



Village of Takoma Park Newsletter

Helping Neighbors Age in Community

Volume 3, no. 3

July/August 2017



Message from the President

Dear members and friends of the Village of Takoma Park,

The Village focuses on two aspects: social activities and helpful services for members. The social aspect is expressed in our monthly “Aging Well” events. Services include rides, visits, errands, and strolls. We respond to community needs by developing new services; it takes about a year to create a framework, recruit and train volunteers, and work out legal and process details.

The newest service is **Small Home Repairs** (see p. 6), provided by a team of 6 volunteers led by Paul Huebner. Paul compiled a list of services which directly relate to the safety and security of the member requesting assistance. Services should require little to moderate skill with low risk to volunteer performing the work. The member bears cost for all materials needed. No warranty of materials or workmanship is expressed or implied. Here are some examples of the kinds of small home repair services that Village volunteers may be able to perform.

Safety and Security	Repair broken window and exterior door locks; hang window drapes, shades, or blinds; check smoke detectors; change ceiling light bulbs; fix loose handrails; install handrails and grab bars; repair loose stair treads or carpeting; install/repair house numbers; trim vegetation to make house numbers visible
Small Household Tasks	Repair loose or sticking doors, gate latches, small holes in walls, floors, and ceilings; hang pictures; replace faucet washers and toilet valves; clean and balance ceiling fans; apply limited caulking to weatherproof

Members who need help with a small home repair should call 301-646-2109 and speak to Coordinator Sandy Egan. She will verify your membership, discuss the request, and initiate a service call. Two volunteers will come and evaluate the problem and estimate material costs. The member must give written permission for the service. Volunteers will then make an appointment to provide the service. The safety, security, and independence of our members are very important, so please contact Sandy to take advantage of The Village’s latest service.

Wolfgang J. Mergner



August Aging Well Event: Trip to the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

When: Tuesday, August 29, 9am – 1:30pm **Cost:** \$1.50 per person, payable at the Site

Where: Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, 1411 W Street, SE, Washington DC

Description: Take a 30 minute guided tour of Cedar Hill, the home where Frederick Douglass lived from 1877 until his death in 1895, see exhibits in the Visitor Center, watch a 20-minute film, “Fighter for Freedom,” and explore the grounds.

Transportation: The City of Takoma Park Recreation Department is providing a bus at no cost. Seats are limited, with priority given to people with mobility issues. The bus will depart the parking lot behind the TP Community Center at 9am and return about 1:10pm. Those who drive should allow at least 40 minutes. Parking is ample. The Site is a ¾ mile walk or short bus ride from the Green Line’s Anacostia station. Those not taking the bus should arrive at the Site by 10am.

Reserve a seat on the bus: Contact Kathie Baker at 301-270-8451 or baker.kathie.66@gmail.com.

Register: Visit <http://villageoftakomapark.com> or contact Kathie Baker at 301-270-8451 or baker.kathie.66@gmail.com.

September 25

Join the Beacon Hill Village in Boston to Celebrate 15 Years of the Village Movement

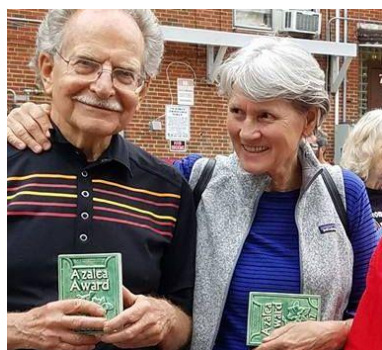
To celebrate its 15th anniversary and the Village movement it inspired, Beacon Hill Village in Boston has invited Villages around the country to participate “virtually” in an event featuring Dr. Atul Gawande, MD, MPH, author of *Being Mortal*. Dr. Gawande, a renowned surgeon, public health researcher, and writer, will speak about the value of community and opportunities as we grow older, in conversation with Robin Young of NPR’s “Here and Now.”

The Village of Takoma Park will host a viewing of this live internet broadcast on September 25, 2017, at the Takoma Park Community Center, in the Atrium Room (third floor), from 5:00 to 6:00pm. This event will not be recorded or streamed, so this is the only chance to see it. Space is limited to 25 people, so pre-registration is required. To register, please go to villageoftakomapark.com/calendar or contact us at villageoftp@gmail.com or [301-646-2109](tel:301-646-2109).



