

Senior Living

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Potomac
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Senior Living

It Takes a Village

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

When Penelope Roberts, 73, of Alexandria, Virginia, had knee replacement surgery last month, she knew she would be out of commission for several weeks. Although Roberts is divorced and doesn't have any children, she had a network of support in place to drive her to medical and physical therapy appointments, pick up prescriptions and even return a library book.

Several years ago Roberts joined At Home In Alexandria (AHA), a local not-for-profit group, built on the "village" model of community-based aging. Villages are membership-based, nonprofit organizations, run by both volunteers and paid staff, that offer access to services from a network of volunteers like technical support, household maintenance and repairs, social activities and educational opportunities.

Need a new light bulb in your dining room chandelier? Want to see a play or discuss Jane Austen? A village volunteer can help.

"I bought patio furniture and after I struggled for an hour-and-a-half putting together one chair, a volunteer came out and put together all of my patio furniture in almost no time," said Roberts. "These are small things, but if you can't do them for yourself, you want to feel that you can call upon somebody and not feel embarrassed about it."

AHA is one of more than 48 villages around the Washington, D.C., area, according to the Washington Area Villages Exchange (WAVE). The movement, which began in Boston in 2002 with Beacon Hill Village, is on the rise as more seniors express desires to remain in their homes and communities as long as possible.

Volunteers offer services like home repairs and maintenance, transportation, social health and wellness programs, social and educational activities, and fulfill other day-to-day needs, enabling individuals to remain connected to their communities throughout the aging process.

"We can work on a leaky faucet or short-term pet care, we can take care of short-term plant watering needs," said Cele Garrett, executive director of AHA. "If they need IT support or if they're trying to get their DVR set up ... we can help with that." Garrett says the Washington-area has the highest concentration of villages in the country.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS are one of the most vital aspects of village communities. "It's really important for people not become isolated if you want to maintain a healthy outlook on life," said Sheila Moldover, communications chair, Potomac Community Village in Potomac, Maryland. "Social connections add flavor to your life."

In fact, village officials name the social



Photo courtesy of Potomac Community Village

Steve Lorberbaum, the owner of Assisting Hands of Potomac, speaks to members of the Potomac Community Village about aging in place.

"It's really important for people not become isolated if you want to maintain a healthy outlook on life."

— Sheila Moldover

component as one of the most important aspects of their programs. "Our members want to get out and meet people and enjoy themselves," said Roberts. "That is a critically important role that we play."

Activities include trips to local museums, performances, concerts, and lunch and dinner engagements. For example, the Lake Barcroft Village in Fairfax County, Virginia, hosted an author talk with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Pat Sloyan, who discussed his book, "The Politics of Deception: JFK's Secret Decisions on Vietnam, Civil Rights and Cuba." Later this month, the Arlington (Virginia) Neighborhood Villages Opera Buffs group is hosting a happy hour and discussion of Verdi's "Othello." The Potomac Community Village is hosting a theater party at the Round House Theater in Bethesda, Maryland.

"Our social events are a great way to stay engaged and active because it's easy to get out if we've already made arrangements for

you," said Garrett. "All you have to do is sign on. You don't have to find an activity or someone to go with."

THE SERVICES OFFERED vary from village to village and are tailored to meet the specific needs of the local community. For example, in Mount Vernon, Virginia, transportation is a concern. Barbara Sullivan, executive director of Mount Vernon at Home says that her volunteer drivers provide an average of 100 rides to seniors each month.

"There are virtually no sidewalks and there are hills," said Sullivan. "Transportation is a huge issue for seniors who want to stay in their homes and remain active."

Roberts is in charge of the volunteer committee for AHA. As both a volunteer and a recipient of village services, she recognizes what a difference those who receive training and offer their services free of charge can make. For example, she assisted a fellow member with small tasks that were a big help. "I was able to put clothes in the washing machine for her, take a book to the library and change bedding that she couldn't change," said Roberts.

"One day soon we'll be making requests for the same help that we provide," said Steve Nelson of Del Ray, Alexandria, an AHA volunteer. "We've met such incredibly terrific and fascinating people that we never would have met otherwise. That's a great motivator."

"We have volunteers who can help with organizing, decluttering or cleaning out a closet," said Garrett. "What would a neighbor or good friend help with? They'd help you with these things, but you wouldn't ask a neighbor to help you to the bathroom."

Coming Up in Potomac

Next General Meeting: Thur. Oct. 22, 2015, 7 p.m.

Free and open to all

"Making Your Community Livable for All Ages" with Stephanie Firestone, Program Director of the Livable Communities Project, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Almost 20 percent of Potomac residents are now age 65 and up, and most of them want to age in place in their own homes.

