

What goes into coordinating a volunteer request?

BY STEPHANIE CHONG & HEATHER HILL

Our volunteers do an amazing job of helping our members stay connected, engaged, and supported in our community. Have you ever wondered how it all works? You might be surprised with how much goes on behind the scenes to make these important connections.

Vetted and trained volunteers – It all starts with recruiting and training good volunteers. Heather Hill, LICSW, NNV's Volunteer and Member Services Coordinator communicates with each prospective volunteer before inviting them to a mandatory 90-minute orientation designed to prepare volunteers for their new role and help them understand the needs and contributions of older adults. Following orientation, we perform a criminal and motor vehicle background check on all volunteers before they work with our members. Ongoing training is offered throughout the year so our volunteers are always prepared to help.

Member requests – Most members call the office to make a service request. This is important because it allows our staff the chance to connect with our members. Every call is an opportunity for us to see how our members are doing and to talk about whatever is on their mind. Our team gets great satisfaction from helping a member with something beyond what they have called for, and we especially enjoy talking to members about the things that are meaningful to them – birthday parties, recent visits with loved ones, even politics. For us, a call for a service request is much more than a call for volunteer help!

Requests posted to our volunteers: Each request is then entered into our online matching system. Heather ensures that the requests include clear and important details like the address, provider name, date and time, and whether the member needs help stowing a walker or other assistive device. The requests are viewable to volunteers



Volunteer Susan Crawford (r.) delivering a meal to member Helen Sebsov



Volunteer Mustafa Bahar (r.) working with member Bob Carr

any time but special reminders go out to our volunteers multiple times a week. If the request isn't filled, staff will work with the member to make alternate arrangements.

Proactive response – Our volunteers are trained to recognize signs of concern and to contact the office when those concerns arise. Often the call from our volunteers is the first sign that our members need more help. Our experienced team listens to our concerned volunteers and then follows up with our members to learn more about how they are managing and offer support. When members' needs are beyond the scope of volunteer services, our Social Work Case Manager Barbara Scott is called in to make an evaluation and coordinate services. This rapid response is often critical to preventing a crisis for our members.

NNV fulfills 98 percent of our requests thanks to our dedicated volunteers and staff support and attention behind the scenes--including more than 80 round-trip rides per month. Tech support, grocery shopping, and simple home repairs are also very popular requests. If you're interested in volunteering with NNV, please complete the inquiry form on our website. We extend special gratitude to all of our volunteers for all they do!

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, call the office at 202-935-6060 or go to www.nnvdc.org.

NNV Board Members

Officers

Morgan Gopnik, president
Sam Smith, vice president & treasurer
Merilee Janssen, secretary

Directors

Richard Avidon
Jessica Berenson
Shanti Conly
Judie Fien-Helfman
Bert Foer
Monica Knorr
Lenore Lucey
Gene Sofer
Jan Solomon
Ann Van Dusen
Karen Zuckerstein
Janean Mann, emerita
Frances Mahncke, emerita
Robert Parker, emeritus
Stewart Reuter, emeritus
Jo Ann Tanner, emerita

Team

Stephanie Chong, executive director
Heather Hill, volunteer and member services coordinator
Leslie Pace, communications coordinator
Mustafa Bahar, programming coordinator
Barbara Scott, village social worker

Newsletter team

Pat Kasdan
Janean Mann
Pat Mullan

Tickets for a Cause supports NNV volunteers

By JUDIE FIEN-HELFMAN

NNV's fundraising efforts exceeded expectations at the annual Tickets for a Cause fundraiser held June 7. Despite the horrific weather the night before which caused some to lose power, the virtual event went on seamlessly – anchored by NNV Executive Director Stephanie Chong, President Morgan Gopnik, guest speaker Robert Siegel, and our own Vanna White – Volunteer and Member Services Coordinator Heather Hill.

