



A rural community of neighbors  
helping aging adults lead independent  
and engaged lives at home.

**Leverett + New Salem +  
Shutesbury + Wendell**

**1-413-345-6894**

[generalinfo@villageneighbors.org](mailto:generalinfo@villageneighbors.org)

[www.villageneighbors.org](http://www.villageneighbors.org)

# Village Neighbors

*Working Together to Create Community!*

---

November / December 2020, Issue 10

---

***With many CoVid precautions still in effect, VN members and volunteers should expect we will continue to proceed within the strictest CoVid protocols.***

## No Cost Home Repairs for Village Neighbors Members!

*In our ongoing efforts to allow seniors to remain in their homes while maintaining their quality of life, Village Neighbors is now offering a new level of service for its members,*

### ***Home Repairs Done at No Cost to the Member.***

In early October, a survey was mailed to all members asking if there were **small projects that needed attention** but were beyond their abilities. So far, 15 surveys have been returned with repairs ranging from **adding handrails to removing air conditioners to refitting doors.**

A team of **capable volunteers** are currently assessing these projects to determine if they can be done, how much time might be needed and the materials needed to complete the task. There is a licensed contractor available to the volunteer team in case a project requires code compliance expertise.

With grant money provided by the **Church Street Home Fund**, managed by **LifePath**, these repairs can be done at **no cost to the member**. If a member would like to pay for the materials, that would allow the grant money to stretch further and accomplish more. Although the team can assess any

If you haven't filled out your survey yet, you can still return it in the stamped addressed envelope.

You can also contact us at

**413 345 6894** or

[servicerequest@village  
neighbors.org](mailto:servicerequest@villageneighbors.org) for help

filling it out or getting another copy.

We're here to help.

**Membership in  
Village Neighbors  
is Free to all  
residents of  
Leverett, New  
Salem, Shutesbury  
and Wendell who  
are over 60.**

Volunteers of any

request, it may need professional service to be completed like licensed plumbing or electric work. It doesn't hurt to ask.

***As with all VN interactions these days, assessments and work visits will maintain strict Covid-19 protocols.***

***Volunteers wear masks, physically distance themselves and, as much as possible, work outside to minimize risks.***

*The Church Street Fund is administered by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts.*



age are also welcome.

Contact  
[membership@villageneighbors.org](mailto:membership@villageneighbors.org)

or call **413-345-6894**  
to learn more

View a list of available  
services on our  
website  
[www.villageneighbors.org](http://www.villageneighbors.org)

## LifePath Home Repairs Grant Also Provides New Service Opportunities for Volunteers

Our team of volunteers are just getting started on these projects, but all of us are happy to be able to provide a tangible benefit to the lives of Village Neighbors' members.



### VN Home Repairs Team Zoom Meeting

Volunteers pictured from left to right: Glenn Stockton, Russell Greco, Don Stone, Paul Lyons, Elizabeth Fernandez O'Brien, Sam Rogers, Bert Fernandez

**Meet The Home Repair Team:**

**Russ Greco:** Russ was a professional builder for many years and a long time (1986) resident of Shutesbury. In February 2006, he went to New Orleans to help in the recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina. He was offered a job as a project manager for Catholic Charities Operation Helping Hands, a non profit volunteer based rebuild organization and worked there until their funding ran out in 2012. To continue this work he started and operated his own non profit, Helping Hands construction, for the next four years until retirement in 2016.

**Paul Lyons:** Paul is a former Wildlife Biologist and Environmental Analyst who has been doing handyman work since his retirement 4 years ago. He built his first home in Shutesbury (an earth-sheltered, passive solar saltbox) himself, and served as the General Contractor for his second home, where he now lives. He most enjoys tackling home repair tasks and small-ish construction projects.

**Sam Rogers:** Sam is a woodworker from Leverett who has been building and restoring furniture for 40+ years, as well as carpentry. He has three kids and two grandchildren in the area and is thoroughly enjoying semi-retirement.

**Glenn Stockton:** Last year Glenn Stockton and his wife moved to their summer home in Shutesbury after retiring from years of teaching in public schools in New York. Glenn likes to stay busy with things that keep him active and useful.

**Bert Fernandez:** Bert is a retired pediatrician. He likes to problem solve. His home is his big maintenance project. He co-built a chicken coop and storage shed this summer with his son.

**Don Stone:** Don is VN Treasurer, chair of the Fundraising Committee and a very active volunteer. He is responsible for finding, attaining and supervising this grant.

**Elizabeth Fernandez O'Brien:** Elizabeth is VN Public Relations and Events chair, and is acting as PR liaison to the team.

