

Montgomery County Villages Collective Impact Report Fiscal year 2024

Executive Summary

Montgomery County's 30 active villages and 7 developing villages continued to play a vital role in supporting older adults who choose to age in place. In FY24, twenty-two villages reported data that shows a significant increase in social and educational events, volunteer services, and collaborative efforts to better serve their communities.

Key achievements include:

Twenty-two reporting villages hosted a record 4,049 events with over 37,700 total attendees, a sign of the villages' ability to adapt by offering both in-person and virtual programming.

Volunteers provided 10,785 direct services, including 6,169 rides, demonstrating the villages' critical role in supporting independent living. With combined budgets of \$919,884., villages total volunteer time of 49,175 hours can be valued at over \$1.6 million*, a significant savings to the county.

The Montgomery County Village Consortium was founded, positioning the villages for greater collective impact through shared resources and advocacy.

Villages expanded outreach to diverse and underserved communities through a State grant to the Montgomery County Consortium and an ARPA grant to the Area Agency on Aging for a Hispanic Outreach Specialist.

* Based on recent volunteer hour value of \$33.49.

While the villages have shown resilience and innovation, sustaining volunteer engagement and diversifying funding sources remain ongoing challenges. The report provides details on the villages' activities, impact, and future.

Fostering Social Connections

Villages are successful in creating vibrant local communities that combat social isolation. In FY24, reporting villages hosted a combined average of 11 events per day, ranging from educational presentations to social activities. This represents a significant increase from previous years, as villages leveraged a hybrid model of in-person and virtual events to optimize accessibility. Overall, 37,721 participants attended these events, a testament to the villages' ability to engage residents throughout the county.

Table 1: FY24 aggregate data on social engagement

	Social and educational events	Number of participants in all events	Number of people involved with the village
Total for 22 villages reporting	4,049	37,721	6,619
Average for reporting villages	193	1,886	315

The shift to a hybrid event model during the pandemic has allowed villages to maintain robust participation while also reconnecting community members in person. This balanced approach has been crucial in providing options for those who may be homebound, have caregiving responsibilities, or are immunocompromised, while also facilitating much-needed face-to-face interactions.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

In addition to fostering social connections, villages are instrumental in providing direct volunteer services to support older adults aging in place. In FY24, volunteers logged a total of 49,175 hours, valued at over \$1.6 million (based on recent volunteer hour value of \$33.49). These services included transportation, shopping assistance, home repairs, tech support, and friendly check-ins.

The top request for assistance continues to be transportation. In FY24 volunteers provided 6,169 rides, many to medical appointments. Villages have developed effective volunteer recruitment, training, and management strategies to sustain these critical services. Qualitative feedback from recipients highlights the personal impact of these neighborly acts, such as the Bradley Hills Village member who was able to continue gardening using a stand-up garden bed; an innovative solution so those with mobility issues can participate.

Table 2: FY24 aggregate data on volunteerism

	active volunteers	direct service volunteers	Number of rides (one way)	Number of all other services	ALL volunteer hours
Total	1,016	609	6,169	4,616	49,175
Average	51	123	294	220	2,342

Leadership and Sustainability

Villages are primarily volunteer-led organizations, with an average of one paid staff member per village. While some villages operate without any paid staff, others have expanded their capacity by adding part-time or full-time positions to support functions like volunteer management, communications, and administrative tasks.

The total annual budget for the 22 participating villages was \$919,884 in FY24. Villages seek to diversify their funding sources, which include county contracts, grants, and individual donations. Ensuring long-term sustainability remains a key

priority, as villages work to develop robust volunteer leadership pipelines and explore innovative revenue streams.

Table 3: FY24 aggregate operational data.

	Number of paid staff	Total annual budget
Total	12	\$919,884
Average	0.60	\$43,804

New and Promising Directions

The establishment of the Montgomery County Village Consortium, developed by seven villages, was a significant accomplishment in FY24. This new association aims to provide shared services and resources, as well as advocacy, to support both established and developing villages. The Consortium received initial American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) funding to hire a part-time fundraiser and outreach coordinator. Additionally, state legislation was passed to provide three years of funding for the Consortium, further strengthening the villages' collective impact. The Village Support Network (formerly RAVE) also expanded its reach, offering branding, marketing, and technology support to villages across the county.