The fundraiser was designed to support NNV's vital volunteer corps - the heart and soul of our neighborhood nonprofit. A tremendous amount of time goes into planning and coordinating NNV's volunteer services – there's outreach, volunteer screening and ongoing training, services tailored to our members' individual needs, and coordination of formal support services, to name a few.

It is a known fact that Villages are a proven cost-effective way of supporting aging neighbors, but there are costs associated with the personalized support NNV offers. This year NNV's annual fundraising event raised more than \$15,000 to help underwrite the costs associated with our vital volunteer training and services.

Before NNV's prizes were awarded, Robert Siegel, the retired and first host of NPR's "All Things Considered" – graciously entertained attendees with stories from his time at NPR, his favorite memes of himself, and even more intimately how a young man from New York City came to and fell in love with Washington, D.C. Robert even drove to our executive director's home to be "live at the event" after his house lost power that afternoon. His interview time flew by and then it was time for the NNV Wheel of Prizes.

The 12 fabulous prizes, ranging in value from \$150 to \$2500, were raffled off with the NNV logo wheel. The lucky winners were:

1. Atlas Obscura trip voucher – Susan G.
2. Atlas Obscura class voucher and signed book – Barbara K.
3. A case of wine and wine tasting at Total Wine and More – Wanda R.
4. A cheese tasting in your own home – Susan B.
5. Museum hopping – Karen F.
6. Art appraisal – Eleanor S.
7. Gift certificates to Little Sesame and Silver Diner - David C.
8. Gift certificates to Bistro Aracosia and a second restaurant of the winner's choosing – Susan L.
9. Gift certificates to Little Beast, Bread & Chocolate, Capital Grill, and a fourth restaurant of the winner's choosing – Wesley D.
10. Gift certificates to Hunters Hound, Capital Grill, and a third restaurant of the winner's choosing – Anne N.
11. Four Nationals tickets with parking – Karen Z.
12. Two tickets for two Nationals games – Sibo N.

The event was a huge success due to the talented efforts of NNV's working group – Gene Sofer, Jan Solomon, Susan Crawford, and Judie Fien-Helfman, with special thanks to NNV staff member Leslie Pace for her wonderful work and support.

Update on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative at NNV

By GRETCHEN JENNINGS, DEI WORKING GROUP MEMBER

You may have been wondering what steps NNV has taken to address diversity, equity, and inclusion at our Village. Here's a report from DEI Working Group member Gretchen Jennings.

Since the beginning of the year, NNV's DEI Working Group has been hard at work. The working group initially agreed on common definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion and recognized who we are – a mostly white, income secure, and privileged group with the free time and commitment to do this work. We acknowledged that there is much we don't know and that we need to listen, learn, and collaborate outside our usual frame of reference.

DEI Working Group's Goal and Vision

GOAL: To engage, support, and enhance the well-being of increased numbers of older adults from diverse backgrounds within our catchment area, with a focus on racial and socioeconomic equity. Ultimately, NNV should reflect the racial and socio-economic profile of its surrounding community.

VISION:

- An inclusive, welcoming, culturally empathetic Village
- Programs and services accessible to all older adults in the catchment area
- A community where no one is excluded through conscious or unconscious bias (race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, SES, etc.)

Our working group launched an information gathering process that has proven incredibly rich and rewarding: meeting and learning from other Villages that are already working on DEI; talking with local DC government representatives, academics, and community leaders; contacting other organizations that serve our catchment, and in general educating ourselves on best practices for nonprofit organizations that wish to become more representative of their communities. Demographic research has revealed that the area we serve is about 70-80% White and 20-30% Black, Asian, Latino, mixed race. While we don't have a firm demographic breakdown of NNV membership, we

know anecdotally that it is far from representative of the area.

So far, our investigations have led us to conclude that:

- Many Villages (both local and national) are engaged in DEI work. We can learn from and, when ready, collaborate with them.
- Representation of more diverse perspectives among our board, staff, and volunteer corps is essential and urgent; until that can be achieved, it is important to reach out to people of color who agree to be allies in this work.
- Collaboration with local community organizations will be important to achieving our goals.
- The changes we seek are systemic, and will transform our organization.
- We need to draw on the expertise of people skilled in helping organizations become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. These experts can provide training, resources in various formats, organizational advice, and links to communities we wish to serve more effectively. This requires funding, commitment, and time.

