



Network News: Happy 2017 from Village to Village Network!



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Virginia Village Works to Advance Health Literacy

LOWLINC (Lake of the Woods – Living Independently in Community), a new village in Locust Grove, Virginia, has launched a health literacy program designed to empower seniors to better communicate with their doctors and other healthcare providers.

With a Healthy Living Grant from the nearby Culpeper Wellness Foundation, we produced a Health Matters Toolkit that contains information about preparing for appointments with healthcare providers as well as pages where seniors can keep track of medications, vital signs, appointments, questions for healthcare providers, and notes about treatment.

The toolkit, a tri-fold pocket portfolio, is primarily based on "Talking to Your Doctor" materials developed by the National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging, and available on their website. To tailor the toolkit for our local target audience, we organized a focus group with village members in our Lake of the Woods community. Their comments and stories about issues communicating with their healthcare providers helped us supplement the NIA materials.

This fall, a working group of LOWLINC volunteers has made 12 presentations on "Talking with Your Healthcare Provider" to our village members and volunteers as well as to seniors at church groups and community organizations at Lake of the Woods and in Orange County (where we are located). We have distributed the toolkits at these presentations and made the materials available on our website. We plan to follow up with a short questionnaire designed to evaluate the usefulness of the toolkit and whether recipients have felt more empowered and engaged at healthcare appointments. In addition to helping our members and other seniors, we believe this project will have the added benefit of boosting awareness of LOWLINC both at Lake of the Woods and in the surrounding county.

By Mary-Jane Atwater, Chair, LOWLINC Board of Directors



Welcome to 2017!

As we kick off 2017, we're looking forward to working with each of you and watching the Village Movement continue to grow. We continue to grow and strengthen your Village to Village Network and are excited to announce three new additions to the VtVN Board of Directors. Each bring much needed skills and expertise to add to our burgeoning organization. With the addition of these three members, we were sad to see three past board members go. We wish the best of luck to President Emeritus, Frank Harnden and past directors, Arthur Culbert and Susan McWhinney-Morse.

New Board Members:

- Peter Fitzgerald, National Pace Association, Washington DC
- Emily Miller, Alzheimer's Association, Chicago, IL
- Yasmin Shah, who is also our new CIO, San Diego, CA

2017 Officers:

- Mandy Summerson, President

- Paul Ramsey, Vice President
- Daniel Taylor, Treasurer
- Peggy Simpson, Secretary

Make sure to check all of our board bios on our [2017 Board of Directors page](#). You won't want to miss our upcoming webinar with the board as well! Save the date for [Thursday, February 23 at 2 PM EST](#). (Make sure you are logged in before you register!) Our board members will be available to answer all of your questions and hear your feedback on what VtVN is doing well and how we can improve in 2017. Here's to another successful year!

Celebrating 15 Years of The Village Movement!

To celebrate its 15th anniversary and the Village movement it inspired, Beacon Hill Village in Boston has invited Villages around the country to participate "virtually" in an event featuring Dr. Atul Gawande, MD, MPH, author of the seminal book *Being Mortal*. The event will be live-streamed to Villages across the United States on February 13th, 2017.

Dr. Gawande is a renowned surgeon, public health researcher and writer, who will speak about the value of community and opportunities as we grow older. While Dr. Gawande's book title alludes to death, the stories in it are actually about life.



He describes people's efforts to maintain autonomy as they age in the face of ingrained habits, cultural expectations and one-size-fits-all corporate offerings. He includes Beacon Hill Village and the Village model as an option for assisting older adults in their efforts, which has often meant providing services and extending community to people who want to remain in their own homes and enjoy the rich stew of activities, attributes, attitudes and ages that engage the community's older adult population.

Choice and community are concepts honored throughout the Village Movement. These concepts are behind the underlying principles that lead to the founding of Beacon Hill Village and subsequent 200+ Villages that impact the lives of older adults across the country. One of the great issues worldwide today is how to support and care for aging populations. By 2030, twenty percent (20%) of our nation's population will be over 65, an estimated 83 million people. The Village Concept and Dr. Gawande's profound understanding of the importance of choice and community offer valuable insights and solutions for this challenging phenomenon.

The History of the Village Movement:

In 1999, a group of friends gathered to talk about their future in central Boston. They wanted more freedom and control over their lives as they aged. They also wanted to be active, taking care of themselves and each other, rather than being taken care of.

The Village Movement was born by the formation of Beacon Hill Village, which enrolled its first members in February 2002 and was soon deluged with requests for help from other groups wanting to form their own Villages.

Today, there are one of more than 200 open Villages and more than 150 in development in 45 states and the District of Columbia that serve 40,000+ members. In 2010, the Village to Village Network was formed to ensure the success of individual Villages and the Village Movement through expert guidance, resources and support.

Winter Safety Tips!



For those of us that do not get to enjoy the sunny winters that some Villages in the USA and internationally get to experience, here is some safety info for winter preparedness.

This 9-tip checklist can help you avoid potential injury:

- Take sidewalks when possible. If there is no sidewalk and the street is clear walk against the flow of traffic and stay as close to the curb as possible. Avoid walking in the streets at all costs if possible.
- If it's an emergency, and you can't avoid the street, wear bright or reflective clothing.
- Wear clothing that does not restrict your vision. Stay warm, but DO NOT impair your vision with hoodies, ski masks, scarves, hats, etc. This type of clothing could prevent you from spotting icy conditions leading to a fall.
- Snow and ice cause havoc quickly, so use extra caution when crossing roadways, and always cross at designated crosswalks.
- Ice hides under a light dusting of snow. Just because you don't see the ice doesn't mean it's not there waiting for your unsuspecting footfalls.
- When walking on unfamiliar sidewalks or roads, keep alert. You may not have knowledge of where potential danger exists.
- Where you can't avoid the ice and snow, bend your knees slightly and take slower,

- shorter steps reducing the probability of a slip and fall injury.
- When using the steps at someone's home, apartment, or public facility, walk slow and take shorter steps when descending. The same is true of driveways and other hilly terrain; these areas can be very dangerous when they become slippery. Steps especially can be hard to clear and build up ice easily.
 - Be aware of overhead exposures! Falling icicles kill hundreds of innocent people annually. Icicles build up in size very quickly with dagger-like formations. Stay clear from the edges of buildings.

Source: Northern Virginia Fall Prevention Coalition

Check out <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather> for more tips and information! Stay safe!

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Today!

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