



# CLEVELAND PARK VILLAGE IT'S ALMOST SPRING NEWSLETTER

Serving the Cleveland Park & Woodley Park Neighborhoods

Editors:  
Cathy Crouch &  
Joanne Omang

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Directors Notes

Who Makes our  
Village?  
Member Cy Richardson

Village Lunch Bunch

Who Makes Our  
Village?  
Volunteers Suzanne  
Rooney & Caroline  
Kulisheck

2nd Annual Event at  
McLean Gardens

Spanish Conversation  
Group

The Community  
Responds

Village by the  
Numbers

Coming Events

## Director's Notes

By Susan Hester, Executive Director



In mid-November, Cleveland Park Village Board President Barbara Stevens and I ventured to St. Louis for three days of networking with Village people from around the country. The National Conference of Villages was sponsored by the dynamic organization Village to Village Network (<http://vtnetwork.org>), which helps establish and improve management of villages in any setting. More than 120 Villages are now up and running in the US, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands, with another 100 in development. DC alone has eight, more than any other city, and the metro area has more than 30—proving we are a town of organizers and activists!

### *We're On the Right Track*

After delightful interaction with dozens of people facing the same challenges and rewards we do, I'm more convinced than ever that even though we are new, we are on the right track. We are doing what other successful villages are doing – emphasizing the importance of creating community, connecting people, reducing isolation.

Most valuable to us was to learn that the Village movement's motto is evolving – from "aging in place" to "aging in community." This recognizes that many people's most important value is staying where they have friends, connections and familiarity, even when that involves downsizing or moving to a retirement community in their neighborhood.

### *Transforming America*

Every day, 10,000 Americans turn 65, a demographic change that will transform America over the next 30 years. Aging is not just one transition but many, involving changes in work life, relationships, health, the glory and choices of "leisure time," and the search for engagement and meaning.

Cleveland Park Village follows the national model: a membership-driven, grass-roots organization run by volunteers and paid staff who coordinate access to services and promote social activities. It's all about connection, and anyone can find their niche in our Village. Put us to the test – become involved!

## Who Makes Our Village? Member Cy Richardson

Cy Richardson still feels a little guilty: he was away on vacation from his U.S. embassy post in Tehran in 1979 when militants broke in and captured 52 people. The 2012 Oscar-winning movie *Argo* told the riveting story of six employees who escaped, and "except for the agricultural attaché, those people worked for me," Richardson says.



## The Community Responds

The Cleveland Park-Woodley Park community responded beautifully to our first year-end report, and we are grateful. We heard from more than a hundred people, and about half of them are new financial supporters! Many letters had comments like this: "We make our contribution with enthusiastic support." "So comforting to have the village in our neighborhood!" "Impressed by how quickly the Village is up and running." We couldn't have done it – we can't do anything! – without the volunteers and members who designed the report, put it together, made quotable remarks, posed for photos, and then got the whole thing to the printer, and later the 17 volunteers who stuffed and sealed the piece for mailing. It was a real micro-community. It is this kind of support that will keep the Cleveland Park Village humming in service to the community through 2014 and beyond.

"I was head of the visa section...I should have been responsible for them. That's still with me," says Richardson, now 87 and a new Cleveland Park Village member. It was the second time the embassy was captured: "the first time, I simply hadn't gone in that day."

Richardson, a New York native, saw military action in Germany in 1945. He was among U.S. forces occupying postwar Berlin and then helped test winter warfare equipment in Alaska. After a stint as a social worker, he joined the Foreign Service in 1956 "out of resentment against fate that had kept me from getting leave to interesting places while I was in the Army."

### *A Life of Travel*

With his wife, he served in what is now Senegal and then in Saigon at the dawn of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. He did consular services in Niger, Paris, Ghana, Belgium and Ecuador before Iran, and afterward worked in Peru and the Bahamas. "In the Bahamas I got into drugs," Richardson jokes – helping the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Cy "got to go places in Europe I hadn't been to before." He retired to his Woodley Park apartment in 1991 and joined the Village in December 2012 in order to stay there, "surrounded by things that remind me of where I've been and what I've done."

