



News

from the Villages of Kensington

Enhancing the quality of life in Kensington, one neighbor at a time!

Volume 1, Number 2 July 2017

Volunteer Highlight: Margaret, the voice on the VoK phone!



Having noticed that over the past few years many old friends and neighbors had departed by various means to various places, it seemed to me that I might be wise to reach out a bit and cultivate some new acquaintances and perhaps over time develop new friendships. When my friend, Donna Savage, told me about Villages, it sounded like something

worth exploring. I liked what I heard at the introductory meeting and signed on.

Having the opportunity to volunteer on an ongoing basis appealed to me, and it wasn't hard to persuade me to take on the role of phone answerer/schedule poster as well. I enjoy the contact with members who call in with requests for rides or other services, and feel that I know them a bit, even if we have never met.

Though somewhat solitary by nature, I do enjoy the occasional group luncheons and other activities that the Villages offers. I also belong to a small writers group, and participate in another organization as well as traveling to/with family and friends, especially my daughter and son-in-law and my two young granddaughters.

*** When you call VoK at 301-509-0191, Margaret answers our phone or retrieves your message and returns your call. She schedules your requests for services and answers initial inquiries about Villages of Kensington. Margaret is an indispensable asset to our Village! ***

VoK's Mission

"The mission of the Villages of Kensington is to build a supportive, diverse, and inter-generational network of neighbors helping neighbors to remain in their homes and to be engaged in their community."

June 9 VoK C&O Canal Boat Ride by Renee Sloan



VoK Canal Trip-ers get best seats on the boat!

My name is Renee Sloan. I am a new member of VoK. Within days of joining, I was greeted with an email giving me the opportunity to join other VoK'ers to go to the Great Falls (Maryland) C&O Canal on an old-fashioned boat ride.

I was initially impressed that all the members of VoK were identifiable, thanks to name tags. Then we were invited to all sit together at the best location on the boat – the front of the upper level. The tour itself took us back in time before railroads. The guides were dressed in period clothing and were courteous and knowledgeable about the workings and history of the canal. We experienced the boat rising and lowering with the opening and closing of the canal's locks. Two mules pulled the boat along the canal, as they did in the 1870s. It was a memorable day!

(continued)

C&O Canal Trip, continued

I brought along a friend who is a long-time resident of Kensington; here are his words: I am Art Romano and I have lived in Kensington for the past 50 years. On June 9th I was a guest on the VoK field trip to the C&O



Canal at Great Falls. The highlight was an outstanding boat trip on the Canal, with the boat pulled by two mules, navigating through two water

locks. This excursion was planned very professionally!



VoK Canal Trip-ers post-cruise, boat in background

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors in Kensington!

“Happy Birthday, VoK!” Report from the VoK Board of Directors



On **July 1, 2016**, Villages of Kensington swung into full operation, offering services and events to our Full and Associate Members. Volunteers had been vetted and trained and were ready to provide services.

It’s been 12 months now, and our vetted and trained Volunteers continue to provide services to our Members. We’ve come a long way since October 2014 when the idea of a Village for the Greater Kensington area was first conceived.

If VoK’s mission ‘speaks’ to you, we would welcome another member or two on our Board of Directors; we’ve been working hard for 2+ years, and we’d love to add to our ranks. Especially if you have marketing or fundraising expertise, we could use your assistance. The Board meets once a month on the third Monday to discuss and decide general and specific policies, share resources and ideas, and report on ongoing projects – and partake of a few treats. We meet at Kensington Park Senior Living on Littledale Road in the Rock Creek Hills neighborhood. If you’re interested and for more info, contact Board president Donna Savage at president@VillagesofKensingtonMD.org.

We are proud of our accomplishments to date, and are thankful to our Members and Volunteers. We always welcome your ideas, whether or not you’re officially part of VoK. Please feel free to contact any of the Board members with your thoughts. (Go to our website at www.VillagesofKensington.org and click on CONTACT.) We thank you for your interest in our community!

VoK Events!

ONGOING EVENTS

VoK Lunch-Around. On the first Friday of every month at noon, we gather at local restaurants or for a potluck at a Member's or Volunteer's home. Fun, good company, and we get to check out various local culinary delights and our own creations. Check the VoK website calendar. We send out at least two email reminders per month. Contact Membership Coordinator Donna Savage at members@villagesofkensingtonmd.org.

