

Villages Update

The Newsletter of Villages of the Berkshires, Inc.

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Days are longer, Spring is here
Newsletter



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WEBSITE UPDATES *New Page on our Website*



Login to the Website



Under **Members Tab** Click the link for "Have you Read This." Enjoy!

Have you read this?

ARTICLE
RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM VILLAGE
MEMBERS



*The views and information contained the following articles are not those of Villages of the Berkshires, Inc. Links are purely being shared because a member found the information relevant and/or helpful to themselves.

JOIN US

Upcoming Events for the VoB

MARCH 2021



TUE 03 / 30 / 2021 AT 1:30 PM
OLLI EVENT: THE RIGHT TO VOTE: REEXAMINING WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
 Educational Event
 Open to all

FREE

Tuesday
 30



Let's get together to learn more about member benefits, requesting services and each other.

FREE

WED 03 / 31 / 2021 AT 4:00 PM
MONTHLY VOB MEETING (ACTIVE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS ONLY)
 Member Services Committee
 Members and Volunteers
 RSVP and instant registration

Wednesday
 31

APRIL 2021



FREE

TUE 04 / 06 / 2021 AT 11:30 AM
6FT STROLL - A MORNING WALK AROUND LENOX (ACTIVE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS)
 Nature Walk
 Members and Volunteers
 RSVP and instant registration

Tuesday
 06



PLEASE REGISTER FOR T...

TUE 04 / 06 / 2021 AT 7:00 PM
OLLI EVENT: BIG DATA'S IMPACT ON WORKFORCE SUCCESS & EQUITY
 Educational Event
 Open to all

Tuesday
 06



FREE

WED 04 / 14 / 2021 AT 10:00 AM
GENERAL INFORMATION SESSION TO GET TO KNOW VILLAGES
 Member Services Committee
 Open to all
 RSVP and instant registration

Wednesday
 14



FREE

FRI 04 / 16 / 2021 AT 3:30 PM
APRIL 2021 VOLUNTEER MEETING
 Volunteer Meeting
 Volunteers only
 RSVP and instant registration

Friday
 16



FREE

FRI 04 / 23 / 2021 AT 1:00 PM
VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP: ART OMI AND NNCC
 Educational Event
 Members and Volunteers
 RSVP required

Friday
 23



EMAIL REGISTRATION REQ...

FRI 04 / 23 / 2021 AT 5:30 PM
SYMPHONIES OF THE SPRING - WARBLER LECTURE
 Nature Walk

Friday
 23



FREE

SUN 04 / 25 / 2021 AT 4:00 PM
LENOX LIBRARY DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES: EMILY BERNARD
 Educational Event
 Open to all
 No RSVP required

Sunday
 25



Let's get together to learn more about member benefits, requesting services and each other.

FREE

WED 04 / 28 / 2021 AT 4:00 PM
VOB MEMBER & VOLUNTEER MEETING
 Member Services Committee
 Members and Volunteers
 RSVP required

Wednesday
 28

Volunteer News



Happy spring, everyone! We are embracing the season with a new volunteer service initiative, an outdoor and in-person volunteer meeting, and forming a new community outreach service group.

Spring Services Campaign

Our phone call service group is getting in touch with all of our members to discuss our many volunteer services and to collect service requests for our first annual Spring Services Campaign. We're also asking specifically about seasonal needs such as screen windows and air conditioners that need placement, yard clean-up, outdoor furniture set-up, garage tidying, and rides needed to upcoming events, among other spring services. Our volunteers are always ready to help our members, but we're using this event to help members plan ahead and to prepare for upcoming needs. Let us know how we can help!

BCC Student Service Learning Classes

Our free member classes with service learning students at Berkshire Community College are well under way. Three members are working with two writing students in two ten-week classes and ten members are working one-on-one with physical therapy assistant students in five-week fall prevention classes. We've had great feedback so far from everyone involved and we are looking forward to expanding these classes in the fall.