Richardson signed up for the Lunch Bunch and the Library of Congress tour. Volunteers have driven him for shopping and other errands, and to concerts and the theater and other cultural events. "Other needs haven't happened yet, but that may not last," he says. "Ask me again in a year."

### Village Lunch Bunch

One thing the Cleveland Park-Woodley Park neighborhood has in abundance is restaurants, and the Cleveland Park Village Lunch Bunch is taking full advantage.

Village members and volunteers enjoyed Mexican specialties and lively conversation in December at Cactus Cantina. "People were very excited and we all had a great time," says volunteer Sandy Rubin, who coordinated the event with volunteer Marjorie Dick Stuart.

It was such fun that a second Lunch Bunch of 27 descended on Lillies near the Zoo in January. "The owners were our servers and did an amazing job serving such a large crowd – and the food was excellent," Marjorie says. All members and volunteers are welcome to join the Lunch Bunch for an outing on the second Wednesday of every month. The restaurant choice is announced in advance on the Village website, in emails and in phone calls, and the Village office arranges rides for those who request it. If there are lots of responses, "we'll do more tables," says Sandy.

The two coordinators have scouted out the neighborhood to find appropriate



Cy Richardson gets a ride with volunteer driver Tom Fox



Members Caroline Backlund and Jackie Kienzle chat during Lunch Bunch at Lillies in Woodley Park



restaurants: they need to be accessible, with good food, moderate prices, low noise levels and open for lunch. "It's a great way to bring people together," says Marjorie.

## Who Makes Our Village? Volunteers Suzanne Rooney & Carolyn Kulischeck

Suzanne Rooney worked in political jobs for members of Congress, and Carolyn Kulischeck managed ESOL teachers (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and also taught in the Fairfax County public schools. Clearly they had the many skills needed to be the volunteer co-chairs of the Cleveland Park Village Membership Committee, recruiting and organizing newcomers.

"We attend to the needs of the members," says Carolyn. "My main job is planning events." She researches members' interests and then sets up the arrangements and logistics for at least one group outing per month: a potluck dinner at the local library; a guided museum tour and lunch; exploring the Library of Congress. "Sometimes seniors can be isolated and we're trying to prevent this by planning these types of events."

### *Getting the Word Out*

Suzanne sets up events too, mostly to get the word out in the neighborhood about the Village's existence and recruit new members and volunteers. Two recruitment parties were held at her house.

"It's fun—we're always looking for new people," she says. "I enjoy talking to people to see if they're seriously interested and ready to join. We're focusing on apartment houses now, people who want to stay where they are."

Either Carolyn, Suzanne, Executive Director Susan Hester or another committee member interviews every new member "to find out their condition, what they can and can't do, what problems they might have, an evaluation of how we can be helpful," Suzanne says. "We also call members every month about upcoming events, ask if they're interested, do they need a ride, what else can we do." They make notes on each person and the results of each event.

The two live within walking distance of each other in Woodley Park and coordinate often. "Aging in place is a wonderful concept," Suzanne says. "As the Village continues to grow, the word will get out more and more about the many nice things we have to offer."

## 2nd Annual Event at McLean Gardens

More than 40 people turned out in November at McLean Gardens to celebrate a milestone for Cleveland Park Village: its first recruitment event for a community took place there one year earlier.

Martha Baron, a Village member/volunteer and McLean Gardens resident, helped organize the wine and cheese reception. "I spoke about my own experience and how I became involved," she said. "It was very fruitful."

Village leader Elizabeth Fox recalled that after the original event, she was "so happy



Suzanne and Carolyn, Membership Co-Chairs, meet with records management volunteer Tom Munzer

## Village by the numbers...

89 Members – eligible for volunteer services, outings and social activities

132 Associate Members – supporters who participate in outings and activities

130 Volunteers – trained and ready to serve

36 volunteers assisting members in January

10 volunteers working in the office

27 volunteers helping run the Village through committees

106 member service requests filled in January

60% transportation assistance

10% help with household tasks

14% help with snow!

