

Why a good chat matters—and how NNV helps make it happen

By DAVID COHEN

Here's how an everyday experience led to a simple and powerful idea. And here's how Northwest Neighbors Village (NNV) has translated that idea into practice, even in the face of a pandemic. The idea started with a basic question: What makes for a good talk with good neighbors?

Before the pandemic, the answer was simple. You might see a neighbor taking out the trash or walking down the block. You could ask about her or his family or catch up on the neighborhood news. You could recommend a handyman or plumber, or talk about a book, show, or restaurant. Or maybe you would agree to watch for packages while your neighbor travels. Often other neighbors stopped to join the chat.

These neighborly exchanges built trust and community. They countered isolation and loneliness. A good chat could bring a warm glow!

Then came the pandemic. Suddenly simple corner chats were no longer simple. They required masks and social distancing. Fewer people were going to meeting places like stores and coffee shops. NNV members were deferring even their outings to dentists and doctors. For NNV members already facing challenges to their mobility, the risks of isolation grew.

In the face of these challenges, I proposed an NNV experiment: a neighborhood chat on Zoom. With the enthusiastic support of NNV executive director Stephanie Chong and volunteer coordinator Heather Hill, it began in May 2020. A year later, it's still going strong. It led to a March 2021 training I did for NNV volunteers, who now host two other Zoom chat groups.

Experiments bring learning curves. In May 2020 I

began with modest questions to enable six people who didn't know each other to share a little about their backgrounds. Where were you born? How did you come to Washington, D.C.? How did you find your way to NNV?

As people took turns talking, they found unexpected things in common: Peace Corps service in the same country at the same time, graduation from the same university, a common hairdresser.

The talking led to an increasing sense of trust and fun. It evolved into an hour every other week. Two participants exchanged books. Others traded recommendations for films, shows, restaurants, hairdressers, and how to find a vaccination site. One recommendation gave me the idea for a gift for my wife -- the book "Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II" by Liza Mundy. (My wife loved it.)

That hour every other week starts with a check-in. What have you been up to since our last chat? Everyone has a chance to speak. The answers prompt exchanges and discussion. Sometimes they lead to support and sympathy, and other times to laughter. Every hour ends with my asking, "Should we do this again in two weeks?"

So far, the answer has been "yes" — and I'm glad! The generous responses of the participants regularly enrich my life. And for each participant, there's a group that witnesses the everyday events that make for good talks among good neighbors.



David Cohen

NORTHWEST NEIGHBORS VILLAGE

a community network of
support

PO Box 39135
Washington, DC 20016
202-935-6060

www.nnvdc.org

Northwest Neighbors Village (NNV), founded in 2007 and opened in 2009, is a nonprofit organization created to help the residents of Northwest Washington live comfortably and safely in their homes and neighborhoods as they age.

Join or volunteer

NNV welcomes new members and volunteers. For more information, go to www.nnvdc.org or call the office at 202-935-6060.

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Stewart Reuter, emeritus
Jo Ann Tanner, emerita

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Heather Hill, volunteer and
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Janean Mann
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Reopening NNV

By STEPHANIE CHONG

In April, Northwest Neighbors Village announced updates to our reopening policy. The changes were made in consideration of the Mayor's ReOpen DC Plan, the CDC's interim guidance for fully vaccinated people, as well as from feedback from members and volunteers. The new changes include:

- Curb-to-curb transportation for members without limitation on the purpose of the trip (e.g., medical appointments, social visits, errands, etc.)
- In-home volunteer services including tech support, simple home repairs and decluttering/organizing
- Small-group indoor activities in non-commercial establishments (e.g., private homes) of no more than 10 fully vaccinated people without requiring masks or physical distancing
- Small-group outdoor activities at commercial establishments (e.g., restaurant or café) for groups of 10 or fewer, following social distancing guidelines and wearing masks when not eating or drinking.

Fully vaccinated members and volunteers who share their vaccination status with Northwest Neighbors Village will have the option to participate in programs and volunteer services solely with other vaccinated parties.

We recognize that after a year of social distancing and other precautions there will be a range of comfort levels within our Village community about resuming social contacts. We are taking a careful, measured approach to reopening and will continue to offer primarily activities that do not require individuals to gather in person, including the continuation of our popular virtual programs and member check-in calls.