If you are interested in learning more about the many **Volunteering Opportunities** to make a difference in your neighborhood, contact [volunteers@villageneighbors.org](mailto:volunteers@villageneighbors.org)

To find out more about the **Home Repair Program** contact us at **413 345 6894** or [servicerequest@villageneighbors.org](mailto:servicerequest@villageneighbors.org)

**Winter is Coming!**  
*Is your wood stacked, your chimney cleaned, and how about those pesky leaves - not to mention the snow?*



Volunteers are available to help with yard chores, raking, shoveling, wood stacking and winter prep! They will bring their own tools and maintain safe social distancing protocols. ***Give us a call, volunteers are waiting to assist you!***

**1-413-345-6894** or email [servicerequests@villageneighbors.org](mailto:servicerequests@villageneighbors.org)

## Health and Wellness Activities

### Take A Walk

Village Neighbors invites you to walk 2 hours on a "Flat Trail". [North Quabbin Trail](#)

[Association \(NQTA\)](#) will provide a safe, distanced, guided walk passing a waterfall and a pine cove on

**Wednesday, Nov 11th at 11am**

**Rain date Thursday, Nov 12th (decision to reschedule will be by 10am 11/11)**

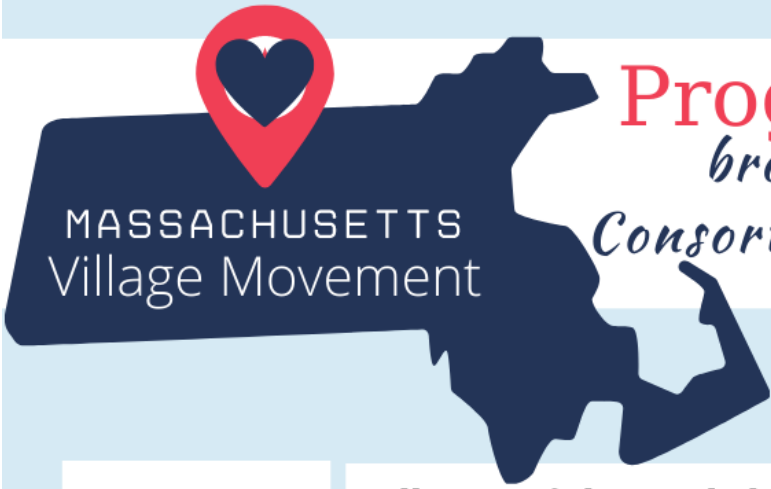
You will need to drive (no rides being offered yet) 20-30 minutes and meet up with others to start the walk at 11:00 am. That's 11/11 at 11. **To register, respond to [pr@villageneighbors.org](mailto:pr@villageneighbors.org) by Nov 7th.** We'll send directions and a trail map. **Questions about trail walking?** Contact Bobby C directly at **978-549-1747** or [info@NQTA.org](mailto:info@NQTA.org).

## Gentle Qigong for Health and Well Being

### *Free Zoom Class from Village Neighbors Member!*

Peter Schein, a member of Village Neighbors, has been a student and teacher of Qigong for many years.


No experience is required for this class and it's suitable for seniors. If you are interested, email Peter [pjschein@gmail.com](mailto:pjschein@gmail.com) to receive a zoom invitation before the class.



## Program Series

*brought to you by the  
Consortium of MA Villages*

**REGISTER**



Villages of the Berkshires, Inc. invites you to attend, The Lenox Library's Distinguished Speakers Series Presentation:  
**Tony Cenicola.**

Tony Cenicola, photojournalist for the New York Times, will be the featured speaker on Sunday, November 15, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. His topic will be "My Life as a Chameleon (Assignment Photographer) for the New York Times."

Now in its 14th season, the Distinguished Lecture Series is organized and hosted by Dr. Jeremy Yudkin. Dr. Yudkin is a resident of the Berkshires and professor of music at Boston University and Oxford University. Every summer at the Lenox Library he presents the pre-concert lectures for the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Tanglewood season.

<https://lenoxlib.org/event/distinguished-lecture-series-tony-cenicola/>

## LifePath Healthy Living Remote Workshops

Free workshops that you can access at home on your computer or your phone. Topics are **Living Well with Long-Term Health Conditions, Chronic Pain Self-**



Management, and Managing Concerns About Falls. For more information and to register, contact **Andi Waisman**, by phone at 773-5555 x2297 or via email at [awaisman@LifePathMA.org](mailto:awaisman@LifePathMA.org).