Village Founders and Board Member Receive Takoma Foundation Azalea Awards

Congratulations to Village founders Wolfgang and Gertrud Mergner and board member Doris Duarte, recipients of this year's Takoma Foundation Azalea Awards in recognition of their tireless efforts on behalf of the community. The awards were presented at Celebrate Takoma 2017 on Saturday, May 20.



The “TAK-TIVIST” award went to the **Mergners**, founders and leaders of the Village of Takoma Park. Their award reads, “Wolfgang and Gertrud planted the seed in 2011 with a series of meetings. Under their persistent, unflagging, kind-hearted leadership, those meetings grew into the Village of Takoma Park. The Village now has scores of volunteers of all ages and income levels and provides a wide range of services (rides, friendly visits, help with errands, simple home repairs, walking companions, informative monthly meetings, opportunities for socializing, a website and newsletter offering links to resources, and more). Wolfgang and Gertrud's ongoing support of the Village is a source of inspiration, not only locally, but to other similar undertakings in Maryland and Virginia.”

Doris Duarte received the “Neighborhood Volunteer” award, recognizing her for being “instrumental in bringing community resources and funding to serve people in the neediest areas of our community. She is a former tenant association president of the Hampshire Tower Tenants Association and took on difficult negotiations to improve conditions in her rental community. She organizes social events and activities for the City’s communities of limited means and disadvantaged youth and is the assistant director of Lunch and Learn, which is one of the most successful summer youth programs in the City. She exemplifies what one active person can do to help the many and can always be found volunteering her time and talent to various community events, activities and committees.”



AGING WELL events in May and June provided a wealth of practical information on fall prevention and fire safety. If you weren't among the 30 or so people who attended each session, here are some tips the presenters shared. The July event featured a "Writing Life Stories" workshop.



Falls are the main reason older people lose their independence, but they are preventable.

According to the Center for Disease Control, to prevent falls you should

- begin (and maintain) an exercise program to improve your strength and balance
- ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medications
- get annual vision checks and update your eyeglasses
- make your home safer by removing clutter and tripping hazards, installing railings on stairways and grab bars in the bathroom, and ensuring you have good lighting.

Montgomery County Fire Rescue Services (MCFRS) wants to ensure that all homes are fire safe with working smoke alarms. Any resident can request a free home evaluation – go to <http://www.weblinks2z.com/mcfrs/firesafety/> and click on the link saying

“To request a home safety visit, click here.” Or call 311 or 240-777-0311. MCFRS will reply within 5 days to schedule a walk-through of the private residence and to answer questions about fire safety. MCFRS may also provide assistance with the installation of smoke alarms or batteries during the visit. **NOTE:** In 2018, the County will require that all battery operated smoke alarms have 10-year batteries.

Another recommendation from the MCFRS: Fill out a “**File of Life**” and keep it on your refrigerator for use by fire and rescue personnel. The File of Life consolidates basic health information such as medical history, allergies, medications, and other health-related topics in one place. For a free information form and magnetized sleeve, contact the Aging and Disability Resource Unit at 240-777-3000 or Sandy Egan at [301-646-2109](tel:3016462109).



Our July Aging Well event was a “Writing Life Stories” workshop attended by 33 and led by Village member, author, and teacher Barbara Rosenblatt. If you missed it, you can find two handouts on our website: one on writing life stories (by Barbara) and one on self-publishing (by workshop attendee and self-publisher of her own memoir, Sue Bray). Go to **About the Village**, then **Documents**, then **Resources**.

Barbara, who has extensive experience teaching memoir writing, is offering an 8-session class on Writing Life Stories through the Takoma Park Recreation Department, open to anyone 16 and older. This class will help you jump-start your memories, organize your ideas, and edit your work. Bring a notebook or laptop and be ready to have fun.



Time: Wednesdays, Sept. 6 – Oct. 25, 7:00 – 8:30pm.

Place: Takoma Park Community Center Rose Room

Cost: \$125 resident/\$145 non-resident

Sign up online at <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/recreation/classes-and-programs> or in person at the TP Recreation Department. Registration opens Aug. 15 for residents; Aug. 22 for non-residents.