How to help make this happen and make our Potomac community more livable for all ages, from children to seniors, is the focus of a free program on Oct. 22, at 7 p.m. presented by Potomac Community Village. The topic is "Making Your Community Livable for All Ages," and the speaker is Stephanie Firestone, Program Director of the Livable Communities Collaborative of the National Association of Area

Agencies on Aging.

Key to this is taking a hard look at transportation, since Potomac is very much a car-centric community.

The program, which is free and open to all, is part of Potomac Community Village's series of monthly meetings.

Bolger Center, 9600 Newbridge Dr., Potomac, Room 111, Osgood Building. Use Parking Lot #3; and enter the Osgood Building's side door directly from the parking lot.

Information:
info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org
Telephone: 240-221-1370

PCV's Appraisal Roadshow Sunday, Nov. 1, 2:30 - 5 p.m., Potomac Community Center Free and open to all.

Do you own an inherited piece of jewelry, a silver tea service, an antique clock, piece of art, or some other heirloom you're curious about? On Sunday, November 1st at 2:30 p.m., you'll have an opportunity to get a professional appraisal of its value and expert advice on what you can do with it.

Presented by Potomac Community Village, the Appraisal Roadshow will take place at the Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. During the show, a gemologist from Paradigm Experts and a guest generalist appraiser will educate the audience about the market for these personal valuables while they assess the age and value of the items brought in. No more than one item per person appraised. Those wanting an appraisal must send a description and photo of the item to Roadshow@PotomacCommunityVillage.org no later than Wednesday, Oct. 28, in order to allow time for the appraisers to research items in advance.

Admission to the Roadshow is free, and is open to all, but it will help us if you reserve in advance so we have enough seating and refreshments. For more information about this exciting event and to reserve your seat, please contact Roadshow@PotomacCommunityVillage.org or 240-221-1370.

www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org

Senior Living

Exactly What You Want in Retirement

Kill the living room, maximize the kitchen.

By John Byrd

There's no doubt that the concept of a family kitchen has been radically altered in the past few decades. Homeowners are comfortable with less enclosure; more visual continuum. They are also embracing zoning ideas that make it easier for a hostess to move between food preparation tasks and entertaining guests.

But suppose the proposed solution for more kitchen space is to "lose the living room?" Unthinkable at first, but then — "really innovative, clever... a huge breakthrough."

Such were the revelations of Joy Green, owner of a 3,000-square-foot residence in Oak Hill, Va. as she contemplated a plan to introduce a gourmet kitchen into the rear of traditional-style three level home.

Joy and husband Helmut, both in their mid-60s, had purchased the house new in 1983; raised three boys in it and, like most homeowners of the period, had happily adapted to what the home had to offer.

Fast forward 15 years, and the Greens have finally removed a wall between the



A former family room and tiny kitchen came together to create a gourmet kitchen nearly three times the size of the original for seniors Helmut and Joy Green of Oak Hill.

family room and the kitchen. There's now more light. But the wall separating the kitchen from south-facing dining room still blocks out the morning sun, and the space remains quite restricted.

"Storage was really a problem. I had to keep certain cooking implements in the basement or other closets. Just keeping

track of what was where was really inconvenient."

But as the Greens gradually became empty-nesters and then retirees, thoughts of retrofitting the first floor to better satisfy emerging entertainment and culinary pursuits prevailed. Joy began to research kitchen design ideas in magazines and

online. She came across kitchen design pro Marcelo Dobrauchi of Terranova Construction K&B and set up meeting in her home.

"I had been experimenting with new space plan ideas for months," Joy said.

"I was kind of stumped. But Marcelo put everything into perspective almost immediately. In the end, he drafted eight floorplan variations. He was very thorough on every issue — and there were many."

"I thought an open plan might be better suited to what Joy and Helmut were looking for," Dobrauchi said, "so I sketched out a concept showing how they could convert the living room to a formal dining room while reconfiguring the adjacent kitchen/family room space as a large open kitchen revolving around a food prep island and dining counter."

At 16-feet-by-3-feet, the handsome food prep island and five stool dining counter is the kitchen's focal point. A pair of state-of-the-art baking ovens are within easy reach of the white quartz counter surface — which parallels a black quartz surface that includes a wine refrigerator and a glass-facing stemware cabinet.

Completing the transitional-style interior design statement, walnut flooring and crown molding create a visual unity. Natural light floods in from all directions.

John Byrd (byrdmatx@comcast.net) has been writing about home improvement topics for 30 years. See more stories at www.HomeFrontsNews.com.

