



Village Beat

Edited by
Amy Hope & Kris Roberts

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Community Village Lawrence is all about volunteers and in this issue of the Village Beat the focus is on several team members who are moving us forward. Their efforts are pushing CVL in a range of areas – developing better community support, planning a gala party, exploring partnership possibilities and implementing benefits for members.

In regards to that last activity, volunteer John Hodge will share his dedication toward creating the paid provider benefit for members. John is organizing this service that other Villages across the country have found to be of great value to their members.

Long time volunteer, Jo Bryant convened the first meeting of our Advisory Council. Jo's deep support traces back to several major initiatives undertaken by CVL.

Drawing on her work with other agencies, she proposed CVL form an Advisory Council. Details from the first meeting follow below.

And who doesn't like a party, especially one with wonderful food? Well mark your calendars for January 15 when CVL will present 'A Taste of San Francisco' featuring the freshest seafood this side of the dock. The menu includes peak season selections featured at elite Bay restaurants. Ooh la-la.

Finally, this newsletter is the commitment of a volunteer who traces way back with CVL. Amy Hope puts the spin on a group she has worked with for years, first as a VISTA volunteer to CVL and now as newsletter editor.

Contact me or our VISTA staff with a suggestion of a group you think maybe interested in learning about Community Village Lawrence and our service to members. It's all about community volunteers.

Thank you,
Chris Holmer
Chairperson
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As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, CVL coordinated receipt and installation of air conditioners for seniors as part of Project ElderCool during Summer 2014. Bishop Sullivan Center and the Mr. Goodcents Foundation began providing air conditioning units to seniors in the Kansas City metro area in 2000, and the program was brought to Lawrence and Topeka by the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging for the first time this year. CVL is very thankful to have been involved in this program, and to have enabled local residents the lower temperatures they need.



On June 10th, Jo Bryant facilitated a planning retreat with the Community Village Board of Directors and volunteers. During the strategic planning session, CVL members established new objectives: form an advisory board; establish community partnerships and potential for joint funding opportunities; and invite local businesses to participate in our paid service provider program for members.

not pictured: John LaRocca

photo by Maggie Kruger

In the month of June, CVL had the help of Roger Hill Volunteer Center's "Summer of Service" members. This program



provides age-appropriate service opportunities for youth in middle and high school during the summer months. Our first volunteer group helped us to make a new banner for the organization, which can be used at local events as an identifier of the organization. This group also created gift boxes to be used at future fundraisers, and worked to assemble informational tri-folds for CVL committees. Our second group was placed with local community members to assist yard work and other outdoor tasks that may have been difficult for the residents themselves.





On July 21st, we welcomed a new AmeriCorps VISTA Program Coordinator. Perlita (Pearl) Torres will work alongside our other VISTA, Kris Roberts. Pearl has experience as a CNA, and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Health Education from San Francisco State University in 2013, before moving to Kansas. She currently lives in Basehor. We are glad to have the addition of her experience and assistance. Please read the interview below to learn more about Pearl.

Amy Hope: *What drew you to apply for an AmeriCorps VISTA position with Community Village Lawrence?*

Pearl Torres: My studies taught me the importance of community ties and the effects on overall human health. I worked as a CNA for a year

and, in that time; I saw that community support was vital to aging well. My interest grew from there. This is a cause I can get behind because I, too, look forward to aging at home.

AH: *Share your experience working with CVL and its members. What tasks have you undertaken so far in your term?*

PT: I've felt welcomed by the CVL "family"; using that term is not a cliché. I have enjoyed getting to know Lawrence. Kris Roberts and I worked together on the RICE Foundation grant which was submitted on September 1st. Also, I've re-initiated the service provider program. Our volunteer, John Hodge, has been a great help! We are building a database, establishing procedures and conducting research on vetting providers.

AH: *What goals and objectives do you wish to meet before the end of your VISTA term?*

PT: I am hopeful that Community Village will be fully launched and that we will be serving at least 50 members by the close of my term. Personally, it is my desire to have helped make a difference in people's lives during my AmeriCorps VISTA service.

Our VISTAs Kris Roberts and Pearl Torres were featured on a 6 News *Acts of Kindness* feature on September 14th spotlighting our Telephone Reassurance Program, in which volunteers make regular calls to residents who live alone, reducing isolation for both participants.

[Please follow this link to read the article and see the video.](#)





As CVL begins the development of our Service Provider program, we are glad to announce the participation of John Hodge as project coordinator. John was born and raised in Ann Arbor, MI, and graduated from Michigan State University. He spent his professional career in supply chain management, mostly in the mineral and agriculture industries. Stops along the way included Dallas, Kansas City, Louisville, Atlanta, and most recently Quincy, Illinois.

In early 2014, he opted out of the corporate world in favor of working part-time in a family business from his home.

"We chose to move to Lawrence because of our familiarity with the area and our desire to live in a vibrant college town with many offerings", John

recalled. It was his plan to become involved in volunteer work from the start, and after months of consideration, he learned about CVL. "It feels like a custom fit" John states, "it is an impactful organization that I can support with my heart. I have assisted seniors in their homes in the past through a church group and found it to be very rewarding and I could clearly see the positive impression on the folks we served. CVL does a great job matching volunteer skills with different facets of the volunteer experience".

John has been married to his wife, Kathy, for 24 years, and has two sons: Austin, 21, a junior at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and Wesley, 18, a freshman at JCCC. In his spare time, John enjoys playing electric guitar in local bands, being actively involved in church and following local sports teams.



CVL had a table at the annual [East Lawrence Block Party](#) on September 27th. Board members gave information to attendees about CVL, and also distributed a community needs survey that to identify the services and programs most necessary for seniors in Lawrence.



On October 14th, CVL held the first meeting with our recently formed Advisory Council, with members Charlie Bryan, Jo Bryant, Linda Cottin, Dennis Domer, Jill Enyart, Allyson Leland, Jeremy Taylor, Nancy Thellman, and Shelly Wakeman. Their dynamic experience and expertise in geriatrics, marketing, finance, healthcare, education, and community relations will benefit the overall project. The Council is expected to offer objective, expert advice, and guidance to help strengthen and support CVL by assisting in the development of its services and the accomplishment of its mission. Over the course of their term, the members may be appointed to specific tasks or activities that will foster the goals of Community Village Lawrence.

Community Village Lawrence is very excited to be [the Merc Change for our Community](#) program's featured organization during the month of November, and will have a table at the Merc on November 15th to spread word about CVL. All donations collected that month will go toward CVL. Shoppers may donate by rounding their orders up to the next dollar, by adding spare change to the register change jars, or by bringing their own shopping bags.

Recent Events

Summer 2014: Project ElderCool (through JAAA, Bishop Sullivan Ctr., Mr. Goodcents Fdn.)

June 10: Strategic Planning Session with Jo Bryant

June 12-13, June 27: Roger Hill Volunteer Center – Summer of Service

July 21: New VISTA, Perlita (Pearl) Torres

September 14: Segment on CVL Telephone Reassurance aired on 6 News

September 27: ELNA Block Party

October 14: First Meeting of CVL Advisory Council

Upcoming Events

Fall 2014: Community needs survey distributed to Lawrence residents

November 2014: CVL as featured *Change for our Community* organization at the Merc

November 15, 2014: Community Village table at the Merc

November 16, 2014: CVL participating in KU Mini Big Event

January 15, 2015: Community Village Lawrence will be hosting a seafood dinner:

[A Taste of San Francisco](#)

