

LAMOILLE NEIGHBORS

A CULTURE OF CARING

Hoping everyone had a good holiday season and is appreciating the returning of the light.

We are working hard and moving forward with our April 1st launch date. **Mark your calendars for our first speaker, Madeleine Kunin, April 26th at 6PM speaking about her new book "Coming of Age: My Journey to the Eighties".**



We were recognized by the Central Vermont Council On Aging in the article below.

"Village to Village" Movement Comes to Central Vermont, by Jeanne Kern, Director of Community and Volunteer Services at CVCOA

Several new "Villages" are in various stages of exploration or development in the CVCOA service area. These Villages are not actual towns or physical spaces. They are an organized network of volunteers and trusted service providers who offer support and services to Village members, so they can remain active, socially connected, safe and comfortable in their homes and communities as they grow older. The Village concept began in Beacon Hill, Boston, in 2001. There are now more than 250 Villages around the country, with many more under development. Each Village reflects the needs of its members and community. Although every Village is different, the kinds of services they provide often include light home maintenance and handyperson services, assistance with simple household tasks, transportation around town, grocery shopping and other errands, and social opportunities. For needs that volunteers can't meet, many Villages also provide referrals to screened service providers who offer discounts to Village members.

The Mt. Mansfield Village, in development, will include Cambridge and Jeffersonville, as well as Underhill and Jericho. For more information contact 802-644-6548. Lamoille Neighbors will focus on Morristown and Hyde Park. According to founding member Lisa Dimondstein, they plan to launch in April 2019. For more information contact lisadimondstein@me.com.

Loneliness and Health , by Kathleen Geiersbach

What does loneliness have to do with health, and how can the Village movement affect both? In 2018 U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy wrote in the *Harvard Business Review*, “Loneliness and weak social connections are associated with a reduction in lifespan similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and even greater than that associated with obesity.” Social connection is more important to our health than blood pressure, diet, or exercise.

Villages like Lamoille Neighbors are ideal vehicles to promote health by providing opportunities to connect in meaningful ways. Members not only connect with neighbors by receiving but also by giving service. By volunteering to help neighbors, we gain a feeling of purpose in our lives. Joining in group activities, whether to share a meal, to participate in an outing, or to learn from a speaker forum, imparts optimism and resiliency to our lives.

Social isolation is deadly in older people. We need to combat it every way we can. The Village Movement aims to disrupt the culture of aging and promote an active and healthy life.

One senior, a founding member, was recovering from surgery and needed help. His caretaker, his wife, needed to go out of town for the day. A founding member, who is also a volunteer, learned about this and volunteered to walk his dogs that day-twice. Lamoille Neighbors will provide this type of service once we launch.



Olea's Story

It was a few weeks before I was going to have a corneal transplant. Because I had had one before and because I live alone, I knew I was in for a few tough weeks during which it was going to be difficult to manage without help. My surgery was a week before Thanksgiving, not the easiest time to ask for help. Our budding Lamoille Neighbors group decided (lucky for me!) to use me as a guinea pig for how we could aid members who are temporarily incapacitated in some way.

Sue Moore, who decided to take on the task of figuring out a good way to provide help as needed, looked at various alternatives but landed on Meal Train as a coordinating vehicle. I had friends and family who could stay with me the first ten days so we decided that what was most needed were meals through that whole period and up to about three weeks.



Those who wanted to help were invited to sign up, and twenty eight people ended up doing so. Everyone had access to see which days I needed meals. I was so happy to have people bring in both lunch and dinner for that whole period of time. I felt privileged. Sometimes people dropped them off, other times people stayed, and we ate together. That was a great way to stay in touch. There was also a chance to sign up for, for example, getting my mail at the post office or giving me a ride somewhere. This was an ingenious way of coordinating help from my usual network of friends and family as well as the new network of Lamoille Neighbors.

Not only were the meals delicious, but the knowledge that so many people had gone out of their way to make food or do other needed tasks made me feel very cared for. That sense of connection with new and old friends and family was important to my healing. Sometimes I would just look at the whole roster of filled in days and bask in the feeling of being part of a wider community of caring. I believe that Lamoille Neighbors can play an important role in enhancing and broadening the natural groups of friends and families we already have.

Olea Smith-Kaland

Committee Reports/Updates

Technology Committee: Kathleen Geiersbach, Marilyn May and Judy Clark

The Tech Committee was formed to provide a core of members who are trained in the Helpful Village software application. They will be resources for troubleshooting and maintaining the data and website as well as training others to use the software. We have decided to use a software program called Helpful Villages, which was designed specifically for the village model. We are currently building out our website and are excited to begin this work.