The health and wellbeing of our Village community is of utmost importance. Northwest Neighbors Village remains committed to staying informed and making thoughtful and measured adjustments to our services and programs to best meet the needs of our members and volunteers.



DARCY TROUTMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Member Phyllis Kline gets a pre-COVID, unmasked ride with volunteer Ann Todd

The District of Columbia has a new overlay area code: 771

The District of Columbia has used the 202 area code since 1947 and it has become synonymous with city pride, but projections show the District will run out of new phone numbers during the third quarter of 2022. To solve this problem, the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) has assigned a new area code to the Washington region: 771.



The NANPA plan will overlay the new 771 area code over the entire geographic area of the 202 area code. All existing customers with a 202 area code would retain that area code and would not have to change telephone numbers. However, once the new area code is active, customers making wireline or wireless phone calls within the District will be required to dial 10 digits (the 202 or 771 area code plus the local telephone number) instead of just the current seven-digit local telephone number to complete local calls.

What you need to know about the 771 area code

District residents should keep the following in mind with regard to the 771 area code overlay implementation:

- Your current telephone number, including current area code, will not change.
- If you plan to get a new phone number on and after Nov. 9, 2021, you may be assigned a phone number with the 771 area code.
- You will need to start dialing the area code + telephone number for all local calls, including calls within the same area code.
- You will continue to dial 1 + area code + telephone number for all long distance calls.
- What is a local call now will remain a local call.
- The price of a call, coverage area, or other rates and services will not change due to the overlay.

How to prepare for the new area code

Customers should ensure that all services, automatic dialing equipment, applications, software, or other types of equipment are reprogrammed to dial 10 digits if they are currently programmed to dial just seven digits. Examples of these types of systems include life-safety systems, fax machines, internet dial-up numbers, gates, ankle monitors, speed dialers, mobile phone contact lists, call forwarding settings, voicemail services, and similar functions.

Be sure to check your business stationery, advertising materials, personal checks, and your personal or pet ID tags to ensure the area code is included in your telephone number.

Important safety and security equipment, such as medical alert devices, and alarm and security systems must be programmed to use 10-digit dialing. Many systems operate on 10-digit dialing by default, but some older equipment may still use seven digits. Any needed reprogramming of alarm and home security equipment must be done by Oct. 9, 2021.

If NNV full members need help, please call or email the office to request volunteer assistance.

This information is from the [Public Service Commission of DC's website](#).

DC Villages join to create safe spaces for LGBTQ older adults

By SAMANTHA SCHIFFMAN, CAPITOL HILL VILLAGE WITH EDITS BY HEATHER HILL

Northwest Neighbors Village (NNV) is partnering with Capitol Hill Village (CHV) and the 11 other D.C. Villages to ensure that our villages are safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTQ older adults. In March 2021, CHV launched this project by surveying village executive directors to learn about LGBTQ inclusions and needs at each village. Villages were asked about marketing materials, programs, referral lists, competency training offered, outreach efforts, and other details about their village's state of LGBTQ inclusion and safety. CHV compiled the results and reported a range of responses as well as an enthusiastic commitment to becoming more inclusive. The expression "if you've seen one Village, you've seen one Village" is apt here because Villages are built by and designed around the unique communities they serve. This initiative will build on each of the village's strengths and ensure the villages are effective, inclusive, and safe spaces for LGBTQ older adults.

Later this month, CHV is bringing together representatives from each of the villages to form the Village Committee on Safe Spaces for LGBTQ Older Adults. Representatives may be village employees, volunteers or members and may be in the LGBTQ community or an ally. Heather Hill, NNV's member and volunteer services coordinator, will be serving as NNV's representative. At the

initial focus group in April, we discussed the creation of the committee and its goals. The committee will work on an ongoing basis to identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and goals we can work toward together. We will develop a schedule for future meetings where we'll work on concrete actions to help each village meet its own goals for inclusivity. The representatives will identify their village's unique needs and seek guidance and tools from experts as well as volunteers within the LGBTQ community.

