

# Silver Spring Village



## Village Vibe

Fall 2020  
Volume 7, Number 4

### Leadership View: Thriving, Thanks

In spite of all of us being home a lot and taking careful precautions against that (darn) virus, the Village continues to be a happening place! We are still managing to have fun, learn a lot, connect with each other, and help where we can. In March, few had heard of Zoom or dreamed that a virtual life could be such a full life. We converted our calendar to entirely virtual online or call-in events. We still hold many of our regular game groups. Some meet just to chat (canasta and the Poker Dawgs), others play their games online (bridge, Scrabble, Rummikub) and talk too. We also have lively Zoom discussions on poetry, books, movies, current events, and the elections. We are writing our memoirs and the men's group continues monthly "brunches" (bring your own food in your own home). We started a regular yoga group and heard about medical marijuana, naturopathic medicine, and women's health. We have learned how COVID pods work and what Metro Access is and listened to a variety of presentations (from comedians to an historian of the Cuban missile crisis) through our monthly SPARKLE programs with the Silver Spring Town Center. We are exploring what key thinkers have to say about racial justice and injustice (page 4) and had events recognizing Easter in April and the Jewish High Holidays in September. We also continue to do community service: Members donate food every week to Shepherd's Table and make masks, blankets, hats, and scarves

for a range of causes. And there are almost daily messages on our member listserv (the "Chat") with ideas for things to do and programs to see.

I think we are following the adage of an old boss of mine: "To rest is to rust!"

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Acting up with our new play-reading group (see page 4)—  
photo by Claire Maklan

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GREATER WASHINGTON

Silver Spring Village is a nonprofit membership organization started in 2013 that helps our members to stay engaged in their community and continue to live at home with support from neighbors and friends.

## Village Stats

### Totals as of end of September

- Members: 221 (84 full, 137 associate)
- Volunteers: 150

### Volunteer hours

- June: 726
- July: 742
- August: 561

### Volunteer help March-May

- 140 one-way rides
- 945 friendly calls and visits
- 14 sessions of tech buddies and tech help
- 76 other tasks, including errands, yardwork, changing outdoor window screens, and moving recycling bins
- Telephone crew hours: 399

### Events held

- June: 47
- July: 48
- August: 48
- September: 56

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We are also talking to each other in groups and one on one. Our member and volunteer communities have regular call-in or Zoom-in sessions. A fleet of volunteers calls members to check and see how they are doing or just to say hi. Volunteers also run errands, get groceries, go to the pharmacy, and do outdoor tasks like taking a member's recycling bin to the curb. Some call members who need tech help with their computer, tablet, or phone. Others give rides for essential medical appointments. And as the weather gets colder, we are reminding members of our "storm buddies" program—we pair volunteers and members to prepare for weather emergencies and provide support when one occurs (see page 5 for more information).

We know it has been quite a tumultuous year and that we are going into a challenging time when, on top of often troubling national and local news, the days are getting shorter and colder and the holidays will be greatly changed to keep us safe. But we are grateful for our thriving, vibrant community, our energetic members and volunteers, our dedicated staff, our faithful donors, our grantors, and everyone else who supports us.



Thank you—and here's to 2021!

—Connie Raab, President

## Silver Spring Village, Inc.

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Vanessa Ripps, *Director of Volunteer Services*

Ana Carrión, *Operations Manager*

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Nominating—Martine Brizius

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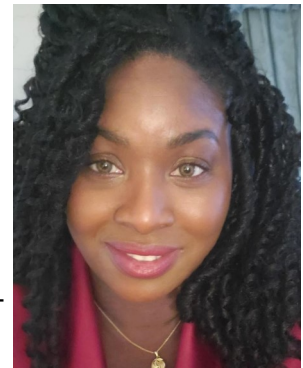
Connie Raab, Erica Summers

## Connecting with Our Newest Board Member

Gail McDonald, MD, is our newest board member as of August—welcome! Gail is a board-certified physician and surgeon of obstetrics and gynecology and is very involved in promoting healthy community living.

Gail recently held a great interactive Zoom session with some of our female members on a variety of topics related to women's health.

One of these topics was the importance of staying active and making connections with other people, especially during this challenging time of COVID-19. Gail outlined both non-technology- and technology-based ways that all of us can use to be active and make connections.



Gail McDonald, MD

### Creating connections without technology:

#### **Reach out.**

Just making the connection is important. Call a family member or friend every day. Write a note or send a card. People are delighted to discover a personal note in their mail, among the ads and bills.

