



# Village Neighbors

*Working Together to Create Community!*

A rural community of neighbors  
helping aging adults lead  
independent and  
engaged lives at home.

**Leverett + New Salem +  
Shutesbury + Wendell**

**1-413-345-6894**

[pr@villageneighbors.org](mailto:pr@villageneighbors.org)

[www.villageneighbors.org](http://www.villageneighbors.org)

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July / August 2023, Issue 26

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## Village Neighbors Annual Members Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation Day

Over 50 members, volunteers, local politicians and the VN board celebrated this year's accomplishments and growth at this event.

**Jen Boron**, a chef at the **Shutesbury Athletic Club** provided a yummy lunch, and **Brian**

**Bender**, a local musician and music teacher made perfect music after the annual Village Neighbors board meeting.

Many attendees gave answers to vital questions to help guide our organization's mission. This ultimately helps everyone in our **VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD**. Whether you are a volunteer who helps run the organization, or provides vital members services, or a member who receives these services, you are a part of this very special neighborhood. An exciting number cited from that day was the recent take-in of our 200th member. Another is that over 60 people in VN are both members and volunteers.

***As of this week, Village Neighbors has 204 members and 111 volunteers.***

All it takes to start this process is a phone call. Then you are ready to receive services when you need them or to provide services when others do! If you are already a Village Neighbor, notice whether there is anyone you know who would benefit from joining.



### ***About the VN Board Meeting:***

Newest member **Barbara Bodzin** was officially elected, and **Jeannette Stockton, Elizabeth Fernández O'Brien, Judy (JR) Raphael,** and **Donald Stone** were all re-elected to the board. **Mary-Ann Palmieri** and **Dina Polizzi** are also members of our VN board.

Our Five VN committees which include Services, Members/Volunteers, IT, PR and Finance gave reports for the year.

The Small Home Repairs team also gave a report.

An amazing statistic from treasurer Donald Stone was his calculation on our volunteer power worth. We take in generous donations, and grants also keep our financial outlook bright, but factoring the 4,452 volunteer hours at \$20 an hour equals the monetary equivalent of \$89,040 donated.

### ***A Big Spring Fling Thank You!***

To the volunteers who got raffle donations, produced, setup, served, registered, photographed, washed dishes, cleaned up, and now are setting up a cribbage group? **Thank you!**

To the 29 members who volunteered to do a task for VN each month? **Thank you!**

Brian Bender's music & Jen Boron's food? **Thank you too!**

Any feedback is welcome at **[pr@villageneighbors.org](mailto:pr@villageneighbors.org)**

5 Village Neighbors members and volunteers who answered questions were winners of our raffle baskets and an emergency GO bag.

*It takes a village. That's Village Neighbors!*





Photos by VN Member/Volunteer Becca Wheeler

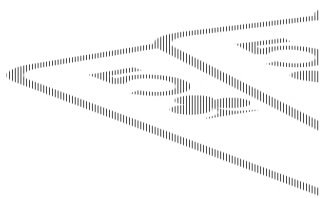
## Upcoming Events

### Veteran's Tuesdays at the Leverett Village Co-op

*Come by for free coffee and  
camaraderie between 11:00 and 1:00.*

Delicious bakery items available daily: fresh pastries, muffins, cookies, breads. Our cooler cases are stocked with freshly made food to take home or eat in. Seating indoors or outdoor patio and picnic tables.

**180 Rattlesnake Gutter Rd, Leverett**



*Village Neighbors sponsored*

**CRIBBAGE**

will be held on

**July 10th and 24th • 2:30 at the  
Wendell Country Store / Deja Brew  
Outdoor Pavilion**

Contact Elizabeth for more information

**pr@villageneighbors.org** or call **1-413-345-6894** and leave a message for **Public Relations**, or or just *show up and play a hand...*



# Writing To Remember Workshop

## Begins Again in September

*Sign up for the next session now!*

### **New Session**

**Tuesdays 10am - Noon**

**September 5th - October 10th, 2023**

**Ruth Flohr's** inspiring memoir writing program **Writing to Remember** will be offered again for **FREE** with the generous sponsorship by **Mass Cultural Grants** from *Leverett, Shutesbury, Wendell and New Salem*.

In this memoir writing class you will discover the inspiration and tools to effectively begin writing your life-story. This class is open to fledgling writers as well as seasoned writers.

This method includes instruction, reading memoir samples, discussion, and impromptu writing exercises with feedback. There will also be an online forum with writing resources and a platform to post your stories.