We presented all this information at a recent Board meeting and are pleased to report that the Board approved for the DEI Working Group to engage an individual or team who will work with us to assess the current situation of NNV regarding DEI and to collaborate with us in developing a systemic and actionable plan to achieve our goals and vision. We commend the NNV Board for investing in this important work. Stay tuned for frequent updates on our efforts to address diversity, equity, and inclusion at Northwest Neighbors Village.

Old Urban Naturalist

By JANE WHITAKER

The Old Urban Naturalist is doing her rural thing for a spell this summer.

And, like MacArthur, she will return!

Older Americans Month

By STEPHANIE CHONG

May was Older Americans Month. What better way to celebrate than to showcase examples of what aging looks like in our community and how NNV members continue to learn and grow by pursuing new challenges.

Mastering the art of watercolor. For years, a group of NNV members have been studying the art of watercolor painting under the direction of Joey P. Mánlapaz, D.C. artist and Corcoran Professor of Art. The diverse group, who after long careers as attorneys, architects, and concert musicians, have discovered meaningful social connection through a mutual desire to master the art of watercolor.



Five boroughs, 40 miles. NNV President Morgan Gopnik and her husband, Tom Bondy, had a great time completing the Five Boro Bike Tour. Approximately 30,000 cyclists rode through all five boroughs of New York City (Manhattan, The Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island) and over five iconic bridges, all completely free of cars for the day. Morgan told us, “It was a perfect day and we felt great!”



Challenging stereotypes about aging. NNV member Ann Garfinkle celebrated her 79th birthday with her family on a float fishing trip in northern Montana. The guide assumed her son was the experienced fly fisherman and was surprised to discover that Ann was the one with experience. Ann shares, “The fishing guide was sure I could not fly cast, I did. He was sure I couldn’t catch anything, I did.” For over 20 years, Ann has been making an annual trip to Montana to go fly fishing. She hopes to do it again this year. We hope so, too!



Building a supportive community. Ann Todd has been a well-known and appreciated NNV volunteer for many years, but her generosity with her time is not limited to NNV members. Ann has also been of repeated help to her neighbors. And at a recent surprise party her neighbors expressed their gratitude.

“We have a pretty close network of neighbors in our area, and Ann is always at the heart of it,” said Linda Gustitus, the party’s organizer. Ann, she said, is regularly “making sure we’re all doing ok and helping where she can.” Recognizing this generosity “just seemed like the right thing to do—and the neighbors agreed,” Gustitus added.



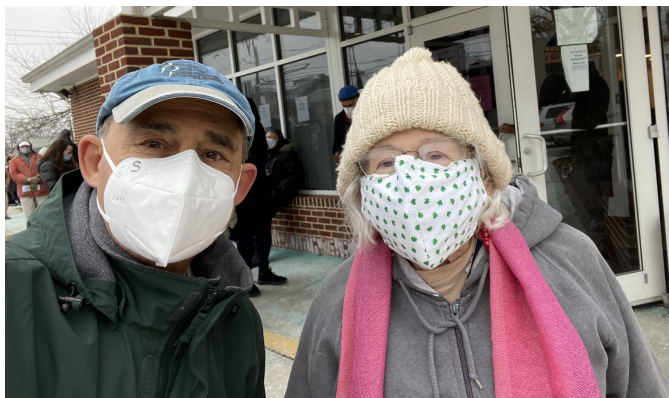
Ann’s NNV volunteer activities center principally on driving members to needed appointments, but she has also brought friendship to members whose activities are limited, especially during the pandemic. Of Ann’s visits, late NNV member Phyllis

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Kline said with a smile, “We always have such enjoyable talks.”