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and the national Village movement*

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HOW YOU LIVE has everything to do with
WHERE YOU LIVE

Our community is truly the foundation for not only a successful retirement, but a successful life. Here, members live a life engaged, filled with cultural, educational and recreational opportunities—and with the peace of mind and security that comes with quality on-site health care.

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A Perfect Fit

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

Dressed in a baggy t-shirt and jeans, a middle-aged woman opens the door of a lingerie boutique in Chevy Chase and take a few steps inside before come to an abrupt halt. She appeared bewildered; her eyes widened and she absorbed the vast sea of lacy bras and panties, satin nightgowns and smoothing shape wear.

"Come in. I think we've been expecting you," a warm voice called and two well-manicured hands extend to welcome her into the store. "Your doctor called and said you were coming over."

It is this warm spirit, finely tuned knowledge of the industry and personalized service that characterize upscale lingerie boutique Sylene of Washington. The owner, Cyla Weiner of Potomac, recently celebrated 40 years of business.

Among Weiner's specialties are fitting women who have undergone breast surgery. She was the first in the area to do mastectomy fashion shows, using as models real customers undergoing cancer treatment. In fact, she made a trek to the White House in the 1980s to fit then-first lady, Nancy Reagan after her mastectomy.

Weiner, who was born in Germany to Holocaust survivors, opened the boutique after stints as a French teacher and an assistant buyer at the now-defunct department store Woodward & Lothrop. Five years after opening her store, she hired her younger sister, Helen Kestler, as her business partner. The women, who grew up in New Jersey working in their parents' lingerie business, say the business is in their DNA.

"We were brought up working together," said Kestler. "As children, we worked with our parents and we were all part of the team. We did everything together as a family and everybody's input mattered, even when I was eight years old."

Weiner, who has been married for 43 years and has two adult children, says she's managed to stay ahead of trends while remaining true to her core values.

"I'm always honest with customers and I try to give customers what they want," said Weiner. "We can kind of look at a customer and know what will fit and what will look great on them."

From beaded Badgley Mischka swimwear to lacy La Perla thongs and nightgowns, Sylene is stocked with foundation pieces by a list of designers that reads like a New York Fashion week schedule. Weiner prides herself in being able to serve a clientele of all shapes sizes and ages that runs the gamut from transgender shoppers to movie stars, politicians and news journalists.

"There's no reason for a woman to be wearing a bra with straps that are falling down or a back that is riding up," she said. "That's not necessary. It doesn't matter what size you are, there is something that can accommodate your figure."



Cyla Weiner (right), owner of Sylene of Washington, and her sister Helen Kestler worked in their parents' lingerie business as children.

Photos by Marilyn Campbell



Cyla Weiner, owner of Sylene of Washington, restocks lingerie in her upscale boutique.

Beneath her well-coiffed, chestnut hair and cupid's-bow red lips, Weiner appears warm, sincere and hard-working. Polished and petite and wearing black slacks and a fitted top she flitters around the store, simultaneously bringing bras to a client in fitting room and hanging night gowns on a

rack, with an energy that belies her age.

"Cyla is driven, motivated and on target as far as knowing what clients want," said Kestler. "She knows which things are going to sell and what is going to work. Vendors come to her to ask her opinion on what new merchandise should be coming to market."

Potomac resident celebrates 40 years in the upscale lingerie business.

Throughout her four-decade career, as she has doled out lingerie advice to her clients, she has learned from them as well.

"I've learned never to judge anybody by what they look like and to never anticipate how somebody will see herself," she said. "I think I've taught my clients that underwear is really important because it makes a huge difference in how you look and how you feel. When you're self confident and you have on flirty and sexy underwear that fits well, you feel really good underneath and that comes through."

Weiner says eight of ten women wear the wrong bra size, and women should be fitted periodically for new bras. "Your bra size changes just like you change," she said. "Weight gain or loss, birth control pills, pregnancy, nursing - all those things change your bra size. What fit you when you were 20 doesn't fit you when you're 50."

"I'm always honest with customers and I try to give customers what they want."

— Cyla Weiner,
Sylene of Washington

There are six bra types that she recommends every woman own: seamless bras that can be worn under sheer tops; a sexy bra; a sports bra; a strapless bra; specialty bra, such as a backless or low cut bra, and a spa bra for comfort.

Weiner believes in giving back to the community and has supported such causes at Interfaith Works and the cancer centers of local hospitals. Later this month, she is hosting a bra trade-in and encouraging women to bring in their old lingerie to be donated to women in need. For more information: <http://www.sylenedc.com/>

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