---

## Local Libraries

Our local libraries are offering classes and activities online. Check in with your town library to see what is available to stay active and engaged. Inter-library loans are available again and libraries are now for curbside pick-up. You can contact your library directly for more information.

**Village Neighbors volunteers can pick up and deliver your library requests to your door.** Contact us at 413-345-6894 or email: [servicerequests@villageneighbors.org](mailto:servicerequests@villageneighbors.org)

### Leverett Library

1-413-548-9220

email: [leverettlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:leverettlibrary@gmail.com)

<https://leverettlibrary.org/p/41/Calendar>

### New Salem Library

1-978-544-6334

email: [n\\_salem@cwmars.org](mailto:n_salem@cwmars.org)

<https://www.newsalempubliclibrary.org/news-events>

### Shutesbury Library

1-413-259-1213

email: [library.director@shutesbury.org](mailto:library.director@shutesbury.org)

<https://sites.google.com/site/mnspearmemoriallibrary/>

### Wendell Library

1-978-544-3559

<https://www.wendellmass.us/index.php/wendell-free-library.html>

## Village Neighbors News

### New Grant Provides Training for Volunteers and Members

**Village Neighbors has been awarded a \$4,000 Covid-19 Resiliency Grant by the Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA)** to expand our online presence and digital skills. This grant

will help us to expand our volunteer base and improve the quality and quantity of on-line programming for volunteers and members.

We will update and improve our volunteer training curriculum and develop an ongoing schedule of new trainings and create more opportunities for virtual social connection, learning and entertainment for our members. We have engaged a Harvard-based virtual technology expert, Kris Kauyate, to train staff volunteers so that they will be better equipped to implement on-line, digital programming, and acquire web-based subscriptions to Zoom, survey, programming, and other communication services. We hope members will soon begin to experience the benefits of this grant directly in their daily lives.



## Call Managers

Village Neighbors needs a few good people to sign up as Call Managers. **Call Managers** answer members' requests for service and try to find volunteers who can provide those services. We have the opportunity to talk to members to find out exactly what they need and then find volunteers who fill the bill -- a truly rewarding job.

**The Service Committee** meets on the fourth Friday of the month at 9:30 am. If you are

interested in attending a meeting to see if this Volunteer opportunity is for you, please contact us through [volunteers@villageneighbors.org](mailto:volunteers@villageneighbors.org)

## Public Relations and Events Committee

### *Do you like writing, graphic design, promotions or events?*

We are continually seeking new ways to stay in touch with our Village Neighbors members and volunteers—to remind you that we are here, and we care that you feel connected, engaged and supported.

### *So what have we been up to?*

- Recently, we sent you information on four ways that you can support others to vote.
- We're working towards sponsoring facilitated writing groups.
- We have arranged with North Quabbin Trails to guide us on a flat trail walk on Nov 11.

### *Will you join us?*

The PR/Events committee warmly welcomes you to participate in a meeting and/or to join our small team. We meet on Mondays at 3:00 PM via Zoom (meeting time and day flexible) Please contact us [pr@villageneighbors.org](mailto:pr@villageneighbors.org) or call and leave your contact info at **413-345-6894**.



Village Neighbors is a volunteer run non-profit dedicated to helping our aging neighbors to lead independent and engaged lives at home.

**Please consider DONATING to Village Neighbors and Support Free Membership.**

You can donate online at [www.villageneighbors.org](http://www.villageneighbors.org) or mail a check to **P.O.Box 501, Shutesbury, MA 01072**

## VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

**Zoom Meeting  
Thursday, Nov. 12, 6:30 pm**

At the orientation you will learn about the organization and find out about the wide range of volunteer activities that you can choose from.

During Quarantine we are still doing grocery and medicine pick-up and delivery, and wellness check-ins for our members.

**To join the Zoom Volunteer Orientation you must  
RSVP by November 4th  
[volunteers@villageneighbors.org](mailto:volunteers@villageneighbors.org)**

A Volunteer Handbook and application packet will be sent to you by email, or sent by mail if you cannot print it.

## Connecting With Your Neighbors

### NOW WE CAN HUG!

*by Elizabeth Fernandez O'Brien (VN Board and PR/Events Committee)*

The hugging wall idea came from a photo taken at a Brazilian nursing home. A benefit to

anyone, the hugging wall really is an antidote to the feeling of isolation.