Making the world a better place. NNV member and biologist, Jane Whitaker, is volunteering her time to bee research at the Bee Lab at Patuxent Wildlife Refuge. Jane shares, “I am blessed to still be able to continue to contribute to the knowledge base of insects that are so necessary for our survival in spite my infirmities, which make it impossible for me to do field work anymore.” With the bee population at risk, Jane’s contributions are so important to the interconnected ecosystem we depend on.



Jane shares her lifelong wonder and appreciation of nature with NNV as a regular contributor to NNV’s newsletter column, “Old Urban Naturalist”. We are so fortunate to have Jane opening our eyes to the environment around us!

Sal Selvaggio is making great contributions to the quality of life of older adults in D.C. In addition to being an extraordinary NNV volunteer – Sal is NNV’s 2020 Volunteer of the Year Awardee – Sal is doing incredible work through advocacy and information sharing.

Sal is a member of the Iona Citizens Advisory Group (CAG), a group of local citizens devoted to discussing critical issues affecting older adults living in Wards 2 and 3 and the impact of public policy on the quality of life of older adults. Sal is also a member of the D.C. Coalition on Longterm Care,

where he is working to increase the healthcare workforce by presenting testimony to D.C. Council members and educating our community on this important issue.

Sal, a retired dentist, is a member of the District of Columbia Dental Society Foundation through which he provides lectures to home care aides on oral care for their clients. Sal also offers presentations to older adults on smoking cessation at some of the Wellness Centers in D.C.

Sal says, “Basically, I need to feel useful. I think I have a nice balance of community service and having fun with the free time being retired offers.” We are fortunate to benefit from Sal’s many contributions to our community. When Sal is not volunteering for or on behalf of older adults, he can be found at St. Ann’s Catholic Church where he is an usher and offers tours of the church’s stained-glass windows and architecture.

Growing, learning, and setting and attaining new goals bring personal satisfaction throughout our lives. Our members and volunteers have demonstrated in countless ways how to live well at any age. I hope you enjoy their experiences and are inspired by their stories!

Second Quarter 2022

New Members:

Josephine C.	Raja K.
Dorothy M.	John W.
Laura D.	John G.

Roger R.

Louise W.

Burt W.

Monica K.

Clara D.

Francis D.

Ann Marie P.

Faye H.

Joel G.

Fessahaye M.

Laurie L.

New Volunteers:

Monica K.

Barbara H.

John R.

Anne R.

Anne L.

Jerry S.

Robert K.

Elana P.

Lucy P.

[Read our current Weekly Update
on our website here!](#)

Calf liver can be a delicacy

By BARBARA OLIVER

Several NNV members confided in me that they really like liver and recently ordered it at an outing at La Ferme, a French restaurant in Bethesda. So, I offer my favorite liver recipe for those of you who also enjoy this dish and want to make it at home.

This recipe will turn liver haters into converts. The three things that will set your liver above all others are: 1) soak in milk, 2) turn the liver as little as possible and 3) don't overcook.

Calf liver is considered a delicacy, due to its tender texture and sweeter flavor. If you can't find calf liver, substitute beef liver. It can be found usually in the frozen food section of most grocery stores.

Absolute Best Liver and Onions

Ingredients

2 pounds sliced calf or beef liver
1 1/2 cups milk or as needed; skim is OK
1/4 cup butter divided
2 large Vidalia onions sliced into rings
All-purpose flour to coat liver
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Gently rinse liver slices under cold water, and place in a medium bowl. Pour in enough milk to cover. Let stand while preparing onions. (Soak up to an hour or two - whatever you have time for.) This step is so important in removing the bitter taste of the liver.

Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Separate onion rings, and sauté them in butter until soft. Season the flour with salt and pepper, and put it in a shallow dish or on a plate. Drain milk from liver, and coat both sides of slices in the flour mixture. Remove onions, and melt remaining butter in the skillet.