Aging Well events are held monthly, usually on the last Tuesday of the month from 10 am to noon. They cover a wide variety of topics and provide an opportunity for gathering (with refreshments) with others in the community with common interests.

Help with “Putting your Home in Order”

Were you inspired by our April “putting your home in order” event? There are many worthy organizations that will take the “stuff” you’re ready to part with and put it to good use. Here are just a few suggestions. For more ideas, visit www.charitychoices.com/page/who-takes-what-dc-area, a list of the DC-area charities that accept donations of various items.



Organization	What they take	Particulars
CLOTHING, HOUSEHOLD GOODS, ETC.		
Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington	clothing, shoes, accessories, linens, small appliances, kitchen/household items, toys, home décor, books, flat screens, and laptops (less than 5 years old)	Drop-off hours: Mon - Thurs 9am – 2pm at 501 Sligo Ave., Silver Spring. Questions? Call Joyce at 301-565-0190. www.acsgw.org
Goodwill of Greater Washington	clothing, furniture, small appliances, house wares, computers, electronics and toys	Visit www.dcgoodwill.org or call (202) 636-4233 for details.
Habitat for Humanity ReStore	home improvement items including appliances, furniture, antiques, doors, windows, tile and lighting fixtures.	Drop-off locations: 1029 E. Gude Dr., Rockville, or 12006 Plum Orchard Dr., Silver Spring. For donation hours, visit www.habitat.org/restores
Interfaith Works Clothing Center	clothing and home goods (provided free of charge to low-income families)	751 Twinbrook Pkwy, Rockville (301-424-3796) Donation hrs: Tues-Fri.: 9am-4:30 pm; Sat.: 9am-2pm.
N Street Village	gently used clothing and new, in-kind gifts, such as toiletries	See www.nstreet.org or contact Adam Brunell at abrunell@nstreetvillage.org or 202-939-2058 to schedule a drop-off time or for donation assistance.
Suited for Change	professional women’s clothing and accessories in good condition and on hangers	Visit suitedforchange.org/clothing-contributions for full details.
Value Village/Unique Thrift	gently-used clothing, furniture, household goods, books, and many other items for resale; profits from resale benefit selected non-profits	Closest store is 10141 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring.
A Wider Circle	furniture, kitchenware and home goods for families transitioning out of shelters, escaping domestic violence, or otherwise living without basic need items	9159 Brookville Road, Silver Spring; for drop-off hours or to arrange pick-up, call 301-608-3504.
BICYCLES		
Bikes for the World	bicycles, spare parts & accessories, hand tools (wrenches, screwdrivers, and hammers), and portable sewing machines, for lower income people and select institutions in developing countries to enhance their lives and livelihoods through better transport.	Visit www.bikesfortheworld.org/ for local collection schedule or call 703-740-7856 to make arrangements.

Organization	What they take	Particulars
BOOKS		
Montgomery County Friends of the Library	books, movies, music, and magazines	Drop off donations at the Old Silver Spring Library, 8901 Colesville Rd. during the Wheaton Branch renovation. Visit www.folmc.org/bookstores/items-we-accept/ or call 301-933-1110.
Friends of the Takoma Park Library	books for the library's twice a year book sale	Storage space is limited, so before delivering books call the library at 301-891-7259.
Mary House	new and lightly used children's books for immigrant and refugee parents and children	Call Sharon Murphy at 202-635-9025 or email casademary@aol.com to make arrangements.
BUILDING SUPPLIES		
Community Forklift	surplus, gently-used, and salvaged home improvement supplies	Visit http://communityforklift.org/ for donation information.
OTHER WAYS TO REHOME, REUSE, and RECYCLE		
Freecycle-SilverSpringMD	unwanted/reusable items to share with neighbors in Takoma Park, Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Kensington	To sign up, follow this link: http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Freecycle-SilverSpringMD/
Craigslist	items you wish to sell or give away	http://washingtondc.craigslist.org/
College Hunks Hauling Junk	unwanted goods	For a fee, will pick up, sort, donate as much as possible to local charities. https://collegehunkshaulingjunk.com/
Takoma Yard Sale Facebook Page	items you wish to sell or give away	https://www.facebook.com/groups/TakomaYardSale/