Diversity and Outreach

Villages continue to prioritize diversity and inclusion in their programming and outreach efforts. The Area Agency on Aging's hiring of a full-time Hispanic Outreach Specialist, funded through ARPA, has been a crucial step in engaging traditionally underserved communities. The specialist has focused on organizing events and identifying volunteer leaders in areas with significant Hispanic populations, such as Long Branch, Germantown, and Montgomery Village.

While villages have made progress, challenges remain in consistently implementing inclusive practices and reaching diverse older adults. Village leaders meet monthly to share best practices and strategize on ways to better serve all members of their communities.

Conclusion

Montgomery County's villages have demonstrated remarkable resilience and innovation in FY24, expanding their reach, services, and collaborative efforts. As the villages continue to evolve, they remain committed to their core mission of supporting older adults who choose to age in place with dignity, autonomy, and a high quality of life. The collective impact of these volunteer-driven, community-based organizations is vital in addressing the growing needs of the county's aging population.

Annex: Village Narratives

Narratives from participating villages highlight their unique achievements, challenges, and community impact in FY24. These stories provide valuable on-the-ground perspectives and illustrate the diverse ways in which villages are serving their residents. Common themes emerge around the villages' roles in combating isolation, providing vital services, and cultivating a sense of belonging within their communities.

Bradley Hills Village

Over the past year, our membership has almost doubled thanks to a door-to-door campaign handing out our new brochure. As we celebrate our 10th Anniversary, we see a shift in our membership as those who founded the village are now in need of services. Our members continue to join for social events and those who attend our events take comfort in asking for services from their friends. In FY24, we were awarded a grant from the State for a program to build community and engage in nature. We doubled our events and our participation in events during this program. We also refreshed our website and shared our program so that others could replicate part or all of what we did. The grants and awards have injected great energy into our village. As we have gained more members and as members have gotten to know each other more, we are watching our ride

requests and service needs increase. We will turn our focus towards volunteer recruitment next year. We have lots to be proud of as a village and even more to be thankful for. The ongoing support from organizations and the engagement of our membership make us who we are today.

One Vignette: BHV holds many gardening events, but most require the ability to kneel or lift. Members with mobility issues were missing the opportunity to dig in the dirt. To try and address this, BHV rented a stand-up garden table from the Montgomery County Department of Parks. A garden table is a raised garden bed that is around 200 square feet. With a garden table, you can stand up and lean on a walker or cane and garden. For the 2024 growing season, it costs \$35 to rent a garden table from Montgomery County. For most of the community garden plots, there is a multi-year waitlist; however, the County reserves several stand-up garden tables for those with disabilities, and BHV was able to rent one for the 2024 growing season. We have a handful of members who have visited the table and one who has committed 8 hours of tending to the garden. It has been a rewarding experience for those who want to get their hands in the dirt but lack the mobility to bend. We use our newsletter and garden day to showcase what is happening at the standup garden.

Second Vignette: The commitment of BHV to being intergenerational motivated BHV to join a local neighborhood group to co-sponsor the first annual Family Day at The Triangle Garden in the Summer of 2023. The event included sprinklers and wading pools, a scavenger hunt in the garden, snacks, and two picnic tables for arts and crafts. Nearly 80 people took part from toddlers to elementary school kids, young parents delighted to discover one another, and a man with a broad smile in a wheelchair at the bottom of the street sitting with a friend and watching for an hour as the kids squealed and ran under a tyrannosaurus rex sprinkler. It was a magical day for everyone. The most lasting physical evidence of the day's delight was the creation of a rock snake that was named Bradley. Children and a few adults painted rocks so that they could be added as a body to the gorgeously painted head of a smiling snake. Bradley still resides along the edge of the middle bed of native plants in the Triangle Garden. In April 2024, our BHV work crew in the garden just removed his winter blanket of leaves to reveal all of Bradley's vibrant colors. We will host the second annual family day in the summer of 2024.

East County Village Seniors

ECVS is post-pandemic and struggling to regroup! However, we are attracting new volunteer members with a few high-interest impact events and hope to retain them through Summer with limited meeting time as our meeting location is the Community Center, which provides Summer Camp for kids.