For more information or to sign up for the next round of workshops, please contact **Ruth Flohr** at **978-544-6534** to register.



## Village Neighbors News

### Senator Jo Comerford's Response to Village Neighbors' support: *"So grateful to you!"*

#### ***VN Support Pledge:***

We support the legislation for the state to help elderly and disabled residents finance home care.

We support the legislation to preserve the financial stability of families who experience the death of a family member who had received Medicaid/MassHealth.

#### ***Tell Us What You Need Now And In The Future!***

Senator Jo Comerford is meeting with us and her district's other Villages

to create better transportation. You responded wholeheartedly (37 of 40 at Spring Fling) to the need for it in the coming 5-10 years. We're working with each town's Council on Aging to get data, with John Szczny of the Leverett COA, and next year, plan to connect with funding from Dept. of Transportation's Rachel Fichtenbaum

We can use your help with attending, giving ideas and moving these initiatives forward.

### ***We are growing in numbers!***

MA Villages join together monthly to share ideas and are now joining together to create more legislative power. We look forward to having more support from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Village Neighbors with 204 members and 111 volunteers is the village has the highest percentage of resident participation in the state!

### ***Would you like to hear from Department of Elder Affairs about any of these topics?***

- Economic assistance (cash benefits)
- Reporting Elder Abuse & Neglect
- Prescription Drug Assistance
- SNAP benefits (formerly food stamps)
- In-Home Services

If you're interested in helping with this initiative, please contact

**pr@villageneighbors.org** or call 1-413-345-6894 and leave a message for Public Relations.

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## **Village Neighbors is Dementia Friendly!**

**A Dementia Friends Info Session** was presented by Nancy Spittle on June 13 at the Wendell Senior Center.

The workshop offered basic awareness of normal aging vs dementia, tips on communication with folks having language and memory difficulties and five key messages that lead to improved quality of life for those affected. As this is an important concern for VN, stay tuned for another session in the near future.

Nancy Spittle also presented about this topic at the Annual meeting with suggestions of how we can get our legislators to help with these

challenges.

We can encourage our towns to adopt this awareness, and we can all learn how to reach out to other community resources.

**LifePath** offers a **Dementia Caregiver Support Group** (Virtual Group with Phone Option)

A FREE support group for those caring for someone with a memory disorder, including but not limited to Alzheimer's Disease. Led by Linda Puzan, LICSW, LifePath.

If you need support, consider starting with a support group and connect with others who are also dealing with life's issues.

<https://lifepathma.org/events-workshops/support-groups/>

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## Membership Renewal Reminder

Thank you for sending in your membership renewal information letter. This information is very important to us. If you haven't already done so, please send it in now. If you need another copy, please let us know by emailing us at [generalinfo@villageneighbors.org](mailto:generalinfo@villageneighbors.org), and we will email you a new form.

Thank you,  
Village Neighbors Membership Committee

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## VN Rides Available



Village Neighbors' fully vaccinated drivers are available for rides, with both driver and member observing COVID masking, distancing and ventilation protocols.

If you have put off needed dental, medical or therapy visits; or need a ride for shopping, a personal visit or to an event, call VN to make a request at **413-345-6894 ext.1** or email [servicerequests@villageneighbors.org](mailto:servicerequests@villageneighbors.org).

Contact **VN Services** 4 or 5 days advance if you need a ride or company for a night out.

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**Fun Events Are**

## *Happening Again... Do You Need A Ride?*

Village Neighbors fully vaccinated drivers are available for rides, with both driver and member observing COVID protocols.

Give us a call **1-413-345-6894 ext.1** or email [servicerequests@villageneighbors.org](mailto:servicerequests@villageneighbors.org)



## VN Volunteer Opportunities

### HELP WANTED:

### Events and Public Relations Committee Needs Volunteers

The **VN Events and PR committee** is responsible for all event planning prep and promotions, press releases, public outreach, newsletter and monthly news emails, and social media. We need creative and sociable volunteers to help. Computer savvy is a plus, but not necessary.

If you're interested please contact [pr@villageneighbors.org](mailto:pr@villageneighbors.org) or call **1-413-345-6894**

### Looking For Vaccinated Drivers

We are eager to hear from **volunteers** who want to resume driving our members. Please contact us at **413-345-6894** or [volunteers@villageneighbors.org](mailto:volunteers@villageneighbors.org) for more information.

