



What is a Village?

Village members engage in service to improve their communities through volunteerism, advocacy, and collaboration.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines a "Village" as a settlement, usually larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town; an incorporated minor municipality. Yet, in the context of the modern world, where people can instant message or Facetime with someone on the other side of the world in real-time but yet don't even know their next door neighbor, geographical distinctions and borders are not relevant as they no longer limit mobility and access.

In this global landscape, the term "Village" has come to take on a new meaning. It can be applied to almost any type of community, enclave, or group, either geographically or virtually. Think of the African proverb "It takes a Village to raise a child". In today's world, that Village could be a neighborhood, a local parents club, an online support group or forum, co-workers, a team, extended family, etc... What is it that makes these groups of people a "Village"? It is not necessarily a physical location, it is more the sense of belonging, and shared values. The essence of "Village" is a community that works together towards common goals.

The popularity of the concept of "village" is evident in the Village Movement, which started with the Beacon Hill Village in Boston over 15 years ago. Currently, there are over 240 open Villages and more than 100 in development in 41 states and the District of Columbia. The premise of the Village Movement is to create a community, a "Village" committed to helping members age in a place of their choosing, closely connected to their communities and with the support and tools they need to create a successful aging plan of their own design. In an effort to expand the Movement, the Village-to-Village Network was created as a national organization to foster the development, growth, impact and sustainability of individual Villages. "The Network provides expert guidance, resources and support to help communities establish and maintain Villages."



Villages form key partnerships with businesses, community groups, and organizations to provide volunteer services including transportation, health and wellness programs, home repairs, social and educational activities and access to vetted and discounted service providers for their members. These services, while meeting essential needs, also serve to enhance interactions and connections to the larger community. The Village also seeks to improve the lives and health of members with better access to health care services and increased confidence to live independently and have a better quality of life.

A Village reflects the community it serves and transforms the “Silver Tsunami” into a “Silver Reservoir” that grows and strengthens its community.

The Foster City Village has become a dynamic force in the lives of older adults in Foster City and Mariners Island, San Mateo. It was the first Village formed in San Mateo County. Foster City Village has been an advocate for older adults in the community in need of personal services to enable them to continue living in their homes and neighborhood as they age with grace and dignity. Through generous local donations (individuals, foundations, corporate grants and fundraisers), membership dues have been kept at \$365 per year (\$1 per day), since chartering as a non-profit 501(c)(3) on February 14, 2013. These donations enable Foster City Village to expand classes, special events, and programs for the community at large, and support the Assisted Membership Program for those who qualify for below market-rate housing.

Through the establishment of the Foster City Village, and its involvement and participation in the greater region, Foster City has become a leader in the region to champion Age Friendly Initiatives. In fact, in the September 2019 report Wallethub.com ranked Foster City as #14 of Best Cities to Retire in California.



To learn more about the Foster City Village, visit fostercityvillage.org



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