Bethesda Metro Area Village

In 2023, Bethesda Metro Area Village debuted a new logo that better showcases the values – friendship, fun, caring, and connection – that unite the BMAV community. BMAV brings together both those who have lived in Bethesda for years and those who have moved here more recently, through opportunities to develop friendships and engage in cultural, educational, and physical activities. In our seventh year of operations, our Board of Directors continued healthy transitions in leadership and membership and completed a strategic planning process to help us anticipate and meet the challenges and opportunities that face us over the next five years. We continue to be on solid financial footing, working toward our village’s mission:

- To build an engaged, caring community of members who want to remain in their homes as they age.
- To provide members with opportunities to make and strengthen social connections, explore educational and cultural activities, and engage in shared interests with friends.
- To provide volunteers who perform services that help members remain in their homes with dignity.

Friendship Heights Neighbor Network

Friendship Heights Neighbors Network is a nine-year-old village that continues to meet the ever-increasing needs of its maturing senior membership. With the help of our dedicated volunteer base, our seniors have the option to receive support services that allow them to age in place and remain active in their community.

FHNN understands the significance of human connection and the importance of battling loneliness, particularly as we get older. We are dedicated to fostering

friendships throughout our village looking for threads of commonality to create those alliances. One of our newer members, Zsuzsanna, originally from Hungary, was introduced to a volunteer, Margit, who speaks fluent Hungarian. Zsuzsanna was having some difficulty finishing a crochet project so Margit, a seasoned FHNN ambassador, registered her for our monthly Crafts & Chat meeting. At the meeting, Joan knew of and connected her with an advanced crocheter, Bobbe who gave the instructional help and tips to finish the project. A long chain of connections and new FHNN friendships that made this happy ending possible.

FHNN members are givers and enjoy helping others in our neighborhood. One of our recent activities that has been most rewarding is the Twiddle Muff Project. FHNN was contacted by Montgomery Hospice and asked to knit Twiddle Muffs for their clients. A Twiddle Muff is a cozy knitted or crocheted tube that people put their hands inside to 'fiddle' with buttons, beads, pompoms, etc. These muffs are popular with people who may have agitated hands and can offer some gentle, reassuring distraction. To date, the Friday Fiber Friends (FHNN knitting group) has donated over 185 Twiddle Muffs to various organizations. It's 'Neighbors helping Neighbors'.

Wyngate & Maplewood Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Now in our 9th year, our Village's volunteers continue stepping up to give needed rides and other direct assistance in our community. The shared-interest groups that we supported continued to create & sustain friendships and the sense of a community where there are people who care.

Our Village is all-volunteer, no-fee, and engages all generations in our community. For example, the vaccination clinic we co-hosted with Giant Pharmacy on a Saturday morning last Fall enabled mobility-impaired residents to be vaccinated in their cars and all family members to be conveniently vaccinated together.

Our place and relevance in the community was further strengthened by hosting a series of presentations on financial literacy and on sustainable living -- topics favored in our poll of the community's interests.

Being community-wide also enabled us to find and engage a young, talented, and gracious resident to lead our adoption of the Stronger Memory program. Village-

organized outings to local points of interest (like the Josiah Henson House) got neighbors to visit places they've long meant to see.

North Bethesda Village

Over the past year, NBV has significantly expanded our offerings to the community and has begun laying the foundation for developing a membership structure and a service delivery system. We offered 12-15 events and activities each month, including regular social meetings and gatherings for games and social interaction at Davis Library. We also offered online and in-person workshops on fine arts, and enlisted expert speakers addressing aging-related topics.

A highlight of the past year was our October 2023 Covid/Flu clinic, which provided nearly 100 vaccines to approx. 80 participants. This event was the result of a successful collaboration between NBV and the Villages of Kensington, with support from Giant Pharmacy, funding from the Federal government, and coaching from Little Falls Village.