### Are You interested in Providing a Seminar or Activity to VN Members?

Please contact [membership@villageneighbors.org](mailto:membership@villageneighbors.org). We can provide technical support to get your seminar up and running.

***Find ways you can help your neighbors and have some fun. Many of our Volunteers are also Members. Be part of the Village Neighbors Team!***

## **VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**

**Wednesday  
July 27th  
6:30 PM**

**Hybrid** meeting both on **Zoom**  
and in person at the  
**Wendell Senior Center**  
2 Locke Village Road, Wendell

At the orientation you will learn about the organization and find out about the wide range of volunteer activities that you can choose from.

Email  
[volunteers@villageneighbors.org](mailto:volunteers@villageneighbors.org) or leave a phone message with a contact number at **413-345-6894 ext.3** to receive a Zoom link and additional information.



Village Neighbors is a volunteer run non-profit dedicated to helping our aging neighbors to lead independent and engaged lives at home.

**Please consider  
DONATING to Village  
Neighbors and Support  
Free Membership.**

You can donate online at  
[www.villageneighbors.org](http://www.villageneighbors.org)

or mail a check to  
**P.O.Box 501  
Shutesbury, MA 01072**

## **Your Village Neighbors Need YOU!**

Village Neighbors has grown quickly while meeting the new challenges posed through CoVid in our elderly community. We need Volunteers to assist members at home, and also behind the scenes in the committees that keep our organization working! Contribute as much or as little time as you want. Match your interests and skills to what's needed in the community.



***Join the fun and make a difference...***

## **Membership / Volunteer Committee**

**[membership@villageneighbors.org](mailto:membership@villageneighbors.org)**

- Recruit and welcome new members and volunteers
- Do new member intake visits
- Conduct volunteer orientations and trainings
- Create and coordinate social activities and programs
- Develop Dementia Friendly community outreach and training

***Volunteer Orientations*** are run by the ***Membership/Volunteer Committee***. Join us at the **VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION, Wednesday, May 15th, 6:30 pm on Zoom**, if you would like to experience this committee in action and find out more about what we do.

## **Service Committee / Call Managers**

**[servicerequests@villageneighbors.org](mailto:servicerequests@villageneighbors.org)**

- Answer requests from Members and connect them with Volunteers waiting to assist
- Assess needs and services
- Train and oversee Call Managers
- Handle vendor services
- Work with the Membership/Volunteer Committee to triage concerns for members and volunteers

***Call Managers work from home to manage member requests.***

## **Events / PR Committee**

**[pr@villageneighbors.org](mailto:pr@villageneighbors.org)**

- Events
- Promotions
- Tabling at community events
- Newsletter
- Outreach and Press
- Social media
- Event Calendar

***Contact the Events/PR Committee to learn about opportunities to be involved in planning our next exciting event and connecting with our community.***

## Fund Raising Committee

[fundraising@villageneighbors.org](mailto:fundraising@villageneighbors.org)

- Provide the money for Village Neighbors to function and grow
- Research funding
- Develop fund raising events
- Develop funding circles (sources) - donations, members, volunteers, and contributors
- Research and apply for grants
- Recruit local sponsors -banks, businesses

***With Free membership, Village Neighbors counts on voluntary contributions, funding and grants to meet our income needs. Volunteers are needed to make this happen!***

## IT Committee

[volunteers@villageneighbors.org](mailto:volunteers@villageneighbors.org)

- Provide assistance to members with all things electronic
- Website maintenance
- Email & Zoom communications

***In the 21st century, internet has become integral to daily life. IT assists members and committees to navigate the challenges.***

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## Contribute to the Village Neighbors Newsletter

If you are interested in contributing articles or information to the Village Neighbors newsletter, please contact the editor Dina Polizzi - [dinawriter22@gmail.com](mailto:dinawriter22@gmail.com). We are looking for information of interest to persons over 60 in our four towns: **Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell**. As of this mailing, **Village Neighbors News** has a mailing list of 350 and is growing with every issue.

## Do You Wish to Discontinue Home Delivery of the VN News?

The VN bimonthly newsletter is emailed to all members and volunteers who have listed their email contact with us; it is direct mailed only to our members. If you no longer wish to receive the hard copy newsletter to

your home, please let us know by emailing the VN Newsletter editor, **Dina Polizzi**, at [dinawriter22@gmail.com](mailto:dinawriter22@gmail.com). Please include the word "Newsletter" in your subject header.

*Special Thanks to:*



Massachusetts  
Councils On Aging

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Newsletter editing and design - **Dina Polizzi**

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