Volunteer Meeting IN PERSON! - Friday, April 16, 3:30pm, Lilac Park, Lenox

How long has it been since you've met your fellow volunteers in person? We're taking the opportunity with the warmer weather to hold our next meeting at Lilac Park right on Main Street in Lenox on Friday, April 16, from 3:30-4:30pm. Bring a chair and a mask and let's catch up on things without the need for cameras and microphones. In case of April showers, we'll reschedule and notify you closer to the meeting date. Please register at <http://villagesoftheberkshires.org/events>. There will be NO ZOOM LINK!

Volunteer with us!

If you would like to become a volunteer, please call 413-409-6446 or email stephen@villagesoftheberkshires.org. You can also visit our website at villagesoftheberkshires.org and click on Volunteers for more information and to complete a volunteer application.

Be Well,

STEPHEN HAGER,
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Vob is excited to announce our socially distant activity - The 6FT Stroll. Sidewalks are clear! Will you lead or join us? Our Events page has updates. First walk is next Tuesday, April 6 @ 11:30am. For Active Members - registration required. Thanks!

Stroll : About a mile at a slow pace on even paths or sidewalks. Frequent stops. A way to get outside and meet others. Socially-distanced outing. Lead by volunteers. Open to Active Volunteers and Members.



Walk: A 2-2.5 mile outing at a moderate pace on paths. Less frequent stops. A way to get outside and meet others. Socially-distanced outing. Lead by volunteers and open to all Active Volunteers and Members.

Why 6 Foot? We are creating Covid compliant activities.
"Stroll" is subjective.
www.villagesoftheberkshires.org

Login and register for the event or request a service. Or email us: info@villagesoftheberkshires.org

Walking Partner : A one-on-one walking buddy to get you outside exploring at your own pace. Distance and location determined by participants. Volunteer coordinates with Member.



JOIN BCC STUDENTS THIS SEMESTER FOR IN SERVICE-LEARNING

Weekly Creative Writing Workshops

1:1 Session: Physical Therapy Assistant Student

In partnership with VoB, Berkshire Community College (BCC) has been able to offer a service-learning component for students. Service-Learning is an integrated learning program that allows students to apply knowledge learned through academic study through hands-on experiences. While participating in this program, students regularly reflect upon and analyze their service experience as it reciprocally applies to their academic and career development.

Throughout this spring, BCC students have been leading either creative writing workshops or one-on-one physical therapy sessions in collaboration with VoB members. These sessions go so much further than the projects themselves, and instead provide space for intergenerational connection and the care of members' overall well-being. As one student from the writing workshops so elegantly stated, "I hope to explore the therapeutic nature of writing in a group setting while moving past the obstacles of online learning."

The unique aspect of service-learning as it differs from volunteering is that service-learning leverages a student's better understanding of content knowledge while helping them become socially embedded citizens. One such example of this is the individual partnerships of BCC's Physical Therapy Assistant students and VoB members. By working with members throughout individual sessions, these students can provide specific care to meet individual needs. As the students navigate learning about what physical therapy means from a clinical lens, they can learn first hands of how their work will impact individuals and community members.

This partnership has paved the path for invaluable learning experiences and connections that will hopefully leave a lasting impact. We are excited where these projects lead through the rest of the spring and into the future.

Tara Jacobsen
Special Program Coordinator- Service Learning
Berkshire Community College



Thanks to NCCC for enabling us
to develop this program through
their financial support.

ENCOURAGING

others to join

On 2/24/21, I took session 1 of the writing workshop. Jenny, a BCC student, was the instructor. One of her exercises asked us to pick an object from our childhood, describe it, and tell why it was/is meaningful. Jenny provided examples and gave 15 minutes to write in response.

I thought of a pair of bookends that my father had made. He'd bronzed and then attached my first pair of hard-bottomed, ankle-supporting, white lace-up walking shoes to standard L-shaped blocks of wood, which he also had bronzed.