Volunteer opportunity

If you're interested in helping NNV become a more inclusive space for LGBTQ older adults, please contact Heather at hhill@nnvdc.org or 202-935-6060. The commitment can be as little as an hour a month to attend the meetings or as much time as you'd like to give.

Capitol Hill Village's LGBTQ programs are funded by the D.C. Department of Aging and Community Living and are open to all D.C. residents.



Jane Whitaker sent in these interesting photos of what's happening in the bee lab at The University of Maryland where she volunteers:

"We used a crossbow to send a rope into a blooming pear tree so we could pull a cup filled with water and Dawn soap into the high branches of the tree to sample the bees that pollinate in the upper areas of the tree. Lots of fun and a new sampling method."



A volunteer shoots the crossbow

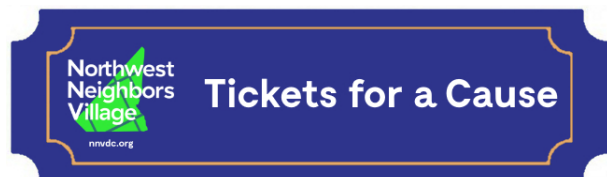


PHOTOS BY SUSAN HUEMMRICH

NNV *Subsidized Membership Fund* fundraiser

BY JUDIE FIEN-HELFMAN

Northwest Neighbors Village's first virtual fundraiser is designed to support our Subsidized Membership Fund. This fund, which makes Village membership available to neighbors of low income, is key to fulfilling NNV's vision of a generous, supportive community where all older adults are valued, age with dignity, and enjoy opportunities for growth and engagement.

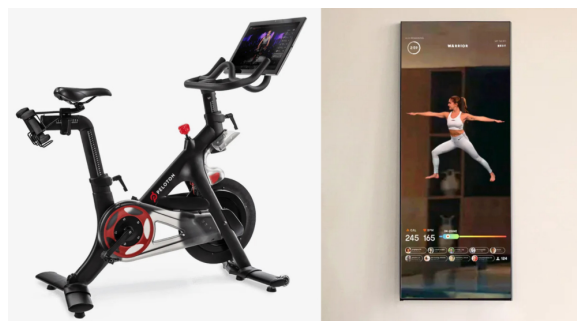


NNV's [Tickets for A Cause](#) fundraiser has four extraordinary prizes. Only 100 tickets will be sold, each one costing \$100. You can purchase as many tickets as you wish to increase your chance of winning. The fundraiser will be held fully online – both purchases and drawings. The prizes are:

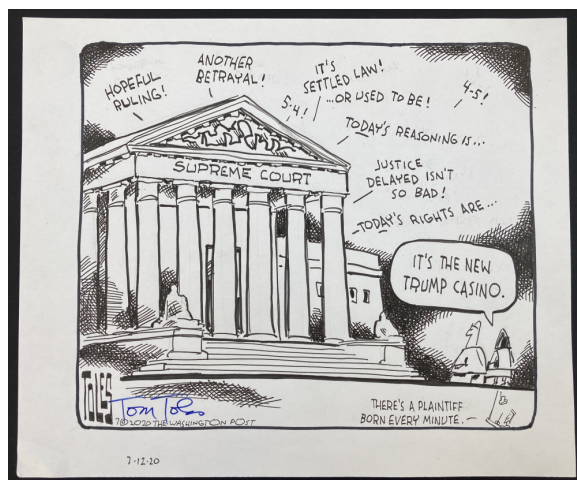
- Peloton or Mirror (winner's choice)
- Tom Toles signed cartoon
- Wine Tasting: Paul's Wines and Spirits - virtual or in-person outside for up to 20 people
- Gift certificate (\$200) at a restaurant of your choice

The actual prize drawing will take place on June 10 from 6-6:30 p.m. via Zoom. Highlights of the event include the prize drawings as well as an opportunity to toast NNV's remarkable year by making NNV's signature cocktail. This drink is being created specifically for NNV's Tickets for a Cause by Colin McClimans, founder and chef at Nina May restaurant, along with Charlie Chiang, Nina May's head bartender. A list of the cocktail's ingredients will be sent in advance to ticket holders, allowing them to make the drink at home.

Mark your calendars and join us on **June 10**. Tell your friends, family, and neighbors about this wonderful opportunity to support NNV and win great prizes. We greatly appreciate your support!