Monthly book club. The Rock Creek Hills Book Club is a well-established group of book-loving residents in the Kensington area that meets once a month in the evening to discuss current and past releases of all genres – fiction, nonfiction detective stories, anthologies, world award winners, etc. Our members are an eclectic group, and we welcome to our meetings anyone who has an interest in lively discussion, meeting new and interesting people, and general camaraderie. We gather at different homes and refreshments are provided. Interested? For info, send an email to villagesofkensington@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Intro to Meditation. In August, Volunteer Kathleen will offer an introductory class on Meditation for VoK Members. Relaxation and calm is so important in our busy lives! For info, contact Donna at members@villagesofkensingtonmd.org.



Got an idea for a one-time event or ongoing program? We're all ears! Contact us at villagesofkensington@gmail.com or by phone at 301-509-0191.

How Can VoK Assist Y-O-U?

VoK Full Members are eligible to receive assistance from our vetted & trained Volunteers. If you can think of it, we can probably help! For example:

- Rides to shopping, social outings, worship, or medical appointments
- Small household or yard tasks, repairs, or other assistance
- Carrying large items to the curb for pickup
- Meal assistance while recovering from hospital stay or illness
- Picking up groceries or prescriptions
- Friendly visits and check-in calls
- Computer and electronics help
- Occasional or one-time, non-emergency assistance – just ask!



To join VoK and benefit from our Volunteers' expertise and friendliness, call us at **301-509-0191** or go online to www.villagesofkensington.org and click JOIN.

New Membership Fee Policy for Members 90+ years old!

As of July 1, every Kensington resident who is at least 90 years old or who will turn 90 during their member year will receive an individual **FREE FULL MEMBERSHIP** for the year! For new *and* renewing Members!

How You Can Help VoK!

-- Tell your Kensington relatives, friends, & neighbors about VoK – who we are and how to sign up as a Member or Volunteer. (Best way: go to our website at www.VillagesofKensington.org)

-- Participate in activities and suggest activities you'd like to see!

-- Appreciate VoK Volunteers (no financial remuneration or tips, please)!

-- If you're a VoK Member, let us know how we can assist you; please do not be bashful! If not yet a Member, tell us how we *could* assist you.

-- Donate money or items for events.

-- In the spirit of VoK, help your neighbors in any way you can!

Thank You to Our Partner Organizations!

We thank our partner organizations with whom we've coordinated during our first year of operation:

↓ VillageRides

sponsored by Jewish Council for the Aging, www.accessjca.org.

↓ Kensington Park Senior Living

www.kensingtonparkseniorliving.com

↓ Suburban Hospital

www.hopkinsmedicine.org/suburban_hospital (click on Community Health)

↓ Jewish Social Service Agency, www.issa.org

And thanks to the Town of Kensington and Kensington-area civic associations and businesses for their ongoing support of our mission!

VoK Lunch-Around – for Members & Volunteers!



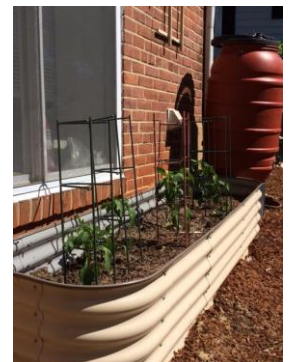
On the first Friday of each month, VoK Members and Volunteers gather at noon for lunch at a local restaurant or for a potluck at a Member's or Volunteer's home. Attendees are welcome to bring a Kensington-area friend as well. We started this "Lunch-Around" in August 2016 and have lunched together every month since then! Above is a photo from the May 2017 Lunch-Around.

If you're a Member or Volunteer and you'd like to join us for lunch, watch your email. For more info, contact Donna Savage, VoK membership coordinator, at members@villagesofkensingtonmd.org.

Ask for Services – Use Your VoK Full Membership Fully & Wisely!

