

*I'm feeling disconnected
during this
COVID pandemic.*

*We can help you
with tasks, errands, and
connections.*



Seacoast Village Project

a NH 501(c) (3) non-profit organization

The Village Vibe

Why a Village?

Seacoast Village Project is about **ALL of US** — whether you are giving or receiving assistance. Our services will build on other available resources to create a stronger sense of community — and a goal of keeping older adults engaged and involved in our NH seacoast towns.



Judy's Story



Homegrown tomatoes were tasty in Portsmouth's South End this fall where Judy Nerbonne shares the products of her garden each year with nearby households.

This former board member of "Friends of the South End" (FOSE), a neighborhood association, is urging friends and neighbors to join the The Seacoast Village. "We're close knit, old hands at volunteering in this neighborhood. For years we've relied on each other for rides, food delivery and other forms of informal support when neighbors are in need," she explains.

"It is community-based—something we need in this area"

"Serving others is its own reward"

"Empowers each of us to remain independent"

"Strengthens a community, the conversations, and values when seniors are involved"

"Reduces the feelings of isolation and loneliness"

"Being able to remain in your own home and community"

"Being part of a caring network"

These quotes are from interviews with our members and volunteers.

Interview continues on page 4

Have you ever gone Geocaching?



Sharing geocaching experiences and stories



A newbie gets friendly guidance

On a beautiful day in October, an outdoor treasure hunt called 'geocaching' brought our members, volunteers and friends together in Seabrook. Organized by our Program and Events team, the hunt used an app that provides location coordinates for hidden 'geocaches'. More than three million of these treasures concealed around the world have enticed a growing number of enthusiasts of all ages.

Meet Sandra

New Castle's Sandra Bisset

may be retired but she's not slowing down. This lively Seacoast Village member loves boating off the Maine coast with her husband Wally. Fall is busy as they personally winterize their 38-foot sailing sloop, dinghies, canoes and kayaks. In winter, hibernation has never been Sandra's habit: she has spent years on Maine slopes teaching folks with disabilities how to ski. "It's about providing encouragement to people who may not realize how active they can be," she says.

So, when the Seacoast Village held its first planning meeting, it was no surprise to see Sandra there. "We all need assistance as we age," she declares. "I sat down with caring neighbors who want a full range of supports and services available on the seacoast, so they can choose to stay at home as they age, despite changing circumstances."

Sandra spent more than 30 years working in the field of environmental health and safety, in manufacturing and hospital settings. After retiring from Gillette Manufacturing in Boston, she discovered her pas-



sion: medical advocacy for people in need. "Navigating the health care system to determine the best course of action is what interests me," she says. Now, as a volunteer, Sandra offers health care guidance to aging seacoast residents.

Seacoast Village supported her household as well, when events last spring required her to stay close to home. "Volunteers kept in touch and delivered food to our door," she relates. "It was a godsend."

The key to aging in place, Sandra believes, is access to trustworthy, reliable services to address the whole person, delivered when needs arise. "If we can add value to people's lives, it makes me happy," she says with a big smile. "It just makes so much sense!"

5 simple steps to getting help at home

Interested, but don't know exactly how you fit in? Here's a simple step-by-step guide to help with your decision process.

1. Curiosity:

Okay. You're reading this, so we've piqued your interest. You've already completed the first step. Keep reading.

2. Your needs:

Think about what you might need help with at home. Simple tasks? Yard work? Rides? Or just companionship?

3. Current help:

Who helps you when you need help at home? Family? Neighbors? Do you need more?

4. Trust:

To assure you of a high comfort level, each of our volunteers must pass our strict vetting process. So you can be sure the people helping you are good, trustworthy neighbors.

5. Join:

Just call 603-610-8430 to sign up. Or go to www.SeacoastVillageProject.org. That was easy! Welcome to the community of neighbors helping neighbors!

Our Board of Directors

Nancy Euchner,
President

Kathy Rockwood,
Vice President

Kathy Donovan,
Treasurer

Peter Cass

Patty Evans

Sam Marwit

President's Update

Although our community continues to be challenged by COVID-19, we have not been idle! We have taken the time to build relationships within our Village and in the community, while serving our members and planning for the future. Throughout the summer, we provided telephone outreach, errand service, limited outdoor repairs and rides to medical appointments. As is typical with other Villages around the country, we've been able to easily manage the requests we've received.