Educational/social and cultural committee: Judy Clark, John Clark, Olea Smith-Kaland, Sue Moore, Carol Young and Lisa Dimondstein

We are busy planning so that when we launch Lamoille Neighbors in April, we will have a well rounded list of events and activities on our calendar. We are scheduling outdoor physical activities, as well as speakers, movies and educational events. Currently we are having Feast Friday every other month, which is a potluck and social gathering for founding members (which we hope you will become!). We plan to continue Feast Fridays for all members after we launch. It's a wonderful way to get to know each other while eating great food. Eventually the interests of the membership will drive the educational, social and cultural events and we're looking forward to that.

Grants Committee: Joan Greene, Jack Wool, Maxine Adams, with occasional help from Kathy Geiersbach.

We are awaiting word from Ben&Jerry's Small Grant Community Action Program about our request for \$2000 to support LN social, cultural and education events. We will apply for grants from Ben&Jerry's Social Change Foundation Program next.

We are working on the application to Concept 2 Community Giving Grants. Maxine is awaiting invitations to submit proposals to grants from United Way, The Calvert Fund and The Green Mountain Fund. Jack will look into applying for funds from Seventh Generation.

Jack is also exploring Americorps/Vista programs and student community service and work study projects through nearby colleges and high schools.

Finance Committee: Kathleen Geiersbach, Sue Moore

The Finance Committee is responsible for preparing budgets and reports to the board as well as other oversight and compliance duties. The committee manages the treasury and cash flow. The activities of the treasury have been negligible for the past few months, with a balance of \$2644.12; however, with the new year several changes are anticipated. We expect income from new membership dues and grants, and with the installation of our software there will be vendor charges to be paid as well as number of other expenses starting in April.

Outreach Committee: Maxine Adams, Ellen Gibbs,
Dian Williams

The purpose of the Outreach Committee is to present Lamoille Neighbors to various leaders in Morrisville and Hyde Park - heads of community services, legislators, church leaders. We want them to understand the value of the virtual village as well as direct potential members to us.

In December the Committee met with Rev Marisa Laviola and Rabbi David Fainsilber and received valuable feedback on our project as well as their support and offers of help.

The Board of Directors presented Lamoille Neighbors to the Selectboard of Hyde Park and they immediately saw the value of our project.

This week we are presenting to the Blueprint Community Health Team.

Board Members

Lisa Dimondstein, president
Joan Greene, vice-president
Kathy Geiersbach, treasurer
Olea Smith-Kaland, secretary
Judy Clark
Maxine Adams
Sue Moore
Ellen Gibbs

We would like to add Morristown folks to the board. Contact Kathy Geiersbach if you would like to join this dynamic group. Help make this vibrant creative solution a reality.
materbach@gmail.com

COMMUNITY CORNER: Calendar of Events that might be of interest

Lanpher Memorial Library is sponsoring 3 events that are free and open to the public. They are all at 12:00 at the Sterling View Community Center

Monday, March 18th: ABLE Library staff will visit to talk about and demonstrate their primary services: (Audio, Braille, Large Print, E-Books) They will bring equipment to demonstrate, including audio books, with cartridges.

Monday, April 8th: Advance Directives

Monday May 13th Better Business Bureau Speaker on Scams, Fraud and Identity Theft.

Lamoille Valley Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) Winter Lecture Series 2019 at the Commodore Inn, Stowe, 1:30. Admission: \$5 per session or \$30 for Winter 9-session Series. Coffee & refreshments follow presentation. Questions: Ruth Hamilton, 802-825-8325.

January 9th C.S. Lewis: The Professor of Narnia, Will Vaus

January 16th Red Scare In the Green Mountains: Vermont in the McCarthy Era 1948-1960

January 23rd, Vermont's Traveling Treasures, Vermont Historical Society E.D, Steve Perkins

January 30th, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." Origin, History and Survival of The Legend in Literature, Aft and Mass Media, Professor Wolfgang Mieder

Lamoille County Civic Center:

January 30th 1:00 PM Eating Well on a Budget, presented by Council on Aging

February 27th, 1:00 PM Tales from the Wild, presented by Eric Nuse, retired Fish and Wild Life Warden

March 13th, 1:00 PM Resources for Seniors, presented by various social service and health agencies

Help move us forward

Seeking someone to do the monthly newsletter until we hire an executive director

Seeking someone to work on signing up volunteers, helping them get vetted and working on a volunteer manual...we have sample manuals.

Seeking more founding members to help with initial set up costs. The dues will cover your first year membership starting on the go live date. The benefits have already started as we help each other after surgeries, with dinners and dog walking and as we begin getting to know each other through social gatherings. If interested in becoming founding member email Kathy at materbach@gmail.com

If you have a calendar event that you would like us to list in our monthly newsletter, that would be of interest to "seniors" let me know at lisadiamondstein@me.com. Starting in April we will be able to offer transportation to members for these events.