PELOTON or **MIRROR**
Peloton or Mirror Exercise Machine



Signed Tom Toles Cartoon



Wine Tasting: Paul's Wines and Spirits



\$200 Gift Certificate to restaurant of your choice

Old Urban Naturalist

By JANE WHITAKER

Spring is here in all its colorful, song-filled glory! A fitting end to our long COVID winter. If you haven't gotten outside to soak up the sun, now is the time before the cicadas emerge. This writing may be too late; by the time you read this their constant humming may be surrounding us.

Undoubtedly you have been inundated with facts and figures regarding these bugs. Just two things to keep in mind regarding cicadas. They are a bountiful food source for the insect-eating wildlife in our region -- foxes, opossums and a myriad of birds. And this is a phenomenon that occurs only in the eastern United States which attracts entomologists from all over the world. So when you're besieged by the little beasts, contemplate how lucky you are to get to experience such a rarity of nature.

Now that I'm back on my deck I'm spending a lot of time leaning back in my chair and staring at the sky. The blossoms on my redbud tree are covered with bees. The puffy clouds bring back childhood memories of laying in the grass and imagining all sorts of animals, faces, and castles in the formations.

Among those clouds I often see big black birds soaring with an ease that makes me envious. They're vultures, commonly called buzzards. To some they conjure up memories of death but they are actually very fascinating creatures. Without them we would be overwhelmed with stinking, decaying flesh.

Did you know that there are two species of vultures in the D.C. area -- black vultures and turkey vultures? They're easy to distinguish from a distance. When they fly, the turkey vultures' wings form a V. Black vultures have a flatter flying pattern. The turkey vulture or TV (birding lingo) has a distinct pale silvery border on the trailing edge of its wings as seen from below while the black vulture has a distinct white patch on the ends of each wing. And the turkey vulture has a longer tail in comparison to the stubby tail of the black vulture.

When soaring, the turkey vulture almost seems to have an internal motor as it rocks its body to change direction and altitude in the upper winds without the slightest flap of its wings. The black vulture has to flap its wings regularly to stay aloft.

Another interesting characteristic of vultures are their naked heads -- red in turkey vultures and greyish black in black vultures -- a beneficial adaptation for sticking one's head into rotten carcasses for a meal. Gunky feathers would be hard to keep clean. Lastly, the vultures' excretions contain uric acid which are deposited onto their feet and legs. That offers antimicrobial protection to their feet which are highly contaminated from the rotting flesh they are stepping into.

Turkey vultures mate for life but go their separate ways when migrating in the fall,

sometimes as far afield as South America. They return to their mates each spring to the same location where they nested the year before. They are a very necessary part of our environment and recycle dead animals. They have an astounding sense of smell and can detect rotting flesh more than a mile away. So, eyes to the sky. They fly over Rock Creek Park and environs all the time. If I've piqued your interest in these birds there is a fascinating book, ["Vultures: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird" by Katie Fallon](#). Fallon rehabilitates injured vultures in West Virginia and has a pet vulture that she takes to meetings to encourage their

protection.

To close on a sad note, the opossum that visited my birdbath nightly all winter has met an untimely death on the street. I saw its remains a block away early one Sunday morning in March. There have been no opossum visits to my birdbath since.

Early May is the peak of bird migration season, so listen for interesting songs and look for colorful little birds in the trees outside your windows. I hope some of you have learned at least one or two resident bird calls by now. And please don't eat the wild mushrooms -- some can make you very sick if not kill you.



Picture from Vultures: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird

What we have missed most during the pandemic:

No question: What I missed most since March 2020 was the dinner every Sunday with my son, daughter-in-law, and their two sons. We've had picnic lunches outdoors and a great outdoor dinner with one table for the vaccinated and one for those who hadn't yet qualified, but I'm still looking forward to a meal for all of us at one indoor table!

Ursula Shears



What I miss most is dancing, which I used to do three nights a week for over thirty years, with and without a partner. Even though I and my partner are fully vaccinated, our dance groups are not meeting in person yet, so there is nothing to return to, and may not be for a long time. Dancing is my life, and that life is on hold right now.