We received two grants this year to help us respond to the pandemic. The first, from Connections for Health, allowed us to provide free memberships to those who applied. A second grant allowed us to purchase supplies and equipment to help us gather safely when conditions allowed.

This fall, we are kicking off our official membership drive. Dues will be \$250/year for individuals, \$300/year for a household. We will continue to offer social

and educational events through Zoom. Our Program and Events Team is also planning some outdoor "meet up" get-togethers, which will allow us to share some of the great walking and hiking opportunities around the Seacoast. And we will do what we can to make the holidays a little merrier.

Our primary means of communication is e-mail, but we can stay in touch by phone or snail mail if you prefer. Just let us know by calling our office at 603-610-8430. Leave your name and a good time of day to call and one of our volunteers will get back to you.



Delivering food to a member



To Volunteer or Donate

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Web:

SeacoastVillageProject.org

E-mail:

Info@SeacoastVillageProject.org

amazon smile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Support us when you shop. Amazon will donate .5% of every purchase to your favorite charity when you follow these easy steps:

- Log into smile.amazon.com
- Create an account
- Pick a charity by typing in Seacoast Village Project!

Thank you in advance for trying this.



SeacoastVillageProject

Altruistic Acts: A way to connect during COVID

Dr. Sam Marwit



In the July 2020 issue of The Village Vibe, I tackled the issue of loneliness and proposed ways to

make social connections and build attachments to people we know or may get to know. These include joining organizations such as the Active Retirement Association, retirement communities, co-housing developments, book or movie clubs, pursuing music, gardening, or other interests, on one's own or with friends.

To these I add the practice of altruism, defined as "selfless concern for the well-being of others". Altruism is the giving of one's self to others simply for the sake of giving, or benefitting the human condition, while seeking nothing in return. Providing time and energy to a food pantry, and volunteering time to help others are examples of selfless behaviors. They serve to connect us to the larger human community. While one's purpose is not to benefit oneself, altruistic acts can alleviate our loneliness and be enormously gratifying.

We thought it might be interesting to survey our Village members/volunteers to see what altruistic behaviors they have engaged in and whether these helped with their sense of isolation and loneliness. Here are some of their responses:

- "Making meals for folks who are having some trouble—and the meal is a supportive connection."
- "A quick phone check-in can really make a difference."
- "Giving a hug to an older friend who lives alone and needs reassurance that friends are there for her."
- "Leaving a bouquet of flowers to boost a friend's spirits."
- "A regular walk now takes time to stop and chat a few minutes."
- "Go beyond the 'how are you doing?' --to really listen."
- "For years before the pandemic, I made weekly visits to read poetry to an 85-year old woman, formerly a poet, who was confined to a locked nursing home unit because of Alzheimer's disease. I barely knew her, but discovered she was wonderful company, and when she died at 89, she'd become a close friend."
- "We are having fun trading fun puzzles and nattering a bit about them at appropriate distance in the process of swapping."



So, why would they want to join the Seacoast Village? her neighbors ask. That's because its mission extends beyond casual support. "As people age, we begin to realize that we can't always do for ourselves," says Nerbonne. "And some people who hesitate to ask for help need support to reach out. That's where a reputable organizational structure comes in."

Judy and her husband plan to renovate their house to accommodate them as they age. As a new Village member, she requested advice on how to make their bathroom accessible. "A highly knowledgeable volunteer recommended we get direction from an occupational therapist and gave us names of reputable OTs."

The OT they chose evaluated their entire house, advising on such things as a walk-in shower, ramp, stair lift, and carpeting with low pile to reduce the risk of falls. "In addition, we got to discuss our long-term care policy with a Seacoast Village healthcare professional who knows all the agencies, large and small, in this area."

"We are so pleased with what the Village is building on the seacoast. I'm hoping as many of my neighbors as possible will become members. Some friends and I have begun to form a cluster of Seacoast Village members in the neighborhood. We began holding informational meetings with Seacoast Village speakers in September, and have already seen an increase in membership."

At all ages, being valued as a contributor to one's community is crucial to well-being. Among the values of joining the Seacoast Village, Nerbonne points out, "is discovering ways to do for others what you may not have imagined would so enrich your life."