

VILLAGE OVERVIEW
Aging Services Collaborative
of Santa Clara County

Susan Poor Consulting
November 4, 2009



AGING IN COMMUNITY

WHY NOW?

- Aging of the population
- Our Generation. Our Choice.
- Desire of seniors to remain active and engaged in their own communities – on their own terms
- Limited housing, financing options, and support options
- Redefining “retirement” given the improved health status of seniors and the economic environment
- Focus on civic engagement in society
- Shift in health care needs of aging population – disease prevention and chronic disease self-care

AGING IN COMMUNITY MODELS

- Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)
- Block nurse programs
- Senior Cohousing
- Senior Cooperative housing
- Shared housing
- Villages

WHAT ARE VILLAGES?

Community-based – often virtual – membership organizations that empower older adults to remain active and engaged in their communities and to stay in their own homes and neighborhoods as they age.

WHY VILLAGES MAKE SENSE

- Older adults want to stay in their homes and communities. According to AARP:
 - 89% of those 50+
 - 95% of those 80+
- Other options are limited and/or expensive and/or age segregated.

WHY VILLAGES MAKE SENSE

- Policy and legal trends today support the desire of older adults and those with disabilities to live in the least restrictive environment possible.
- Chronic disease self-management approaches proven more effective in community than clinical settings.

VILLAGE COMPONENTS

- Grass roots
- Membership based (many definitions)
- Member driven - of, by, for members
- Self-governing
- Self-supporting
- Service consolidators
- Care for whole person
- Win-Win collaboration/strategic partnerships (do not duplicate ANYTHING)
- Intergenerational

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Assistance with day-to-day activities
- Social, cultural, educational activities
- Health and wellness
- Volunteering and member-to-member assistance
- Many offer reduced-fee memberships

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- No evidence-based data yet on improved health outcomes or health care cost savings of Village model
- From other models, there is solid data on positive health impacts of social networks and social capital:
 - Social isolation increases risk of morbidity, mortality, cardiovascular disease, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.
 - Social networks positively impact social isolation, longevity, the likelihood of institutionalization, and mortality.
 - Volunteering is associated with higher levels of well-being and improved mortality rates.
 - Poor self-rated health is a risk factor for hospital admission and nursing home placement.

REPLICATION

- 48 operational Villages in U.S. and over 100 more in development
- Replication means starting a new nonprofit or a new program of an existing organization
- Building a Village requires vision, skilled nonprofit leadership, commitment to the process and the model, stamina, high-visibility partners, champions, funding sources

REPLICATION IN LOWER INCOME AREAS

- Neighborhood Exchange Team (NEXT) in San Francisco
- ElderHelp Concierge Club in San Diego
- WISE & Healthy Aging/Santa Monica Village in Los Angeles

SUSTAINABILITY

- Continually build resources:
 - Members/participants – new/renewals
 - Pro bono support
 - Volunteers
 - Strong, skilled board of directors
 - Expertise
 - High-visibility partners and stakeholders
 - Funding
- Become part of the continuum of care in your community

BENEFITS

- Strengths/asset-based approach
- “Upstream” community-building and connection
- Consumer-driven
- Health/wellness/prevention focus
- Volunteering and mutual assistance/reciprocity
- Entrepreneurial – opportunity to leverage resources

LESSONS LEARNED

- Be clear about mission
- Start with defined geographic area
- Recruit local senior activists, leaders
- Explore potential partnerships - do you need to start a new organization?
- Access family foundations and individual donors for funding

RESOURCES/DEVELOPMENTS

- Village to Village Network (www.vtvnetwork.org)
- California Villages Project

FINAL THOUGHTS

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
(Margaret Mead)

What cannot be achieved in one lifetime will happen when one lifetime is joined to another.
(Harold Kushner)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Susan Poor Consulting

susan@susanpoor.com

www.susanpoor.com

415-516-9413