Vita Hollander

What I missed during covid and am looking forward to - maybe being a ball kid at citiopen in DC this summer.

I missed being a ballkid at the Miami Open in 3.20 and citi open in 7.20 as both were cancelled

Judie Fien-Helfman



Photograph of Heather pre-pandemic



I can't wait to get back in the pool!

Heather Hill

I've missed getting together with friends in person for our monthly bookclub. Zoom is just not the same.

Leslie Pace

I am vaccinated as is my best friend. We have exchanged hugs and it feels really good.

Eilene Robb

My parents live in Canada, far out in the country, several hours from Toronto. With Covid spreading, and the Canada-US border closed, I have been unable to visit them in over a year. Now that we are all vaccinated, we're just waiting for the border to open up. The moment that happens, I will jump in the car and drive North!



Morgan with her parents and brother at their farm in 2018.

Morgan Gopnik

I got a haircut the day after my two weeks were up.

Sandi O'Neill



I miss celebrating as a large community.

Stephanie Chong

I also miss being in the company of our members and volunteers. Look at these beautiful smiles!

Stephanie Chong

Stephanie and family celebrating the Nationals World Series Win in 2019



Peggy Nolan, Pat Kasdan and Gail Hurd at the NNV Picnic 2019



Ann Ingram and Debbie Dusault at the NNV Holiday Party 2019

Calendar

Our calendar is regularly updated. Please check for current listings. To learn more about any event or RSVP, please see the [Events page](#) or phone: 202-935-6060.

Unless otherwise listed, events are online, via Zoom.

REGULAR EVENTS:

NNV Walks

Every Monday at 10 a.m. Make sure to [check our calendar](#) to see where we are meeting each week. If the weather is poor, we will not walk. Contact lpac@nnvdc.org.

Conversational Spanish for Beginner+/Intermediate

Every Mon. 3 p.m.

(Members & Volunteers only)

Gentle Yoga with Mayu

Every Monday at 2 p.m.

Jazz with Carey Smith

Thursday, May 6th will be the final session of jazz. Join us to send Carey off in style!

French Conversation Group

3rd Thurs. of each month

May 20 & Jun. 17, 3:30 p.m.

RSVP: John Wiecking

jwiecking@gmail.com

Join members of NNV and Cleveland & Woodley Park Village and *parle Français!*

Bingo!

2nd Tues. of each month

May 11 & Jun. 8, 2 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

[D.C. Strong: Recognizing Our Community's Collective Response to Helping Older Adults Thrive](#)

Thursday, May 20, 10 a.m.
Celebration of Aging in DC sponsored by DC Villages and DACL. See p. 10 for more information.

[Tickets for a Cause](#)

Thursday, June 10, 6 p.m.
Fundraiser for NNV's Subsidized Membership Fund. See p. 5 for more information.



Virtual Speaker Series

Northwest DC is home to numerous dynamic, informed individuals. Join us for one or all of these discussions, designed to engage and inform you. The Virtual Speaker Series is being offered free of charge to the community.

We regularly add more Virtual Speakers. Please [check our website](#) for upcoming speakers. Many past speakers have given permission to record their programs. These are available [on Vimeo](#).

[An NPR Correspondent's Life Covering COVID-19](#)

Tuesday, May 4, 11 a.m.

Speaker: NPR Science Correspondent Joe Palca

[How the Kennedy Brothers Changed the World](#)

Tuesday, May 11, 11 a.m.

Speaker: Author Lawrence J. Haas

[Introducing the Capital Jewish Museum](#)

Tuesday, May 18, 11 a.m.

Speaker: Kara Blond, Executive Director

[US-German Relations Under Angela Merkel and Joe Biden](#)

Tuesday, May 25, 11 a.m.

Speaker: Der Spiegel Reporter René Pfister

Comments about the Virtual Speaker Series

THANKS!! this is very helpful ..
Great service to the community.

M.B.

Thank you for providing this
invaluable information

E.H.

Thank you for offering this.
Today's program was excellent!

B.M.

I am a member of <another local
village>. thank you for inviting us!

C.R.

Thank you for your interest in our programming!