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If you need extra compassion and support, consider the following resources using your landline or cell phone to connect to a friendly voice:

- All Village members can contact us and ask to receive a friendly call, on a one-time or regular basis.
- AARP Friendly Voices - (888) 281-0145. An AARP Friendly Voices volunteer will return your call just to say hello. You can also reach them via the internet at <https://aarpcommunityconnections.org/friendly-voices/>.

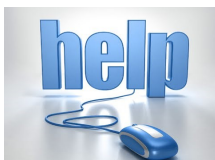


### **Stay active, mentally and physically.**

- Move more, sit less. Put on some music and dance! Take a walk with a friend or neighbor, either distanced/in person or walk and—if you have a mobile phone—talk while you walk.
- Flex your brain. What ideas do you have for this? How about reading, doing crossword and jigsaw puzzles, cooking something new, alphabetizing your spices, gathering up items for donating to others, organizing papers and photos, keeping a journal, painting or drawing, or trying out a new skill?

### **Creating connections using technology:**

- Use online tools to connect with friends and family. (Try Zoom, Skype, Webex, Google meetings, FaceTime, and more.) You can use many of these tools on your smart phone, as well as on your tablet, laptop, and desk top computer. Try calling someone or more than one person if your phone can merge calls or via free conference calling (where you all call in to a single number).
- Attend events and concerts or tour museums from home.
- If you are a member of the Village, attend a few of the 40-50 virtual events we offer each month.
- Read a book online (<https://www.usa.gov/libraries>) for public, state, and federal libraries) or via the County library system (<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/>).
- Volunteer and share your skills from home. There are lots of opportunities through the County's volunteer center at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/>, or call the Village and ask what you can do.
- Stay fit via virtual exercise programs. Check out <https://ymca360.org/> for on-demand programs as well as <https://seniorplanet.org/locations/montgomery-county/> and many others.



Tech help is available through Senior Planet at <https://seniorplanet.org/have-a-tech-question-give-us-a-call/>. Village members: do you have tech devices, but need help? Give us a call and we will connect you with a volunteer "techie."

## **Have You Gotten Your Annual Flu Shot?**

Flu season is coming, and it is time to get a flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends an annual flu shot for everyone 6 months and older, and especially for older adults. According to the CDC, the flu shot is the best way to help protect yourself and the people around you from the flu. But it is especially important this year to help reduce the strain on our health care systems, which are still responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. CDC says that even though the shot does not provide total protection from the flu, it can reduce the severity of illness if you do get the flu. And remember, last year's shot will not provide you with adequate protection against this year's flu.

CDC recommends getting your flu vaccine in the fall before the flu viruses begin spreading, because it can take two weeks for your body to develop antibodies that provide protection against the disease.

Flu shots are available in many locations, such as walk-in/urgent care clinics, drug stores, and large grocery stores, as well as your doctor's office. The cost of a shot is covered by Medicare Part B and most other types of health insurance.

To find locations where you can get a flu shot, visit <https://vaccinefinder.org>. See page 7 for our drive-through approach to flu shots.



## Act Up! Act Out!

Have you heard about one of the newer groups in Silver Spring Village? “Act Out!!” is a play-reading group run by Jeanne Adams. At the first Zoom meeting in August, members read “Lysistrata,” the classical Greek play by Aristophanes. Two weeks later, they tackled a parody of “Macbeth” called “Scots on the Rocks” by Richard Nathan. As of this issue, the group is working on scenes and monologues to present during an open meeting on October 29 from 3 to 5 p.m. to which all members are invited. Going forward, the group plans to tackle more plays, including more Greek plays and a little Shakespeare. Jeanne takes suggestions from the group about what they would like to read. Once she has chosen the play, Jeanne locates an online version to send to members along with a cast list with assigned parts. She does this a few days in advance of the meeting so folks have time to prepare. It’s been a blast so far and the lineup for the next open meeting is very promising.

Like many of our creative members, Jeanne has even more ideas, cooking up a Halloween talent show on one night and a Halloween costume parade on another, both by Zoom.



## Learning and Growing

Diversity, inclusion, fairness, and equity are values we embrace as a Village. We want to reflect these values through our actions and programs in what we do for the older adults we serve and for others in the community. The dramatic events of the past several months, particularly the George Floyd murder and other disturbing events, have led us to work on understanding racism and the need for racial justice. So, this summer we embarked on a series of discussions with our members and several programs for members and the wider community.

