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## Mount Pleasant Village Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 2 - March 2021

[www.mountpleasantvillage.org](http://www.mountpleasantvillage.org)

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### Reliable Sources for COVID-19 Information

The following are valuable resources for information on the COVID-19 pandemic:

- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)
- [District Government](#)
- [Mount Pleasant Village Website](#)

### To Request Assistance

The Village/Neighbors Helping Neighbors initiative provides volunteers to help with shopping, pharmacy pick-ups, and other tasks, as well as masks and food aid. To request assistance, call **202-573-7548** (please leave a voice message) or email [request@anc-volunteering.org](mailto:request@anc-volunteering.org).

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors grew out of a collaboration between ANC-1D and the Village in the spring of 2020, as the pandemic was being recognized as a global health emergency. Seniors were urged to stay at home as much as possible and avoid contact with non-household members. No one knew how long the emergency would last or how the disease would affect different groups.

Volunteers came from all corners of Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights, and a database and clearance system (with background checks facilitated by the Village) were created. Eventually more than 200 volunteers, speaking 17 different languages, were enrolled. Village President Bill Emmet was on hand during the planning and roll-out of Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and he continues to be involved.

Mask-making was one of the first activities of NHN. But the volunteers also distributed flyers about grants to local businesses, drove food donations to other parts of DC, picked up prescriptions, and did many other tasks. Village Board member Tess Amolsch has been both a volunteer and coordinator for many of these tasks.



It quickly became apparent that the pandemic was having a severe impact on poorer residents of Mount Pleasant, as jobs disappeared, schools closed, and parents had to find childcare or stay home themselves. Bancroft School and the local Catholic Charities office began food distribution programs, and long lines formed on Wednesdays to receive food. Village member Larry Rickards was among the volunteers who sorted donated food items into boxes for families.



purchase carts for transporting the food. Ross Hamory and Larry Rickards stepped up to assemble the carts, with the assistance of Ross's grandson, a fifth-grader.

NHN also partnered with World Central Kitchen, the charity founded by renowned chef José Andrés, to use Mount Pleasant restaurants to prepare meals for low-income apartment residents. Village member Claudia Schlosberg was instrumental in that relationship. Inspired by NHN's success, the corporate office of Doctor Bronner's (who of us does not remember, if not still purchase, Dr. Bronner's soap?!) donated soap and hand sanitizer for distribution in Mount Pleasant.

NHN continues to find and fill community needs, including most recently distributing covid information in Spanish and helping those eligible make vaccine appointments (plus finding them rides, if needed).

A community that pulls together in times of trouble is a precious thing. Mount Pleasant Village can be proud of its role in Neighbors Helping Neighbors and its commitment to meeting the needs of the broader community. "Thank you" to all of the many people who have contributed to caring for others during this difficult year.

If you can use NHN's services, call **202-573-7548** (leave a voice message) or email [request@anc-volunteering.org](mailto:request@anc-volunteering.org).

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## Remembering Our Beginnings

### Remembering Our Beginnings

In 2021, for the first time, the Village Board of Directors does not include any of the "founding mothers and fathers." We thought this was an appropriate moment to ask the founders to look back on the early days and share their impressions. We invited them to respond to four questions (below) about how the Village came to be. From small beginnings....



Rebecca Shannon and Robert (Hoff) Hoffman. They are identified by their initials below.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

To see the "Brief History of Mount Pleasant Village" mentioned in the article, [click here](#).

### **Why did *you* get involved in setting up the Village?**

BC: There were news stories about the first Village, in Boston, the Beacon Hill Village. It sounded right, with members in charge, not a paid management staff making decisions. The reasoning was that members would "retire in place" and not make a break with their homes and established communities.

RS: Bonnie Cain and I had noted the movement, and I had attended the first meeting of Village representatives at Gallaudet. I was personally surrounded by young families, and I wanted to know and socialize with more people my age in the neighborhood. At the time, volunteering was less important to me than having day-to-day company to exercise, etc.

