

After more than a year of hard work and planning by many volunteers, Redwood Coast Village is getting ready to launch its first membership drive. Villages are now a national movement, with over 190 villages across the United States. Every community designs their village to suit their own needs, and Redwood Coast Village has been diligent in taking surveys and talking with seniors to find out what is most needed in Humboldt County.

In a Village community, members help members, and volunteers of all ages provide the kind of help a friend or good neighbor might offer. Just because you've gotten older, doesn't mean you have to stop being active and helping others. Many times when people retire, their lives contract around them and they become inactive and reclusive. But having a reason to get out of bed everyday keeps us stimulated and socially aware. And the best part about being a volunteer is that you can make your own schedule.

Everyone has different strengths and knowledge, and a Village coordinates a system of connecting people to help seniors stay engaged so they can remain in their own homes as long as possible. Help like rides to appointments, shopping, the post office or a movie; light fix-it jobs in the home and around the yard; assistance with technology – now that is a big one. It used to be you needed a Doc in the family but now it's a computer whiz. As the Village grows, many other volunteer-based services will certainly be added. But for me a huge plus is that volunteering definitely adds meaning and purpose to our lives.

Joining a Village is as much about volunteering as it is about receiving services. It's almost like paying it forward, so that when the time comes that you need assistance yourself, there are not only people there to help you, but people who are part of your Village. It is so much easier to accept these people coming into your home to help you, because you are already comfortable with the system and the people.

Membership will be open to Humboldt County residents age 50 and older. The village is a program of the Area 1 Agency on Aging, and the central office will be located at their building in Eureka. With the

help of a software program built specifically to coordinate the needs of a village, one simple phone call is all that's needed to get the service required, or to find an opportunity to volunteer.

During this first membership drive the Village is offering a Charter Membership for early supporters, getting 13 months for the price of 12. The cost is just over a dollar a day. For an individual the annual cost is \$420, and for a two-person household the cost is \$630.

Redwood Coast Village is offering new options for seniors so give the Area 1 Agency on Aging a call to find out more about our own Redwood Coast Village.