Are you a Full Member of Villages of Kensington? Our wonderful Volunteers want to help you make Life easier! Here are a few examples of services our Volunteers have cheerfully provided for Members in recent months:

- Lots and lots of rides to various appointments, choir practices, social gatherings, etc.
- Cutting up a large branch, bagging it, and bringing it to the curb
- Telephone check-in calls
- Help with installing a raised garden bed – "We were delighted to have help from a VoK Volunteer putting it together. Pepper plants are thriving!"
- Moving an old TV



If you're thinking about joining as a Full Member or upgrading to Full Membership, keep these and other services in mind!

Helping Kensington neighbors is what VoK is all about!

Two New VoK Policies You Should Know About!



-- **Are you at least 90 years old** or do you know someone in that amazing age category?

If yes, Full Membership in Villages of Kensington is **FREE!** That means rides where you want to go, chores

around the house, shopping for or with you, friendly visits, changing that hard-to-reach lightbulb – all services are FREE! If you're 90+ and the person you live with isn't quite there yet, you can add that person as a Full Member for a small fee!

-- VoK also has implemented **reduced Full Member rates** for individuals and couples in Greater Kensington if your adjusted gross income on your most recent tax return is below \$50,000.

If either of the above categories describes you and you'd like to join Villages of Kensington, please contact our membership coordinator at members@VillagesofKensingtonMD.org or leave a message at **301-509-0191**. Get started today using our services and attending our events!

To volunteer with VoK and offer services to your Kensington neighbors, call us at **301-509-0191** or go online to www.VillagesofKensington.org and click on **VOLUNTEER**.

VoK Receives Grant from County Executive's Office!

VoK was notified in June that the County Executive's Office will fund a \$10,000 grant request to help VoK expand its outreach efforts to attract new members and form partnerships with local community organizations. Funds were limited due to great demand from many different and worthy groups. As a result, VoK received only one-third of the amount we requested. In the notification letter, Ike Leggett, Montgomery County Executive, acknowledged VoK's success in its first 18 months of operations, with its successful volunteer recruitment and training and active membership. The letter also recognized VoK's desire to support members who cannot afford the full cost of membership.



Funds will be used to help VoK develop outreach and marketing materials to promote the value of Village membership to residents in the 20895 ZIP code. The grant will also support VoK's efforts to promote the Village to human service and faith-based organizations whose constituents could benefit from the many types of services that VoK Volunteers provide.

VoK is especially interested in reaching seniors who might not be able to afford the Full Member fee and are in need of supportive services that will enable them to remain in their own homes. While we didn't receive the full amount requested, the funds will surely help VoK increase its visibility in the Kensington community, and will help us get services to seniors who need them!

2017 Volunteer and Member Surveys by Sharon Parver



Friendly, punctual, good listeners, safe drivers. These are words used by VoK Members to describe the volunteer drivers who help get them to their health care appointments, social events, and other

destinations. How do we know this? We conducted a user survey in March 2017 to find out what our Members think about our transportation services and the neighbors who drive them. We heard from Members who are regular riders and a few others who tell us that they appreciate knowing that the service is available even though they haven't used it yet.

Most Members noted that they would recommend Village membership to friends because of the wonderful transportation services provided by many of our Village Volunteers. Transportation is our most popular service. We would love to do more....we have many trained volunteers who are ready to help transport members wherever they need to go.

We also asked our volunteer drivers about their experiences. Our volunteers told us that they love being able to help Members who need transportation services. Volunteers report they are satisfied with our VillageRides online system and think that they have all the information they need to make each trip a successful experience. What do they like most about being a VoK volunteer driver? Many respondents told us that they love the chance to meet new people and make new friends. The only complaint? Many drivers told us that they would like to have *more* ride requests to fill – they'd love more opportunities to help VoK Members! They really enjoy feeling connected to the Members and being able to be of service in their community.

We are so fortunate to have such wonderful Members who express their appreciation to their volunteer drivers! And, we are so glad to have a talented team of Volunteers who are so willing to serve Village Members!

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Contact VoK:

...on the Web: www.VillagesofKensington.org

...by email: villagesofkensington@gmail.com

...by phone: **301-509-0191**

...by U.S. mail: P.O. Box 118, Kensington, MD 20895-0118...or,

...on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/KensingtonVillages



www.VillagesofKensington.org