If you have old sheets/fabric, a clear plastic rectangle, plenty of duct tape and old shirt or two, our wall is hanging on nails by wire coat hangers. I taped and sewed it together but you can tape the whole wall together. Village Neighbors has some extra materials if you need. The pattern is easily copied. Just give me a call or text, **Elizabeth 413 374 3271**

In these photos, you can see the visitor (our son) holding his arms out for a hug. In the second photo, we are able to hug because I put my arms into the blue and white print "sleeves".



## Winter in the Pandemic

*by Nancy Spittle (VN Member Coordinator)*

**It has been almost a year since we heard about the novel virus, COVID19,** and 8 months since we had to seriously change our daily lives to avoid it. Few of us ever thought these restrictions on activities and resulting health and economic challenges would last this long. And now we face a **New England winter** and likely the following season(s) before we are free to travel, to visit and to hug our friends and relatives, to go shopping without fear, or to attend a concert, festival or celebration. This will be a true test of our patience and resilience as individuals and as a community, even if we don't get sick. We still need to be vigilant!

**How can Village Neighbors support each other** through these winter months when we are not able to do many of the activities we had planned to offer (the rides, the planned social events and speakers, the fundraisers)? This summer and fall, finally, New Salem and Wendell join Leverett and Shutesbury being hooked up to **broadband internet**, which can be a valuable tool to engage in social activities remotely. Although in person meeting is more desirable for most of us, we can learn, with some help when needed, to adapt to having a group phone conversation or to participate in a zoom meeting or presentation. We can take part in a **book group** or take an **art lesson** or **exercise class** on zoom, for example. We can keep a **journal** of our thoughts and coping strategies, which will be a fascinating read a few years down the road. Or we can keep a **gratitude journal** to lift our spirit, or **reach out by phone or card** to a friend or relative that we are thinking about.

## What is your plan?

- How will you keep up physical activity and healthy meals?
- What activities will you do to keep your mind engaged?
- Do you have a neglected hobby to brush off and explore?
- Would you like to stream movies, plays, virtual museum tours and concerts to your home?
- Keep in touch remotely with family and friends over the holidays?
- Start up a weekly coffee social or happy hour with neighbors?

Village Neighbors is planning to increase the ability of all of us to take part in these new options. It fits in with our goals of helping seniors remain safely in our homes and to strengthen our community cohesiveness. Both those presenting new skills and those just learning them are equally important. Please invite people you know to **consider joining Village Neighbors as either member, volunteer or both** to combat the isolation of this pandemic. Call us to request a weekly check in phone chat or to suggest an activity. And stay tuned for more information about our new online endeavors.

---

## On-Line Connections

*Here are some already-existing online places that neighbors are connecting:*

### Leverett:

#### Leverettconnects

This is an email list for the town of Leverett, MA residents and close neighbors. Posts to the list are intended to be about Leverett events, announcements or news. The list is intended to focus on the Town of Leverett and events, announcements and posts in town to help build a closer community.

Subscribe: [leverettconnects+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:leverettconnects+subscribe@groups.io)

### New Salem:

#### The New Salem News

An online newsletter for residents of New Salem published early Saturday mornings. Currently it goes out to 350 people. Residents may join by writing to [newsalemnews@gmail.com](mailto:newsalemnews@gmail.com) and requesting their e-mail to be added to the list.

### Shutesbury:

#### NextDoor Shutesbury

This is part of a nationwide platform, NextDoor, that is available for any neighborhood or town to use. The purpose is for residents to connect with one another.

It includes categories for posting items for sale, news and updates about lost dogs, people experiencing phone or electricity outages, and much more.

Anyone can join. Here's how:

1. Visit [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com).
2. Enter your **residential street address\*** and **email address**.
3. Select **Find your neighborhood**. You will automatically be assigned to that neighborhood.
4. Complete all of the required fields.
5. Click **Sign up**.
6. Finally, verify your address.

**\*Note:** NextDoor does not support the use of P.O. Boxes. Members must join using their



physical address.

## Wendell:

### Online Wendell Townsfolk

An online listserve that is available for residents of Wendell. Go to the following web site for instructions on joining the list serve and information on rules and other things.

<https://mailman.deepsoft.com/mailman/listinfo/wendell-townsfolk>

---

## SAGE Connect

SAGE is matching LGBT elders with community members and allies who want to connect during the pandemic crisis.

<https://www.sageusa.org/sageconnect/>

## Councils on Aging

**Councils on Aging & Senior Centers** provide local outreach, social and health services, advocacy, information and referral for older adults, families and caregivers. *Please contact your town CoA directly to find out what services are available during quarantine.*

### Leverett

**413-548-1022 X5** If you would like more information, leave your contact information so that someone can return your call.