MR: Rebecca Shannon sent out an email (maybe on the Mount Pleasant listserv?). I did not know her or anyone else. Anyway, I was in my early 70s and considering issues of aging, so I responded.

EH: I wanted to lend a hand to Rebecca Shannon who was trying to get something started.

KT: I had been looking for some volunteer activity, so when Bonnie [Cain] asked me to attend a meeting (in Mary's [Rojas] house) I went along not knowing what was involved. I got hooked to the concept. I knew nothing about the Villages but was very impressed by the small group of neighbors who knew much more than I did and were enthusiastic. I met several people I had never met before and that was stimulating too.

BK: I had heard about the Village concept from friends in Boston, and when I retired, I realized that after 30 years living in Mt. Pleasant, I knew only a small number of neighbors, as most of my time was taken up with pretty demanding



and picked up a flyer at Katie's table announcing an "interest" meeting about starting a Village. Thrilled that I was not going to start from zero, I immediately got in touch with Katie. We talked and talked and realized we were totally on the same page and that my skills would be helpful to the ad hoc steering committee, so she invited me to join the next meeting... I felt, and still feel, that the Village concept is an amazing vehicle to bring together assorted neighbors who might never otherwise mix socially, and once people know each other, barriers break down and you begin to feel that your neighborhood is really just a small town. And the added benefit of mutual assistance only makes the whole experiment even better.

DM: I have lived in Mount Pleasant since 1989 and have enjoyed working with neighborhood organizations (like Main Street) since shortly after that. In addition, I have always liked the Village concept of a community within a neighborhood and, accordingly, I had been making annual donations to Dupont Circle Village for years. So, when the opportunity arose, I was eager to participate.

RH: I knew about the successes of the Beacon Hill Village in Boston and Capitol Hill Village in DC. I was thinking that this concept would work well in Mount Pleasant given the makeup of the neighborhood. I heard about the possibility from Elinor Hart and Mary Rojas and came to a meeting a week or two later, where the Board was formed.

LL: My husband and I moved to Mount Pleasant as a young married couple in 1970 and loved the neighborhood – but it was very different then.... Later I worked in real estate for many years and knew that the vertical nature of the neighborhood was going to be challenging for many as they aged. The Village concept seemed to be a good way to address some of those challenges. I loved the idea of people helping each other to age in place.

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**Hello, Neighbor is Ready for Spring**





Social distancing and mask-wearing have made it hard for us to stay connected in this pandemic year, whether we are family, friends or neighbors. But all of us realize that those connections are vital to our health and well-being. And we are fortunate to live in Mount Pleasant, a small neighborhood recognized for its community character and warmth.

These qualities have drawn many newcomers to Mount Pleasant, and a long-time tradition of saying “hello” to passers-by seemed to be dying out even before COVID hit us. One of the members of Mount Pleasant Village wondered how we could sustain this tradition as neighborhood demographics are changing in the midst of a deadly pandemic – and the “Hello, Neighbor” campaign was born. Members have already received a New Year’s greeting card with the Hello message, and a window cling with the Hello logo.

The campaign is a way to encourage people to recognize members of the community by saying hello-*hola-bonjour-salaam*, nodding heads, bumping elbows or waving hands. It’s a way for businesses to signal “hello” to community members and visitors with a Hello, Neighbor decal. It’s banners on some of our neighborhood landmarks and homes that affirm our community spirit. It’s shopping carts to help our neighbors that use the food programs in our community get their groceries home. It’s masks with the Hello, Neighbor logo. It can be **all of these things**, and more – whatever “hello” means to you.

There will be more news about the campaign in April, so stay tuned. We hope that you will participate in the spirit of Hello, Neighbor by displaying the logo, wearing a signature mask, hanging a banner from your porch, or just saying



If you'd like to be involved or want to know more about the *how* and *why* of Hello, Neighbor, please contact Laura Breeden, [LLBreedden@icloud.com](mailto:LLBreedden@icloud.com).