When the butter has melted, turn the heat up to medium-high, and place the coated liver slices in the pan. Cook until nice and brown on the bottom about 3 minutes. Turn, and cook on the other side until browned, about another 3 minutes. Add onions, and reduce heat to medium. Cook a bit longer until slightly pink inside.

Makes 8 servings.



BARBARA OLIVER

Notes

Alternative to milk: place sliced liver in a bowl, barely cover with water and add the juice of a lemon or a tablespoon or two of vinegar. Soak for 1-2 hours before cooking, drain and pat dry. *Notes from nourishingdays.com.*

Recipe source: adapted from allrecipes.com



Adaptive clothing can be functional and stylish. Name brands including Tommy Hilfiger, Lands End, and Nike, as well as more niche brands are realizing that people require adaptive clothing for all kinds of reasons.

[Check out this article at The Vou for some options!](#)

Do you have any time-saving or safety suggestions to share? Send them to Leslie (lpac@nnvdc.org).

Spring socials

By ANN VAN DUSEN

Like early spring flowers – or perhaps like Rip Van Winkle – our neighborhood is waking up from its two-year COVID-induced nap. NNV, too, is celebrating the beginning of the end of COVID isolation.

Small group lunches at local restaurants, group walks in Rock Creek Park, and small gatherings in private homes mark the renewal of NNV's increasingly active social calendar.

In April and May, for example, there were small in-person gatherings for supporting members who joined NNV during the pandemic and another for new volunteers. NNV also plans to launch informal gatherings of members and volunteers who live near one another but may not be aware of other "NNVers" in their neighborhood. While everyone

has admired and appreciated how much NNV has been able to do to keep our community together over Zoom, there is huge enthusiasm for being able to meet up in person again. As Christine Lynn, a new member, commented after one of the gatherings: "It is a great joy to simply be with other people again. I loved meeting other new members and learning about their lives."

Unfortunately, a brunch in early May for new members had to be canceled due to COVID. And until we are fully out of the woods on COVID, NNV gatherings will be limited in size and held outdoors whenever possible (not always easy in Washington's unpredictable summer weather)!

If you might like to attend an upcoming small gathering or would like to host one, please contact Mustafa Bahar, NNV's new Programming Coordinator (202-935-6060 or mbahar@nnvdc.org)



PHOTOS BY ANN VAN DUSEN

L. to R. Doris Feinsilber, Maureen Miller, Christine Lynn and Stephanie Chong



L. to R. Mike Van Dusen, Wilbur Wright and Mary Beth Jacobs

"I have been very happy with my recent rides. The volunteers have been prompt, pleasant and a joy to ride with."

-NNV Member



NNV

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.

Please check our website for the most up-to-date listing of future [Virtual Speaker Series](#) programs.

Many past speakers have given permission to record their programs. These are available on [Vimeo](#).

Calendar

NNV's calendar of events is regularly updated.

Please check our [website events page](#) for current listings.

Member and Volunteer Surveys

We are very interested in learning more about how you're doing and how the Village can help you. We will run two surveys this summer that we invite you to participate in: A volunteer survey running now through July 15th and a member survey which will run July 18th through July 31st. These surveys are to share your thoughts and experiences with us. The member survey is being sent to members of Villages across DC as part of an effort to gain a deeper understanding of how we can best meet the needs of our members.

Your survey responses last year have informed the services and programs you enjoy today. Most notably the introduction of our new Village Programming Coordinator, Mustafa Bahar, and improved communication with our members who are not online. Your participation in the 2022 survey will provide valuable feedback that will help our Village to continue to offer member-driven programs and services. Your thoughts and opinions are important to us and we look forward to your response.

Volunteers should have received a link to take the volunteer survey already. If you are an active volunteer and have not received this link, please contact the office. Members will receive an email link to the survey on July 18th. You are welcome to complete the survey online, but if you prefer to be interviewed, rather than complete an online survey, please contact the office at info@nnvdc.org or 202-935-6060 and we will arrange for a volunteer to collect your responses through an interview. Members who do not use email will automatically be assigned a volunteer to complete the survey interview over the phone.