In terms of member discussions:

- In July, we watched and then discussed a thought-provoking talk, “The Truth About the Confederacy” by Jeffery Robinson, who is the lead on criminal justice, racial justice, and reform issues for the American Civil Liberties Union. The talk was given way back in 2017 but provided a riveting history of the impact of the Confederacy through even the 1900’s. A link to the talk is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOPGpE-sXho>.
- In August, we read and talked about white fragility, a concept of the author Robin DiAngelo.
- In September, we read about the idea of caste as described in Isabel Wilkerson’s book “Caste” and had a discussion led by Tony Sarmiento, former President of the Village.
- In November, we will read and discuss the key concepts underlying being an antiracist, the work of Ibram Kendi.

We continue to think that reinforcing awareness of racism and racial justice is important. One of our next steps is to try to find out what other local groups are doing in this arena and consider what we can learn from that.

In terms of programs, here are some we have held recently:

- In September, we heard from Dr. Alison Blakely, a Village member who taught history for 30 years at Howard University and is a professor emeritus of European and Comparative History at Boston University. He discussed a lifetime of combatting racism, his military work, and his career as a Russian history scholar.
- Also in September, we also heard about the power of children’s picture books to convey racial cultural values from two professors emerita (one Black, one white) of Loyola University Baltimore. Dr. Margaret Musgrove and Dr. Wendy Smith-D’Arezzo have been working together for several years.
- In October, we had an engaging session with former Montgomery County Executive Isiah (Ike) Leggett on his personal reflections on race in America and his lifetime of work in military service,



*In this 1990’s picture at Howard University, Dr. Blakely—left foreground—is escorting the late civil rights leader Representative John Lewis—at right, who was participating at a program at the Ralph Bunche International Affairs Center—photo Howard University.*

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## Summary of Member Survey Results

During July 2020, the Village conducted a survey to give our members an opportunity to express their feelings and beliefs about the Village and to share their suggestions about additional programs the Village might provide. With an 81% response rate, we are confident that we obtained an accurate reflection of where members stand. In addition, respondents wrote a total of 236 comments to the five open-ended questions, providing valuable written input.

Strengths identified include:

- On core benefits of membership, respondents posted high scores: makes me feel like part of a caring community (93% agree), gives me added peace of mind (85% agree), improves my quality of life (85% agree), is a good value (88% agree), helps me remain in my own home as I grow older (74% agree), and makes it easy to get assistance I may need (77% agree).
- As a result of membership, respondents said they made new friends and know more people in their community.
- Respondents indicated that they feel welcome and valued by the Village leadership and volunteers.
- More than 90% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their membership.
- 95% of respondents are likely or very likely to recommend Village membership to others and continue their own membership.
- Overall, 91% of respondents were satisfied with the Village response to the pandemic.

Areas for the Village to continue improving:

- Finding and mounting more programs that provide intellectual stimulation and more fun. These areas of programming scored lower than they likely would have scored before the pandemic because so many activities had to move to an online format.
- Developing creative ways to reduce member feelings of isolation if/where possible during the pandemic. Many members are feeling more isolated than before the pandemic arrived.
- Expanding efforts to diversify Village membership so that it better represents the over-60 population of our Silver Spring zip codes.

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teaching university law classes, and politics. He said that the mix of people in America was not a homogenized soup, but a rich gumbo where you can see and appreciate all the parts—the meat, the vegetables, and the fish—and they are all held together by roux, which he likens to our love for humanity.



We look forward to continued thoughtful discussions and programs.

—Connie Raab



## Storm Buddies

Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of the pandemic keeps our volunteers from being storm buddies, a Village program that can help out before or whenever dangerous cold, hot, stormy, wet, or windy weather is predicted or occurs unexpectedly.

Full members are paired with Village volunteers who will do their best to help ensure member safety during and after a weather event. These volunteers can make sure the member is prepared with flashlights, food, medications, etc. If the power goes out, the volunteers will contact their buddies and provide support until power is restored. Volunteers also can help with post-storm cleanup and securing assistance with removal of snow, ice, broken branches, and other debris.

Members who have not previously been assigned a storm buddy and volunteers who would like to serve as a storm buddy should contact Vanessa Ripps at [vanessa.ripps@silverspringvillage.org](mailto:vanessa.ripps@silverspringvillage.org).