Potomac Community Village

Potomac Community Village saw great growth and engagement over the past year. Our nearly 200 members and 45 volunteers embraced the robust set of programs and social opportunities that we offered. These ranged from a popular monthly speaker's series on topics such as AI and health, to virtually- led art tours of museums nationwide, to nature hikes and many social events. Our latest addition is a new Solo Aging group which has been enthusiastically embraced by our solo agers. From coffee and conversations to lunches at different ethnic restaurants, PCV has something to offer everyone. Our members truly enjoy each other and our Village community. "I enjoy the Village's resources and events and meeting new people who are aging well with flexibility and courage," says Marj, a PCV member. Amy K. notes, "Potomac Community Village has been a true gift for my parents, providing them with interesting intellectual opportunities and social engagement."

King Farm Neighbors Village

Over the past year, we have seen the number of members, volunteers, and participants in our events continue to grow. We have encouraged more diversity in our events which has led to some new participants and greater appreciation for the treasures and variety of cultures within our own community. For example, last November we had a Diwali celebration at our regular monthly coffee and enjoyed treats associated with this holiday. Some members came dressed in their traditional clothes and led a discussion about the different celebrations of this holiday in India. In June we held a widely acclaimed highlight event to learn about sign language that included input from current college students learning sign-language who compared their experiences with those of our senior members who learned another style of sign language. Finally, we co-sponsored an event in May with the Mattie Stepanek Foundation to celebrate the legacy of Mattie Stepanek who was a treasured member of our community and is honored in our local park. His Mother, Jeni—a member of our village—led a discussion and creative activity with some young attendees who made beautiful tiles to include in a mosaic dedicated to Mattie.

Greater Stonegate Village

GSV has prioritized community involvement and intergenerational outreach over the last year. We recently partnered with the Stonegate Citizens Association to co-sponsor a program with the Stonegate Community Police Liaison to help assuage some recent concerns about neighborhood crime. GSV hosts one to two educational programs per month, which are open to all members of the Stonegate community and other local villages. While choosing program topics, our Program Committee Chair, Marla Lahat, selects speakers who will help our members live healthy and informed lives. In addition, we welcomed a new executive administrator this year. Overall, we have had a great year and are thankful for the county's continued support.

North Chevy Chase Connections

NCCC is making a big impact in our neighborhood. We celebrated our fifth anniversary since launching services with an elegant event at one of our local partner's events spaces in January 2024 with 125 attendees. We have multiple

points of engagement with our neighbors each month through our communications (listserv, monthly digest, and emails), programming, services, and interest group activities. Our membership is growing, and we are financially sustainable at this point as an all-volunteer village. Our focus this coming year is finding volunteers willing to take leadership positions.

Villages of Kensington

Villages of Kensington has made substantial recoveries from the Covid era. In the past fiscal year, we have enlarged the Board, adding three new members to a full complement of 10. We have added 24 members and five volunteers in the first six months of 2024. We have increased our number of social activities and have become much better known in the 20895 community. We have a long way to go to meet the needs of this community, but we are headed in the correct direction.

Chevy Chase at Home

We continued to provide support, services, and social opportunities for our members and the community at large and we provided even more opportunities for engagement and expanded programming. In addition to our volunteer-provided services, we also continued to offer a wide range of programs, including our Guest Speakers Series, a fall Vaccine Clinic, and several events at local museums and gardens. We provided programs to 1,902 participants, 212 interest group meet-ups, a vaccine clinic for over 150 participants, 134 exercise classes, 20 Guest speakers and presentations, 20 participants and 80 letters exchanged through our Pen Pal Program with students in the English as a Second language program at Chevy Chase Elementary School. Our interest groups met regularly, both in person and online, and brought people together in small groups. The groups covered a wide range of interests including books, movies, coffee and conversation, walking and exercise, brunch gatherings, knitting, needlepoint and other crafts, and gardening.

Strathmore Bel Pre Village

Strathmore Bel Pre Village is a developing, multigenerational village comprising the full neighborhood of Strathmore Bel Pre, located in the Aspen Hill region of Silver Spring, MD. After surveying the community in June of 2023, SBPV began

Fiscal Year 2024 offering social, educational, and wellness programming to meet the interests and needs expressed by the community. SBPV has used this first full year to grow its program, foster relationships, and develop name recognition and trust within the community.

