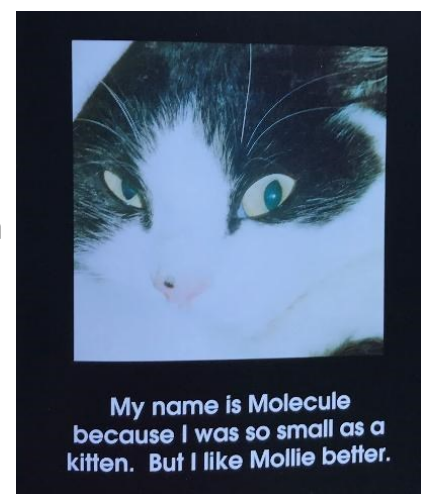
THAT'S IT; YOU'RE DONE! If you need help with any of this, contact the Village Office and we'll walk you through it.

*~ article by Bob DeFranco, VSMC Emergency Preparedness Committee*

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## MOLLIE'S PICTURE BOOK IS AVAILABLE!

Last month we highlighted Village member Mary Beech and the picture book she assembled about her beloved cat Mollie. This delightful hardbound book is not available online, but Mary has made 25 copies available to us. You can have a copy by making a \$15 donation to the Village. I have read the book multiple times (30 pages of charming photographs) and I think it would make a great little gift for young children. If interested, please call the Village office at 650-260-4569 and we'll arrange prompt delivery to you.



*~ article by Scott McMullin, President, VSMC*

## VILLAGES OF SAN MATEO COUNTY DONORS

VSMC extends its sincere thanks for the generous financial support and in-kind gifts received from the following major donors:

- *Charis Foundation*
- *City of San Carlos*
- *D & D Fields*
- *Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital*
- *Home Safety Services, Inc.*
- *McGovern Insurance*
- *PAMF Community Health Care Endowment*
- *Paula Thompson Legacy*
- *Peninsula Healthcare District*
- *Redwood City Parks and Recreation*
- *Sequoia Healthcare District*
- *Trinity Presbyterian Church of San Carlos*
- *West Valley Federated Women's Club*

## A CARING COMMUNITY

What does a caring community look like?

A business in Redwood Shores was closing their office and wanted to donate various coffee room items to a worthy cause. They looked on the Nextdoor website and found that Sandy Kraft of the Community Foundation of San Carlos was busy connecting available resources with current needs. The business offered a refrigerator and other items to Sandy, who immediately sent emails out to nonprofits in the area, including Villages of San Mateo County.

Villages was informed, through an email from Trinity Presbyterian Church, that St. Francis Center in Redwood City was looking for refrigerators and other kitchen items for low-income clients. Volunteers were mobilized, a trailer was rented, and it came to pass that a low-income family in North Fair Oaks now has a nice refrigerator, microwave and toaster oven in their kitchen.

That is a caring community!



Volunteers from the St Francis Center...



...and VSMC volunteers completed the delivery.

## TESTIMONIALS

*"What a lovely surprise on my front porch...that beautiful Poinsettia. It will probably be my only Christmas decor this year. It is just another expression of the Villages' thoughtfulness to us, and I am so blessed to have all of you volunteers in my isolated life, holding me together. I hope you have peaceful, safe and joyful holidays, and that soon we can all commemorate these special times together."*

*Love and Peace, Nancy Grandfield*

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*"What a warm and lovely surprise this afternoon when the door bell rang and a lovely Poinsettia was delivered to my home. I thank you all for your beautiful surprise on December 1st! May the joy of Christmas be with you all."*

*With appreciation, Sally Mellinger*

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*"What a very special treat! I found a very lovely Poinsettia sitting on my front porch! Just yesterday I was thinking I would love to have one! Christmas [was] a quiet one for me, the first one not gathering with family. I do love the festiveness of the holidays, so you have really added to making my Christmas more joyful! I am truly blessed to have you in my life!"*

*Thank you so much! Nancy Batten*



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*"Today, I found the most BEAUTIFUL, huge and lovely Poinsettia plant from Sequoia Village! What a wonderful surprise. Thank you so much...cheered up my day more than you can imagine.... Sequoia Village frequently thinks of thoughtful ways to keep us smiling...thank you again...you lift my spirits."*

*With appreciation, Elaine Higashi*

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*"I'm never sure who to thank when lovely, fun, or surprising items show up on my doorstep but I always am quite pleased when they do. The poinsettia plant is beautiful and takes center place on my table. It looks great on top of the Christmas runner as the reds, golds and greens of the material highlight the flowers so well."*

*Sincere thanks, Janise Belson*