## COVID Email Scams

The Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) says that cybercriminals are sending emails offering maps to identify COVID hot spots, posing as hospitals offering health information, and selling bogus cures and products. Their goal is to get unwary consumers to click on a link. However, this can allow online viruses or malware access to your computer and steal personal information. (This is sometimes called “phishing.”) The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) also recommends that consumers be careful about emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO). Rather than clicking on links, open your browser and go directly to sites like [coronavirus.gov](https://coronavirus.gov) and [usa.gov/coronavirus](https://usa.gov/coronavirus) to get the latest information.

OCP and FTC both recommend that consumers never click on links in unsolicited emails and text messages. For more tips from the FTC on how to avoid COVID scams, go to <https://www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams-consumer-advice>. The County’s web site for consumer protection is <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ocp/>. Scams can be reported to the County at [consumerprotection@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:consumerprotection@montgomerycountymd.gov) or to the OCP’s Anonymous Tip Line at 240-777-3681.

## How to Give: Let Us Count the Ways

Your financial support of Silver Spring Village during the Coronavirus pandemic is more important than ever.

### Cash Gifts (Non-Itemizers)

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act included a few provisions to encourage charitable giving. For the current tax year, every taxpayer can take a charitable deduction of up to \$300 (\$600 for a married couple). This is an “above the line” adjustment that directly reduces the amount of your taxable income. Your gift must be paid no later than December 31 and it must be paid directly to a charitable organization such as the Village (not, for example, to a donor advised fund).

### Cash Gifts (Itemizers)

The CARES Act also increased the charitable deduction limit for taxpayers who itemize. Individuals can donate up to 100% of their adjusted gross income this year. Corporations can donate up to 25% of their taxable income.

### Gifts from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)

Due to the pandemic, the rule requiring adults over age 70 ½ to take a required minimum distribution from their IRA has been suspended this year. However, you *are* still allowed to make a charitable gift of up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to qualified charities such as the Village. The advantage of giving this way is that your gift is not included in your taxable income. To take advantage of giving this way, you must instruct your IRA plan administrator to pay the gift directly to the charity on your behalf. Give him or her instructions to make the gift to Silver Spring Village, 8700 Georgia Avenue, Suite 306, Silver Spring, MD 20910. You may also need to provide him or her with our tax identification number 46-0723926.

### Gifts of Securities

This year has seen a huge increase in the value of many stocks and other securities. Giving stocks can be a good way to support your favorite organizations and avoid any capital gains tax on the increased value of your investments. If you prefer to give to the Village this way, it is important to instruct your broker to transfer the stocks “in-kind” directly to the following:

Account Holder: Silver Spring Village, Inc.

Account #: X96662021—DTC #: 0226

Fidelity Investments, Attn: TOA Receives, PO Box 770001,  
Cincinnati, OH 45277-0036

### Spread the Word

Do your siblings, children, and grandchildren know how much the Village means to you? Take moment during the giving season to share with them the things you like about the Village and ask them to invest in our mission, too!

*thank you!*



## Vote!

As you know, Election Day is Tuesday, November 3rd. This year, because of COVID, there have been significant changes to the way we can vote. Most important, far fewer voting centers will be open. So, although you can still vote in person on Election Day, the Board of Elections is encouraging Marylanders to vote by mail.

### How to Vote

**Voting by mail:** If you requested a mail-in ballot in time (by October 20), you should have received your ballot along with a prepaid postage-return envelope. You can return your completed ballot any time by mail, but it must be postmarked no later than Election Day, November 3. Or you can put it in a special drop box as soon as you complete your ballot, but no later than 8 p.m. on November 3.

**Early in-person voting:** If you want to vote in person, you can do so prior to Election Day. Early voting is available from October 26 through November 2, from 7 am to 8 pm.

**Voting in person on Election Day:** On November 3, you can go to any voting center in Montgomery County between 7 am and 8 pm. To avoid lines, the Board of Elections recommends voting between 10 am and 3 pm.

**Locations:** Although you can vote or drop off your ballot at any authorized location in Montgomery County, the sites in the Village's main service areas (zip codes 20910 and 20901) for drop boxes, early voting, and Election Day voting are at the Silver Spring Civic Center in downtown Silver Spring at 1 Veterans Plaza and Montgomery Blair High School at 51 University Boulevard East.