The social, wellness, and educational programs have been well-received and new members join with each new activity offered. The village has established some new community traditions, such as the monthly Village Volksmarch, a 5K community nature hike on the first Saturday of each month. Another favorite program series is Village Voices, where volunteer members of the community teach other neighbors what “community” looks like in their native home cultures. So far, participants have learned about connectedness in Mali, West Africa, and how they eat and socialize together regularly as a large community group. Participants also learned what it was like to be a tween in France under Nazi occupation during WWII. Members have also enjoyed various exercise classes, game nights, happy hours, and garden tours as well as a variety of educational and wellness programs.

The Montgomery County Villages Consortium will be SBPV's fiscal sponsor for Fiscal Year 2025. SBPV is anxious to begin volunteer services in FY25 as soon as it obtains insurance and nonprofit status through the nascent consortium.

Mill Creek Village

Mill Creek Village is an all-volunteer, no-fee organization helping senior residents age safely and gracefully in their homes. During the past year, we celebrated our 10th year anniversary. We proudly continue to provide for our Derwood community by assisting our senior neighbors in need and promoting a caring, informed and socially connected community. In addition to providing senior rides and home visits, we hosted eight free social events and kept our neighbors informed by publishing an e-newsletter and posting on social media. We also initiated the coordinating of a monthly luncheon at various local restaurants for senior residents where they can socialize with each other over a leisurely meal. Our expenses are supported not only by the generous donations of our residents but also through sponsorship from 14 local businesses. We are building additional ties within our community by event partnering with the Mill Creek Towne Garden Club as well as the Mill Creek Towne Swim Association. This summer marked the

installation of our first Little Free Library near the Mill Creek Towne Elementary School.

Village at Kentlands and Lakelands

In 2023, the Village at Kentlands and Lakelands (VKL) achieved a significant milestone by becoming a free-standing non-profit entity. This transition was accompanied by the creation of an Advisory Board, which meets quarterly to provide strategic guidance and oversight. While the Advisory Board plays an important role in shaping VKL's direction, the day-to-day operations and major responsibilities are managed by the Steering Committee. Supporting this leadership are three subcommittees—Events, Communication, and Administration—which are instrumental in executing the organization's activities and initiatives.

VKL has 61 members and 48 dedicated volunteers. In fiscal year 2024, VKL volunteers collectively drove 1,077 miles and spent 203 hours providing transportation services, which included 166 round-trip and one-way rides. In addition to transportation, volunteers fulfilled 200 non-transportation requests, dedicating 136 hours to tasks such as grocery shopping, picking up and delivering mail, making friendly visits or check-in calls, providing IT support, and running errands. Beyond direct services, 11 volunteers contributed 1,707 hours to organizational tasks, including administrative duties and work on the Events and Communications committees, as well as participation in the Consortium.

VKL's commitment to fostering community engagement was evident in the 13 events it sponsored, which attracted over 300 attendees, including members, volunteers, and the public. These events not only provided opportunities for connection but also laid the groundwork for new initiatives. VKL launched special interest groups, guided by a survey designed to identify members' interests, and plans are underway to create more groups based on the feedback received.

The organization also prioritized effective communication to keep its members, volunteers, and the community informed. Monthly articles were published in two community newspapers, while quarterly newsletters provided in-depth discussions on critical topics. Additionally, a monthly publication called "Happenings" summarized upcoming community events, county initiatives, and volunteer opportunities.

For FY 2025, VKL's key initiatives include developing a strategic plan to ensure long-term growth and sustainability, migrating data to the Helpful Village platform

to enhance operational efficiency, launching a new website to improve communication and engagement with members and volunteers, and expanding outreach to involve more people. VKL also intends to create a comprehensive document detailing the critical activities performed by its Steering Committee and sub-committee members, ensuring continuity and clarity in its operations. The accomplishments of VKL in FY 2024 highlight the dedication and collaboration of its members and volunteers. With a strong foundation and clear plans for the future, VKL is poised to continue its mission of building a supportive and connected community.

Olney GoRides

We provide rides to Seniors in the Greater Olney Area at no fee to them. Primarily for medical appointments, but other rides also, such as religious events and social events. I am very proud of this organization served by people who generously give of their time to help Neighbors.