### New Salem

Town Coordinator, Nancy Aldrich **978-544-6437**

### Shutesbury

Call **259-3796** or email [coa@shutesbury.org](mailto:coa@shutesbury.org)

### Wendell

Susan at **978-544-3758** or Nancy at **978-544-6760**.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Contribute to the Village Neighbors Newsletter

If you are interested in contributing articles or information to the Village Neighbors newsletter, please contact the editor - [dina@dinapolizzi.com](mailto:dina@dinapolizzi.com). We are looking for information of interest to persons over 60 in our four towns: **Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell**. As of this mailing, **Village Neighbors News** has a mailing list of 260 and is growing with every issue.

---

## Your Village Neighbors Need YOU!

With Free Membership in place, Village Neighbors will be growing quickly in the coming year. We need Volunteers to assist members at home, and also behind the scenes in the committees that keep our organization working!

Contribute as much or as little time as you want. Match your interests and skills to what's needed in the community. *Join the fun and make a difference...*

### ***It takes a village to make a Village!***

***During the **coronavirus quarantine**, VN is still available for check-in calls, grocery and medicine pick-up and delivery, and yard work.***

***We have suspended all in-person contact until quarantine is ended, and are taking this time to continue to strengthen and grow our committees and internal organization. Meetings are taking place through conference calls and Zoom. We hope you will consider reaching out to a committee of interest and explore opportunities for volunteering.***



---

## **Membership / Volunteer Committee**

- Recruit and welcome new members and volunteers
- Do new member intake visits
- Conduct volunteer orientations and trainings
- Create and coordinate social activities and programs
- Develop Dementia Friendly community outreach and training

***Volunteer Orientations are run by the Membership/Volunteer Committee. Join us at the Volunteer Orientation if you would like to experience this committee in action and find out more about what we do.***

## **VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**

### **Zoom Meeting**

**Thursday, Nov. 12, 6:30 pm**

At the orientation you will learn about the organization and find out about the wide range of volunteer activities that you can choose from.

During Quarantine we are still doing grocery and medicine pick-up and delivery, and wellness check-ins for our members.

***To join the Zoom Volunteer Orientation you must RSVP by November 4th***  
**[volunteers@villageneighbors.org](mailto:volunteers@villageneighbors.org)**

A Volunteer Handbook and application packet will be sent to you by email, or sent by mail if you cannot print it.

**CONTACT Membership / Volunteer**

---

## **Service Committee / Call Managers**

- Answer requests from Members and connect them with Volunteers waiting to assist
- Assess needs and services
- Train and oversee Call Managers
- Work with the Membership/Volunteer Committee to triage concerns for members and volunteers
- Handle vendor services

***Call Managers work from home to manage member requests.***

## Events / PR Committee

- Events • Promotions
- Tabling at community events
- Outreach and Press
- Newsletter • Social media
- Event Calendar

***Contact the Events/PR Committee to learn about opportunities to be involved in planning our next exciting event and connecting with our community.***

CONTACT Event / PR

---

## Fundraising Committee

- Provide the money for Village Neighbors to function and grow
- Research funding
- Develop funding circles (sources) - donations, members, volunteers, and contributors
- Develop fundraising events
- Recruit local sponsors -banks, businesses
- Research and apply for grants

***Now that Village Neighbors is Free to members, we are counting more than ever on voluntary contributions, funding and grants to meet our income needs for the coming year. Volunteers are needed to make this happen!***

CONTACT Fundraising

---

## IT (Information Technology) Committee

- Database and website maintenance
- Troubleshoot technological issues
- Manage email and phone programs
- Training volunteers and members
- Home assistance for members with electronics, broadband, Skype, FaceBook, etc.

***IT is the support system for all committees, members and volunteers around technology. With the arrival of Broadband in our rural towns, members will need assistance in setting up and learning how to use their new systems. We need people who are comfortable training others, but not everyone on IT needs to go out into the community. Many of us are happily at home, figuring out and enhancing VN technology.***

CONTACT IT

---

## Village Neighbors Board of Directors

- Develop policy
- Develop action plans based on Committee input
- Maintain fiscal health of Village Neighbors
- Maintain records

***Board members do not need to be members or residents of our four towns. It would be great if we could add people to the board who have legal, accounting, or social services experience. We have five dedicated members now who are working hard for the organization, but we need more people who could provide varied perspectives and expertise.***

CONTACT VN Board of Directors

*Special Thanks to:*



VILLAGE NEIGHBORS | [villageneighbors.org](http://villageneighbors.org)



© 2020 Village Neighbors  
Newsletter edit and design - [Dina Polizzi](#)