During Covid-19, we have opened up much of our programming to the community. Our membership dues account for less than 1/4 of our budget, and we rely on the support of generous donors to continue to create and share engaging programs with the community. If you enjoy this program, please consider [making a donation](#) to Northwest Neighbors Village.

Passages

Mimi Sokol at
NNV's 5th
birthday party

In Loving Memory of Longtime NNV Member Mimi Sokol November 18, 1921 - April 27, 2021

At 99 years old, Mimi Sokol enjoyed life. She loved to sing and laugh and was a regular attendee at NNV events and especially loved the ice cream socials. Dressed to the "nines", and despite her small stature, Mimi was easily recognizable by her signature big hats perched atop her perfectly coiffed hair. As recently as two weeks before her death, Mimi and I were singing songs from the 40's. She was on key, I was not! She also thoroughly enjoyed her Bible study class, most recently by Zoom. A long time NNV member, Mimi died April 27. She had moved to Washington with her late husband Max in the early 70s. Always active, Mimi roller-skated into her 60's and loved to dance. She is survived by three daughters—Marlene, Maxine and Marsha. Funeral arrangements will be announced later. See our next newsletter for a fuller tribute to Mimi. Donations can be made in Mimi's memory to NNV or to the Audubon Society.



JANEAN MANN

Janean Mann

Taste Provence's bounty

By BARBARA OLIVER

Summer is fast approaching as will be the bounty from myriad vegetable gardens. Named for Provence's popular terra-cotta dishes, tian is a combination of summer vegetables perfumed with olive oil and thyme topped with Gruyère cheese. The trick to a successful tian is creating uniform vegetable slices and keeping them layered in a tight shingle (think of a slate roof). If you have an oven-safe Provencal-style gratin dish similar in size to a 13x9-inch baking dish, by all means put it to use.

Tian de Courgettes aux Tomates

Zucchini and Tomato Tian with Caramelized Onions

Ingredients

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 medium yellow onions, halved and sliced ¼-in. thick
(about 3 cups)
Salt
2 medium garlic cloves, minced or put through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)
1 pound zucchini, trimmed and sliced ¼-in. thick
1 pound plum tomatoes, cored and sliced ¼-in. thick
1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme leaves
Ground black pepper
2 ounces shredded Gruyere cheese or Parmesan
(about ½-¾ cup)

Directions

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 375°F. Brush a 13x9-inch baking dish with 1 tablespoon of the oil; set aside.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons more oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onions and 1/2 teaspoon salt, and cook until softened and lightly browned, 12-15 minutes. Stir in the garlic

and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Spread the onion mixture onto the bottom of the prepared baking dish.

3. Alternately shingle the sliced zucchini, yellow squash and tomatoes into a single layer of 4 tightly fitting rows on top of the onions. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon oil and the thyme and season with salt and pepper. Cover the dish with aluminum foil and bake until the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes.

4. Remove the foil, sprinkle the cheese over the top, and continue to bake until bubbling around the edges and lightly browned on top, 20 to 30 minutes. Let rest for 10 minutes before dishing up. Serves 8-10 as a side dish.

Notes

Slicing the squash and tomatoes on a mandoline gives perfect, uniform rounds crucial for this recipe. An oven-safe, Provencal-style gratin dish can be substituted for the 13x9x2-inch baking dish, if it's of similar size.

Source: Louise Fenner from several versions of this dish.



BARBARA OLIVER

You're Invited

In recognition of Older Americans Month, the 13 D.C. Senior Villages invite you to **"D.C. Strong: Recognizing Our Community's Collective Response to Helping Older Adults Thrive"** on **Thursday, May 20, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** There will be a special pre-program at 9:45 a.m.

Join us as we celebrate aging in D.C.! Find out how our city created strong partnerships to support our seniors during the COVID-19 emergency and what to expect in the future. You'll hear from Mayor Muriel Bowser; Department of Aging and Community Living Director Laura Newland; Councilwoman Anita Bonds; Age-Friendly D.C. Coordinator Gail Kohn; The Washington Home CEO Phyllis Dillinger; Medium Rare Owner and Philanthropist Mark Bucher; and the D.C. Villages community of staff, members and volunteers. We hope to see you there!

Join us via Zoom. To register visit <https://tinyurl.com/DCVillages>