Village members march in Takoma Park's 4th of July Parade



I. to r.: Kathie Baker, Wolfgang Mergner, Cherwanda Oliver, Tom Lavender, Debbi Rothstein, and Gertrud Mergner



POSNA (Parents of Special Needs Adults) participate



VOLUNTEERS/SERVICES

Small Home Repairs/Tasks: The Village of Takoma Park has an expanded team of volunteers who are ready and willing to do small-home-repairs and tasks around the house for members who have no other access to help for minor repairs or chores such as moving furniture and replacing high light bulbs. If you are a Village member in need of help, call 301-646-2109. Volunteers will contact you to arrange an evaluation of the job and determine if it can be done by the small home repair team. When a Village team is unable to perform a repair or a task, the homeowner or apartment resident who meets certain income requirements will receive an application form that goes to Rebuilding Together Montgomery County, a non-profit organization that works with community volunteers to provide free home repair and accessibility modification to help low income homeowners to live safely and independently in their homes. These repairs may include minor plumbing and electrical work; roofing, floor, and ceiling repair; interior and exterior painting; installation of grab bars; and building of ramps.

Errand Service: If you have stopped driving, can no longer get around easily, and need something that you (or a friend or family member) are unable to order online or from a delivery service, we will do it for you if you are a member of the Village. You may, for example, need to pick up a prescription, a package from the post office, or dry cleaning. Call 301-646-2109 and let us know what you need. We will try to fill all requests within three days, sooner if there's an emergency.

Friendly Visitors/Callers: Village volunteers provide visits to Takoma Park elders or homebound residents. Do you know someone who might welcome this service, or would you like to volunteer? If so, please contact the Village of Takoma Park at 301-646-2109 or email Sandy Egan at sandyeganretired@gmail.com.

VillageRides: VillageRides remains our most active, heavily used service. We can always use more drivers. To learn more, to volunteer, and/or to register for or request a ride, call 301-646-2109.

Senior Stroll: How easy is it for you to go out for a walk in your neighborhood or Sligo Creek Park? For some of us it isn't easy: we are afraid of tripping, or falling, or getting lost. The Village of Takoma Park has a senior stroll program which matches a volunteer or two with a senior who wants to go for a walk once or twice a week. Each volunteer is a member of the Village of Takoma Park and has had a criminal background check completed. If you are interested in this program or know someone who might be interested, please contact sandyeganretired@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.

SUPPORT GROUPS: The Village of Takoma Park has fostered the development of the following support groups and helps to promote them.

The Movement Disorder Support Group was started in response to interest from Takoma Park residents with Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and similar conditions. Members, ideally together with the caregiver, meet once a month, usually at 2 PM on the second Wednesday of the month (with some variations), to exchange information and hear from guest professionals. For more information, contact wolfgang.mergner@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.

Parents of Special Needs Adults (POSNA) is a Takoma Park advocacy and support group for parents and other loved ones of adults with developmental and/or chronic psychiatric challenges. The group is especially interested in securing jobs, supportive housing, safety, and recreation for their loved ones. Meetings are the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM. For more information, contact Mary Muchui (muchui@aol.com) or call 301-646-2109.

FAREWELL to CLAIR GARMAN: Village Volunteer Driver Extraordinaire



Clair Garman, who started as a volunteer driver on March 15, 2015, and then provided an amazing 486 rides in two plus years, has resigned from the Village due to a move from Takoma Park. Clair reports that the best part of giving members lifts was “meeting the people”, and much of his personal and professional life involved meeting and serving a variety of people.

His early childhood was spent outside Lancaster, PA. He grew up in his maternal grandparents’ home with his Scotch-Irish mother, who worked in a nearby factory. His father, born into a Mennonite family, had gone off to WWII and after

serving relocated to Florida and “did not return to the family, perhaps because he did not want to resume the strict Mennonite tradition.” Clair earned an NROTC scholarship to Penn State and received a degree in mathematics. After graduating, he was commissioned Ensign, US Navy, and served 3 years of active duty as an engineering officer on a U.S. Navy Atlantic Fleet destroyer.