The drop box at the Silver Spring Civic Center—photo by Connie Raab

## For more information on voting

Montgomery County Board of Elections

- Internet address - <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/elections/>
- Mailing address - 18753 N. Frederick Ave, Suite 210, Gaithersburg, MD 20879
- Phone – (240)777-8500
- Email - [elections@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:elections@montgomerycountymd.gov)
- County voting locations: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/PollingPlaceLists/Lists.html>
- County drop box locations: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/dropbox.html>

Maryland Board of Elections

- Internet address - <https://www.elections.maryland.gov/elections/2020/>
- Mailing address - P.O. Box 6486, Annapolis, MD 21401-0486
- Phone – (410) 269-2840, toll free (800) 222-8683
- Email - [info.sbe@maryland.gov](mailto:info.sbe@maryland.gov)

## Extra Protection for Our Members

At the end of September, fifteen people received “near-contactless” flu shots at a drive-through clinic that was set up specifically for members of our Village. “Patients” could choose the regular or senior version of the vaccine and get it without having to go inside a building. While waiting to get the shot, they enjoyed the opportunity to see and chat with a few (masked) people in person and were rewarded with a few of our Executive Director’s homemade *langue de chat* cookies. And the Village is delighted to have enrolled as new members four people who decided to join our Village because of this program.

Big thanks to Ellie Darj, co-owner of the Corner Market and Pharmacy!



Drive through flu protection—photo by Claire Maklan

Village members: If you need help with any aspect of this process, including help getting your ballot to the drop-off box or getting a ride to vote, contact the Village.



## Services for Members During COVID

You are probably aware that the Village has converted most of our many social and educational activities to an online format (Zoom) due to the social distancing requirements that began in March. But did you know that some services previously only offered to full members have been temporarily extended to our associate members? These services include regular wellness check-in calls, friendly phone visits, remote technology assistance, grocery and pharmacy shopping and delivery, and, as feasible, transportation to essential medical appointments. For more information and questions, contact Vanessa Ripps (at right).

We are here to help.



### Volunteers say:

*☞ The group is so great. Honestly, to know I am connected to such a great group of people is a continuing inspiration. We are the antidote to any philosophy that does not support helping others.*

*☞ I feel very lucky to have drawn these three SSV members for these wellness calls. Very much a blessing for me and a ray of light during these dark times and evidently they enjoy our conversations enough to continue them. People are so interesting once you take the time to get to know them.*

Clip art in this issue is courtesy  
[CreativeCommons.org](https://creativecommons.org/).

## Volunteer Corner: Building Community

Twice a month, Silver Spring Village volunteers, both established and new, meet on Zoom to discuss their experiences as a Village volunteer and other issues of interest. Topics range from humor to self care, from active listening to confidentiality. Participants have reviewed the Village's "Volunteer Manual," job descriptions, and code of conduct. Guest facilitators have joined to discuss mindfulness, coping, computer issues, and transitions, such as those that the COVID-19 situation may bring. Most importantly, participants have been able to create connections to each other and to our Village. The Zoom hour is a way for the group to hear what other volunteers say about their experiences. For new volunteers it is a way to get a sense about what it's like to volunteer with the Village and to understand the role and purpose of being a volunteer. Established volunteers enjoy the opportunity to stay involved and connected while opportunities to volunteer are limited by the pandemic.

In the months ahead, the group will continue to meet via Zoom on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The focus will be on topics such as communication, isolation, aging/ageism, volunteering, and illness/death. We plan to watch videos, listen to podcasts, and read articles that will guide us through our Zoom conversations.

If you are a Village volunteer or interested in becoming one, consider joining us at one of these Zoom sessions. For more information, email Vanessa Ripps at [vanessa.ripps@silverspringvillage.org](mailto:vanessa.ripps@silverspringvillage.org).

—Vanessa Ripps

**DONATE NOW**—Help Silver Spring Village continue to provide programs and services that strengthen our community while helping neighbors age in place. Your contribution is fully tax-deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\$ 500 \_\_\$250 \_\_\$100 \_\_\$50 \_\_\$25 \_\_Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to Silver Spring Village and mail it to Silver Spring Village, 8700 Georgia Ave., Suite 306, Silver Spring MD 20910. To contribute by credit card, please visit the [donations page](#) on the Village website. If you would like information about how to leave a legacy gift, please contact Doug Gaddis at (301) 503-7401.

Silver Spring Village, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Maryland corporation. You will receive no goods or services in exchange for this contribution, so it is tax-deductible as allowed by law. A copy of the organization's financial statements may be examined upon written request to Silver Spring Village, 8700 Georgia Ave., Suite 306, Silver Spring MD 20910. Documents required by the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available for the cost of copying and postage from the Secretary of State, 16 Francis Street, Annapolis, MD 21061.