I finished writing by making this stunning | observation: the hand-made bookends may have been a gift of love by a father to his young daughter, but there were no other such gifts in the remaining 35 years of his life. Or if there were, I don't remember them. Clearly, the act of writing helped me see something I hadn't seen before.

Join Jennifer and me as we prepare more written snippets for only ourselves or to share with others.

—FW

Kindergarten by Fran W.

Written during Service Learning Writing Workshop with BCC Spring 2021

My younger brother and I shared an elementary school, even the same kindergarten classroom, four years apart. I had a youngish teacher, whom I early on knew adored me. My brother had a much older—in fact, white-haired—teacher, with a reputation for being strict—in fact, mean.

Although I had put my foot down and refused to go to the private nursery school my parents had signed me up for the year before kindergarten, by kindergarten itself, I relished school and being teacher's pet.

My brother, by contrast, was not sold on going to kindergarten because it meant being away from his mother. One day, near the beginning of the school year, my mother was shocked to see her five-year-old open the apartment door and walk in. The school was two moderately trafficked Bronx blocks away. |

The story goes that my mother asked, "What are you doing here?" to which my brother replied, "I didn't want you to be all alone."

How did this difference in our response to the kindergarten experience foreshadow the decades of our lives to come? I continued to play by the rules. Kenny has forever been the maverick and at the same time consistent, reliable caretaker.



WATCH
CLAUDIA

PTA
Service
Learning

As seen in the Spring OLLI Update.

An article by Carl Shuster

Villages March 2021

Villages of Berkshires in Partnership with OLLI at BCC Awarded more than \$76 Thousand to Help Elder Residents

A Berkshire County organization that works in partnership with OLLI at BCC to help elderly persons in Berkshire County has been awarded a major grant by the federal government's National Community Care Corps. The \$76,737 grant was awarded for a one-year period ending July 31.

OLLI member Carl H. Shuster, Villages co-founder and vice president said the funds would be used to advance "a joint effort between Berkshire Community College and the Villages to find ways to engage students in the service-learning program at BCC. The students will provide services to Villages members such as assistance with computers, iPhones and other technology."

Shuster added that the grant allows Villages to add a volunteer Community Care Corps, coordinator, Stephen Hager, to its staff and to underwrite the cost of a recently hired service-learning staff member at BCC, Tara Jacobsen.

In announcing the award, Paul Weiss, president of the Oasis Institute which administers Community Care Corps, said the Berkshire Villages "volunteer model was chosen over hundreds of other outstanding programs across the country."

"This grant is a tremendous vote of confidence in the direction we're taking," said Berkshires Villages President Howard Shapiro, who also is an OLLI at BCC member.

Barbara Lane, president of OLLI at BCC, said the lifelong learning group is pleased to have an expanded role in Villages work. "OLLI looks forward to continuing to collaborate with the Villages to provide educational and social opportunities and support services to our respective members," said Lane.

Trained Villages volunteers provide such services as transportation, a call-in program for members who live alone, and assistance with household tasks. The non-profit currently serves Lenox, Lee, Stockbridge and Pittsfield. The program is to expand to more towns in south county.

OLLI's Board of Directors unanimously approved an agreement to provide easy access for OLLI members seeking services offered by the Villages and for Villages' members seeking access to programs and events offered by OLLI.

The agreement also provides for discounted membership fees for OLLI members who wish to join the Villages and **discounted fees** for Villages members who wish to become members of OLLI.

Beside the exchange of member services, OLLI and the Villages will explore ways to share in the marketing of their respective services to older residents who are not now affiliated with either organization.

The Berkshires is home to some 18,000 residents over the age of 65, of whom about 1,300 are members of OLLI. Villages of the Berkshires was founded by members of OLLI at BCC and created as a part of the national Villages to Village network of communities,

Further information can be obtained about the Villages at www.villagesoftheberkshires.org.