Silver Spring Village

The number and range of activities and services at Silver Spring Village continued to grow. During the year, we received our first grant from the State of Maryland and continued to partner with other non-profits including the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative for a consumer education event and Little Falls Village for a vaccination clinic. The Village was again included in Spur Local (formerly the Catalogue for Philanthropy) and was awarded "Non-Profit of the Year" by the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce. During the year, we developed a publicly accessible online "Resources for Seniors" webpage with more than 1,000 aging-specific resources and began developing an ongoing health and wellness education series. **The year was capped off by being cited as a key reason Silver Spring was chosen by Fortune Magazine as America's #1 Best Place to Live for Families.**

Little Falls Village

The 2023-24 fiscal year highlighted a cooperative effort in public health via the village network, as Little Falls Village collaborated with sister villages (Silver Spring Village, Village of Takoma Park, Wyngate & Maplewood Neighbors Helping

Neighbors, North Bethesda Village, Village of Kensington), Village to Village Network, and Giant Pharmacy to increase the rate of vaccination uptake under an effort funding by The National Council on Aging (NCOA). The effort's success - born of local ingenuity and effort - highlighted the power of village networks to get things done and done well!

Village Support Network (RAVE)

Village Support Network (VSN), a DBA of Rockville Area Village Exchange, was established in 2017 and is a 501(C)3 that addresses gaps and needs of new Villages in Montgomery County. We have an all-volunteer Board composed of a diverse set of individuals advancing our mission: Village Support Network (VSN) empowers developing and vulnerable Villages by offering tailored operational support to enable sustainable growth and success.

During the past 18 months, VSN has served as an incubator of multiple neighborhood Villages and in total has supported over 20+ Villages in the county. While each Village has unique needs, the solutions provided often serve as replicable models for others, leading to successful outcomes and overall cost savings such as:

- New Websites: launched 5 new and customized Village websites and additional tech support to existing villages focusing on boosting visibility and increasing community engagement.
- Grant Writing Workshop: VSN hosted a workshop focused on Grant Writing equipping Village leaders with the tools and information needed to secure essential funding
- Creative Marketing: VSN developed logos and customized marketing materials to raise awareness and effectively promote Village initiatives, driving increased community involvement.

Tech Support: We secured the OWL system, a state-of-the-art audiovisual tool to enhance connection through hybrid meetings and keep communities engaged. Villages can use this as needed, as it is transportable. Additional technology tools, such as Zoom, Mail Chimp, Survey Monkey, website URLs, etc., have been purchased for the villages.

- Board Strategy workshop and individualized Villages consulting support from a partner company.
- Leadership Support: training and guidance to help Village leaders strengthen organizational foundations and navigate operational challenges.

VSN's Resources site is: <https://www.villagesupportnetwork.org/resources> including topics such as:

- Board Governance and Strategy
- Grant Writing
- Communication Strategies
- Newsletter Templates
- Volunteer Management
- Promotional Material (e.g. Digital Strategy)

Additional information can be found at <https://www.Villagesupportnetwork.org>

Village of Takoma Park

The Village of Takoma Park has had a very busy year. Our anchor activity is providing free rides (through VillageRides, a partnership with the Jewish Council for the Aging) to our members, who need to get to medical and other appointments, grocery stores, and pharmacies. One rider told us: “It is such a blessing to know I have a reliable ride to the doctor’s” and our volunteers are thrilled to help our seniors remain independent.

In June 2024, the City of Takoma Park, through the State of Maryland Department of Aging, awarded our Village 31,000, making it possible for us to offer home repairs and small improvements free of charge to our members, enhancing their ability to live safely in their homes as their needs change. We work closely with landlords and homeowners to support seniors aging in place. We also work with Community Forklift, another Maryland non-profit that provides free building materials for our repair projects. We have installed wheelchair ramps, repaired decks, waterproofed basements, completed yard work, and fixed decks and gutters.

We match volunteers with members who appreciate friendly visits or walking partners. We co-host with Silver Spring Village, an LGBTQ Senior group. We also sponsor a group called the Parents of Special Needs Adults (POSNA). Our monthly walking group is extremely popular.

We have potlucks, monthly museum visits, and our very popular stronger memory program. For something new, we partnered with the Silver Spring non-profit Docs in Progress on their Village Reels project, giving high school students the opportunity to learn and create two mini-documentary films featuring Village seniors who shared their life stories. We loved having the high school kids around, and the mini-docs are inspiring.