Upon discharge from the Navy, Clair began what would be a long professional career which paralleled the growth of the emerging information technology field. He began in a computer tech job which was “boring, with all the punch cards and slow computers” so he began teaching high school math in Woodbury, Conn. In 1976, wanting a change, he moved to Washington, DC to join the Peace Corps. After entering the training program, Clair felt too old at age 36 for the Corps, so he took a job with Digital Equipment Corp, an IBM competitor. His career with DEC involved training and troubleshooting with customers’ staff. In the early 1980s it led to world travel training overseas clients. In December 1986 he returned to the U.S., where he resumed his position with DEC and met his wife Michele Morgan. They moved to Takoma Park in 1988, and Clair retired in October 2001.

After retiring, Clair began an active volunteer life. He helped found the Friends of Sligo Park, which organizes and leads the semi-annual volunteer Park clean-ups. He also actively volunteered with the Friends of the Northwest Branch, which protected and maintained that section of the Anacostia watershed. In addition, Clair has worked with a group that helps the feral cats of Takoma Park by maintaining feeding stations at Washington Adventist Hospital and behind Shoppers Food. These volunteers trap and neuter the cats, then release and feed them daily.

On August 1 Clair and his wife moved to Riderwood for a new chapter in their lives. “We are sorry to leave Takoma Park, but it’s time; I’m 78,” he noted. The Village regrets losing such a dedicated volunteer and friend, but wishes all the best for Clair and Michelle. Volunteer Coordinator Sandy Egan stated that “Clair will be missed by all the riders, but especially by me. Each week he checked to see what rides hadn’t been accepted and then he did them.”

The Village Receives 2 Grants

The Village recently received two grants -- one from Takoma Foundation and another from Montgomery County. Pazit Aviv, Montgomery County’s Village Coordinator, made the announcement of the County grant, saying this “is a clear indication of the County Executive and County Council’s strong support for the work that [the Villages] do.” Thank you to the County Council, County Exec. Isiah Leggett, and the Takoma Foundation for their vote of confidence and for helping us to fulfill our mission. Because we keep our membership dues so low, we do rely on outside financial support. If you’re able to help, you can send a check payable to Village of Takoma Park, PO Box 11420, Takoma Park, MD 20912 or donate online by credit card at villageoftakomapark.com.





JOIN OR RENEW

Sign up or renew online at our website – villageoftakomapark.com.

Don't have access to a computer?
Call 301-646-2109 to request a membership form.

Membership dues are \$10 per year per member.
Pay online at our secure site or mail your check to:
Village of Takoma Park, PO Box 11420, Takoma Park, MD 20912

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are essential to the success of the Village.
The two types of volunteering are

- Direct service to members
- Volunteering to help the organization

In most cases you may serve on a regular or periodic basis, giving as much or as little time as fits your schedule. Anyone age 18 or older is welcome.

Note: Our insurance coverage requires that all volunteers join as members as well. Let us know if the \$10 annual dues are a hardship.

To volunteer, go to villageoftakomapark.com, **Join** and **Member Signup**, or email Sandra Egan at sandyeganretired@gmail.com.

SUPPORT

Village of Takoma Park is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization. We rely on grants and donations to supplement income from dues. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Donate online by credit card at villageoftakomapark.com or send a check payable to Village of Takoma Park, PO Box 11420, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

We greatly appreciate your support.

Officers

President: Wolfgang Mergner
Vice-President: vacant
Secretary: vacant
Treasurer: Lois Weinberg

Additional Board Members

Kathie Baker
Marisa Cruz
Doris Duarte
Jacquette Frazier
Andy Kelemen
Joseph Khabbaz
Erwin Mack
Ruth McGoff
Laurie Welch

The Advisory Board

Bruce Baker
Seth Grimes
Peter Kovar
Moses Wilds
Deborah Zuckerman

Ex Officio

Paula Lisowski

Committee Chairs

Communications: Linda Carlson

Finance:

Membership: Wolfgang Mergner

Programs: Kathie Baker

Service Delivery: vacant

Volunteers: Sandra Egan

Newsletter editors

Margo Stevens and Maria Tokic'

Mission Statement

Village of Takoma Park's mission is to provide intergenerational support to seniors and persons with disabilities who wish to live actively in the Takoma Park community by

- providing assistance, advice, and neighborly support;
- facilitating access to needed service providers;
- advocating on behalf of Village members and informing them about relevant issues and policies;
- organizing and managing Village volunteers who provide services and assistance; and
- collaborating with the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County, and other organizations.