OLLI at BCC offers a complimentary 50% discount in the first year of an OLLI at BCC membership fee to each new Villages member who is not yet a member of OLLI.

Villages offers each existing member of OLLI who becomes a member of the Villages a complimentary waiver of the first two months' fees otherwise payable to the Villages.



Join us for a special two part program featuring a virtual tour of Art Omi <https://artomi.org/> in Ghent, NY.

The first part is a virtual tour on April 23 at 1pm. Zoom link will follow closer to the event.

The second part is an actual site visit to Art Omi with our friends at Neighbors of Northern Columbia County(NNCC). A date for part two is TBD. You can attend one or both sessions. Registration for the site visit will be a separate event on our website.

Neighbors of Northern Columbia County(NNCC) <https://northerncolumbia.helpfulvillage.com/> is a Village getting off the ground and we are happy to partner with them for this event. We will host them here in the Berkshires for a reciprocal event later this year. More to come on that later.

We are excited to have a neighboring Village to visit! Join in the fun.



"Let's meet on the lawn at Tanglewood this summer."

[Get ready by watching some practice lessons.](https://www.bso.org/brands/bso/at-home/bso-homeschool/bso-homeschool-lessons.aspx)
<https://www.bso.org/brands/bso/at-home/bso-homeschool/bso-homeschool-lessons.aspx>

Info SESSION



WHO WE ARE

We are residents of the Berkshires who are taking on the mission of enabling people to age in their own home by fostering independence, a sense of security, well-being, and a meaningful life.

The Village concept comes from a community of people who get together and/or volunteer their talents, skills and time to assist one another. Villages is the "little bit" of help that keeps you living at home with peace of mind.

Do you live at home in the beautiful Berkshires of Massachusetts?

Would you like to remain where you are as you grow older?

Does volunteering to help a neighbor interest you?

During this information session we will talk about what Villages is all about. Our presentation will touch on formation, membership, volunteering and where we are now. We hope you can join us.

APRIL 14 @ 10AM

REGISTER

**living at home
with peace of mind**

**info@villagesoftheberkshires.org
www.villagesoftheberkshires.org
413-409-6400
P.O. Box 1821
Lenox, MA 01240**

Q&A.

Q: What types of Memberships do you offer?

A: We have full, year-long memberships for individuals and dual households which include member service requests, member events, service providers database, office support staff, social activities and more. This is a wonderful group that gets together for activities and monthly meetings. From technology help, transportation to light handyman help and many things in between! We aim to provide that little bit of help to make you live at home with peace of mind. \$300/individual, \$540/household

In addition, we have year-long Associate Memberships at a reduced fee that do not include service requests. Individuals who might not be ready for services but would like to support Villages are encouraged to join us as Associate Members. \$100/individual, \$200/household

[Learn about Memberships](#)

Q: Do you have to be a member to volunteer?

A: No. We welcome all comers. There is no annual fee to become a volunteer. We are happy to report that a high percentage of our members do volunteer within our group. We encourage members to share as volunteers, but it is not required. All members and volunteers are vetted through the State iCORI program.

Volunteers work with our Volunteer Coordinator for training. Volunteers provide services within their geographic area and can do as much as they care to. No "required" hours.

[Learn about Volunteering.](#)

VB Membership/
Villages of the Berkshires Volunteer
Meeting

*Last Wednesday of
each Month - 4pm*

Mark your calendars
and sign up on our website events
page. Details listed each month.

See you soon!

WATCH

NOW



Helpful
VILLAGE

VIDEOS - HOW
TO USE OUR
WEBSITE

**Demo for
Members**

[Click Here](#)

**Demo for
Volunteers**

[Click Here](#)



Always know that we are happy to
process any request via phone or email!

We are residents of the Berkshires who are taking on the mission of enabling people in the Berkshires to age in their own home by fostering independence, a sense of security, well-being, and a meaningful life.



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