



#### Network News: Happy Older Americans Month!



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## Older Americans Month 2017: Age Out Loud

Getting older doesn't mean what it used to. For many aging Americans, it is a phase of life where interests, goals, and dreams can get a new or second start. Today, aging is about eliminating outdated perceptions and living the way that suits you best.

Since 1963, OAM has been a time to celebrate older Americans, their stories, and their contributions. Led by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the annual observance offers a special opportunity to learn about, support, and recognize our nation's older citizens. This year's theme, "Age Out Loud," emphasizes the ways older adults are living their lives with boldness, confidence, and passion while serving as an inspiration to people of all ages.

Village to Village Network will use OAM 2017 to focus on how older adults in our communities are redefining aging—through work or family interests, by taking charge of their health and staying independent for as long as possible, and through their community and advocacy efforts. We can also use this opportunity to learn how we can best support and learn from our community's older members.

Throughout the month, Village to Village Network will share information on our social medias using the hashtags #OAM17 and #AgeOutLoud to highlight older adults who "Age Out Loud" and empower our communities.

Follow Village to Village Network on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

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## Village Stories: Foreign Language Conversation Groups

[At Home on the Sound](#), in suburban Westchester County, New York, currently boasts more than 200 members and approximately 100 volunteers. We strive to create stimulating opportunities for those with shared interests to meet and socialize. Our Foreign Language Conversation Groups offer these opportunities. Our French and German groups are well established; a Yiddish group has recently begun to meet; and an Italian Group is in the planning stages. These groups convene once per month at the home of a participant and are open to both members and volunteers. Hosting duties rotate.

Our German group is comprised of German-born and Austrian-born people, as well as those who lived in Germany or studied the language. Current events are discussed, as are articles from German newspapers, or American news concerning German affairs. Reminiscences are also an element of the conversations. While chatting, the group enjoys a traditional "Kaffeetafel" (coffee and a selection of baked goods). One member was inspired to bring out her mother's antique coffee service. Another commented, "We could open a bakery with all the delicious goodies that are brought to the table."

In our French conversation group, only one participant is a native speaker; but all who attend share the desire to maintain or refresh their spoken French. In spite of disparate levels of fluency, the group members are very patient and encouraging to one another - a true sense of camaraderie has developed.

Foreign language conversation groups are easy to arrange and a lot of fun. They also provide members an opportunity to exercise skills which may have been dormant for a while - to "brush off the cobwebs" as one member put it. [A recent study has shown improved memory and cognitive functioning in older adults who speak a second language.](#)

We encourage other Villages to inquire among their membership about languages spoken and plan get-togethers. You may be surprised by the number of members who speak a second language. We certainly were!

*Written by Jilana Van Meter*





Village members dining together at a Foreign Languages Conversation group

## Village to Village Network Update

Once a year, the Village to Village Network Board of Directors gathers in St. Louis for an in-person team building meeting. This year our meeting took place on April 3rd– 5th and focused on the value of VtVN. Your VtV Network board spent a day and a half poring over the details of member benefits, benefits of Villages and the Village Movement and identifying gaps that needed to be filled. The board came to the conclusion that the overall greatest value the Network brings to member Villages and the Village Movement is a national presence and the ability to share and spread the word while also educating the public, government and other organizations about Villages everywhere.

By the end of the retreat in St. Louis, the VtVN BOD put together a plan for building on and improving the work of expanding our national presence. The board agreed to work together to tailor and refine our messaging, build up our national partners, identify and plan to attend more national conferences, collect more promising practices and increase our overall marketing. This work has already begun and we look forward to sharing more information in the coming months.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in any of the work on building our national presence, please email [mandy.summerson@vtvnnetwork.org](mailto:mandy.summerson@vtvnnetwork.org).

-- Written by: Mandy Summerson, President, Village to Village Network



The VtVN Board of Directors at dinner Monday evening before a long day of meetings!

## Villages in the News

Here are a few Villages who have been featured in news articles lately. Click the links below to check them out!

Dupont Circle Village, At Home in Alexandria. and Village to Village Network:  
**[Baby boomers join 'aging-at-home villages' for yoga, happy hour, cooking classes and biking](#)**

At Home in Darien:  
**[Friendly caller program keeps seniors involved in community](#)**

Care Links:  
**[Saratoga Senior Center helps elderly re-connect with community](#)**

Villages NW:  
**[Kaiser Permanente awards grant to local Village Movement](#)**

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