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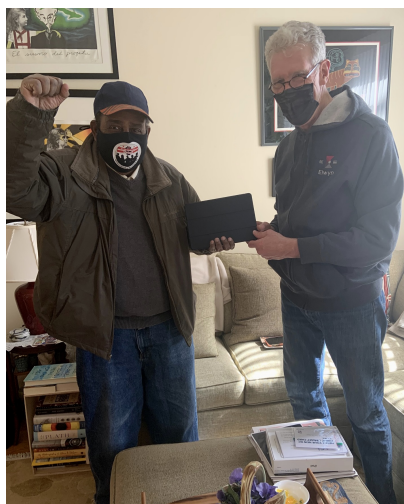
## Welcoming New Members!

Houcine Mkais - Kilbourne Street NW

Athena Viscusi - Lamont Street NW

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## Three iPads for Members!



We want to thank DC's Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) for helping to bridge the digital divide for older adults across the District. Here in Mount Pleasant, the program has kicked off by providing iPads, internet connections, and support in using them to three residents, including Arturo Griffiths, pictured here with Village President Bill Emmet. DACL worked with Mount Pleasant Village to identify recipients under this new program.

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## Marking Your Milestones (Birthdays, etc.)





Birthdays and Anniversaries are a special time. They allow us to celebrate those who are important to us. The Mount Pleasant Village and the Cluster Coordinators would like to cheer our members, and also to remember those who have passed. It's a way to come together around meaningful times in our lives.

To participate in this community-building effort, and for more information, please [click here](#).

THANK YOU!

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## Spotlight on the Racial Justice Working Group

The Racial Justice Working Group is composed of Rick Reinhard, Olivia Cadaval, Judy Fisher, Steve Mabley, and Martha Sipple. The group is focused on how to actualize the Village's commitment to ending racism, per the resolution adopted by the Board after the murder of George Floyd.

The Racial Justice Working Group has sponsored several online events to provide a framework for talking about anti-racism, white privilege and related issues. Most recently, there was a facilitated session based on the work of Emmanuel Acho, who was brought to their attention by working group member Judy Fisher. Acho is a former NFL player and a son of Nigerian immigrants, raised in Texas. He's the author of [Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man](#) and a companion video series on YouTube. A children's book version was recently released.

In addition to the powerful work by Acho, the working group suggests some other readings that frame the issues of systemic racism and unconscious bias.



[“Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture,” from Showing Up for Racial Justice \(SURJ\)](#)

[“Unpacking the Knapsack of White Privilege,” by Peggy McIntosh](#)

The working group has a number of ideas on the table. One, Accountability Buddies, is based on a method that’s used at Judy Fisher’s church. Pairs agree to make certain commitments and check in with each other to review progress. A list of “starter questions” could help guide these “intentional conversations.” Buddy pairs might eventually present at a “Lunch, Learn, Act” session about how the process worked for them.

The article from the Huffington Post, referenced above, about children redirecting their inheritance toward people in need strikes a chord with seniors. Another “Lunch, Learn, Act” session could use the article as a stimulus for discussion about what it would mean to pass white wealth on to people of color, instead of (white) children and more typical heirs. The adult children in the article were more interested in solving immediate needs (tuition, rent) of people of color than in accumulating wealth for themselves.

The working group also offered to facilitate a session for the Diversity Committee using the SURJ resource (White Supremacy in language) above as a guide. If this proved successful and useful, it might serve as a model for a similar effort for the Village Board.

If you would like to know more, or to join the group, please contact Rick Reinhard, [rickreinhard1910@gmail.com](mailto:rickreinhard1910@gmail.com).

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## JOIN MOUNT PLEASANT VILLAGE!

**Membership Fee:** \$50 annually per individual. For more information, contact Michael Burke at [membership@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:membership@mountpleasantvillage.org).

**Donate:** Make a tax-deductible donation by sending a check to Mount Pleasant



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**The newsletter is a cooperative effort! If you have questions, comments,  
or news to share, contact: [info@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:info@mountpleasantvillage.org)**

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