6% friendly visitors

5% tech tutors helping with computers and cell phones

## COMING EVENTS

RSVP to Village office  
202-615-5853 or info@  
ClevelandParkVillage.org  
Members call for a ride.

### Lunch Bunch

Noon Wednesday, March 12  
Robert's Restaurant in the  
Omni Shoreham  
2500 Calvert Street NW  
We have seating in the private  
dining room, a 5% discount,  
free parking and separate  
checks. RSVP!

### ActYourAge! – A one- woman show

1:30 PM Thursday, March 13  
The Methodist Home of DC  
4901 Connecticut Ave NW  
Come spend 60 minutes with  
a sassy 70-year old. Having  
survived 6 broken bones,  
2 broken marriages, and a  
broken spirit, Beth Urech is  
now "breaking a leg" on  
stage! Free admission and  
light refreshments. Parking is  
available behind building and  
in the neighborhood. RSVP!

### Info Gathering about CPV

6:30 - 8:30 PM, Tuesday,  
March 25  
Cleveland Park Library First  
Floor Meeting Room  
3310 Connecticut Ave NW  
Send or bring your friends  
to this gathering so they too  
can learn more about the  
Village. Village members and  
volunteers will be on hand  
to talk about our member  
services, activities, volunteer  
opportunities, and how the  
Village promotes community  
connections. RSVP!

### Coffee and Conversation

10:30 - 12:00 Noon, Friday,  
March 28  
In The Broadmoor – location of  
Cleveland Park Village office  
3901 Connecticut Ave NW  
Meet for informal conversation,  
coffee and tea, with other  
Village members and  
volunteers. Ask questions and  
give ideas. RSVP!

### Village Play Date

2:00-5:00 PM, Wed., April 2  
The Methodist Home of DC  
4901 Connecticut Ave NW  
Join us for an afternoon of  
cards and games or just  
visiting with other members,  
volunteers and supporters from  
Cleveland Park Village.

that people from this unique section of our community were truly interested in connecting with people across Wisconsin Avenue.

Baron told the gathering at the Gardens' Porter Street ballroom that she is "an ordinary mother" from North Carolina who worked in employment and training for New York's Suffolk County government until retiring to Washington in 2004.

"It's difficult to meet people and make friends in a new community," she said. She attended that first meeting and joined the Village immediately.

"I'm still pretty healthy and have my children to call on, so I don't really need the services yet. But I like the concept of aging in place and acquiring the feeling of community," Baron said. She has joined the Lunch Bunch and the Membership Committee and has made several new friends.

"We are very grateful for the support that McLean Gardens board and staff have given to the Cleveland Park Village from the very beginning," Fox said. "Now that residents are active as members and volunteers, we feel we have a real partnership."

## Spanish Conversation Group

By Janet Cyphers, Village Volunteer

Our Spanish practice group started in September when I was driving member and fellow volunteer Linda Mahler to Union Station and discovered she could speak Spanish. I'd been taking classes and getting ready to go to Mexico for a few weeks. We decided to practice together and she suggested we do it through the Village.

Susan Hester put out the word, and now we have 15 people on our list and a regular core of five or six people who attend. Those include Virginia Scofield, who grew up in Cuba and is a native speaker. The rest of us are low-level to high-intermediate level speakers.

We meet twice a month (the second and fourth Sundays) in the lobby of Sedgwick Gardens (corner of Sedgwick and Connecticut). The sessions are very casual but a lot of fun. Participants each give a little talk about an article or subject of interest to them, and we try to correct each other at least part of the time! Then we chat about things in general.

I would like to plan for the group to attend a performance at the Gala Hispanic Theatre and perhaps do other Spanish-flavored things as time goes on. We're still in the startup stage so more participants are welcome. ¡Bienvenido a todos!



Good crowd gathers for Village informational event at McLean Gardens