



In This Issue:

Feeding Mount Pleasant
Medicare Open Enrollment Starts Oct. 15
Vote! Vote! Vote!
Meet the Street
Welcome New Members
Crisis and Community: From Our Board President
Socializing During a Pandemic

Feeding Mt. Pleasant: Village Collaboration Addresses Food Insecurity

BY Larry Rickards

The Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN) joint initiative between the Village and ANC-1D continues to provide food aid in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially established to provide services to Villagers and other Mount Pleasant residents, as the pandemic extended into months of job layoffs and self-quarantining, NHN has added food support to meet the urgent needs of families whose incomes have shrunk or disappeared.

Working with Food for All and the Capital Area Food Bank, NHN currently helps distribute shelf-stable items (soup, pasta, beans, etc.), produce, and milk to more than 900 of our neighbors on a weekly basis at four primary locations – Bancroft Elementary School (100 to 120 families), Sacred Heart Church (100 families), the Spanish Catholic Center (600 families), and the Woodner apartments (100 families). These sites have also served as distribution points for hand sanitizer and masks. Both the Spanish Catholic Center and Sacred Heart Church organized their own distribution systems, but receive groceries with NHN assistance. In addition to these efforts, *La Casa* and the Latin American Youth Center have independently become food distribution sites. Unfortunately, food insecurity throughout the District continues to grow as the pandemic continues and jobs disappear.

Reliable Sources for COVID-19 Information

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

- Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>
- National Institutes of Health (NIH): <https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus>
- District Government: coronavirus.dc.gov
- Mount Pleasant Village Website: www.mountpleasantvillage.org

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.

The NHN effort is being accomplished by a host of volunteers and organizers, coordinated by ANC Commissioners Chelsea Allinger and Robin Sandenburgh. Volunteers develop the links to food sources and providers, drive the trucks that deliver items to the distribution sites, organize the volunteer network, unload food boxes, bag produce for distribution, and disperse the food to families at the sites. The volunteer network includes several Villagers.

While this may seem organized and tidy, each week brings new issues to work out, such as what stable food and produce is available and in what quantities; when it's going to be available; whether an adequate number of volunteers can be recruited for each of the sites; when the delivery trucks will arrive; and a host of related issues. All of these components have fallen to disarray at one time or another. The tenuousness of the food support network reflects the stress and uncertainty felt daily by families who have lost jobs and income. Fortunately, volunteers have made the adjustments necessary to provide families with needed provisions.

Another NHN food support effort [see the July Newsletter] was spearheaded by World Central Kitchen (WCK), which through the efforts of Villager Claudia Schlosberg, contracted with three Mount Pleasant restaurants – Don Juan's, Dos Gringos, and Haydee's – to provide 500 ready-to-eat meals to five neighborhood apartment buildings twice a week during June/early July. And, in commemoration of the 9/11 attack, this September WCK worked with the same restaurants to provide 500 meals to first responders and healthcare workers in our area.

A third source of food support organized by NHN is the partnership with Food Rescue, an organization that collects surplus food from restaurants and grocers, for weekend distribution to several apartment building in Mount Pleasant. Donated items vary from week to week –sometimes bread, sometimes produce, sometimes nothing.

A challenge for families receiving food assistance is how to get the bulky items home. While many families have grocery carts, many do not. The Village's Diversity Committee is leading an initiative to bulk purchase grocery carts and distribute them to families. While the details of the project are still under discussion, this will be a very direct way to help support families.

Additionally, there are ways that Villagers can help support the NHN food aid initiative – through volunteering at the food distribution centers (www.anc-volunteering.org) and by supporting the GoFundMe initiative to help support Food for All (<http://gf.me/u/ysc3x9>). For additional information, contact Larry Rickards at ldrickards72@gmail.com.

News from Medicare

Medicare Open Enrollment begins October 15! This year, Medicare plans have historically low premiums — dropping an average of 34% over the last 3 years, and in some states up to 60%! Starting October 1, you'll be able to take a sneak peek at plans available in your area. If you're among the 1 in 3 people with Medicare who has diabetes, here's some more good news: many participating drug plans will offer a 30-day supply of insulin for \$35 or less starting January 2021. Visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) or call **1-800-MEDICARE** for more information

Vote! Vote! Vote! (But Only Once)

Here it is, straight from the DC Board of Elections web site (www.dcboe.org). Note that you can check your registration status on their site, or at www.iwillvote.com.

Absentee Voting

All active registered voters will receive a mail-in-ballot at their registered address **beginning the first week in October.**

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT! However, you can use the absentee form to update your address or request the mail in ballot to be sent to another location where you are located.

Voted and mailed ballots must be postmarked or otherwise demonstrated to have been sent on or before Election Day, and must arrive no later than the 10th day after Election Day to be counted. Ballots can be **mailed via the postal carrier**, dropped off at a **Mail Ballot Drop Box** ([See list of Drop Box locations](#)) or **delivered in-person** at any Voting Center during Early Voting or on Election Day by 8:00 pm.



Meet the Street al Fresco

Villagers stepped out on September 22 and enjoyed dining *al fresco* at Purple Patch. New street-side dining options are popping up, so check to see if your favorite is available. Or... order take-out from one of the many restaurants that offer it.

Help keep local businesses alive!

Welcome New Members!!

Steve Mabley - 17th Street NW

Robin Sandenburg - Newton Street NW

Crisis and Community: A Message from Board President Bill Emmet

Many have observed that the upheaval of 2020 has revealed much about who we are – as a nation, as organizations, and as individuals. This disorienting year is a mirror in which we can discern our character as we respond to the stream of unanticipated events and the devastation they have caused to many lives.

Another oft-repeated truth is that actions at the most local level can make big differences in people’s lives. In this year of health and economic disaster and an erupting focus on racial justice, we are all aware of the vulnerabilities of our neighbors and the challenges many must overcome to live with safety and dignity.

So, it is extremely gratifying to see that our neighbors in Mount Pleasant and, specifically, members of Mount Pleasant Village have revealed their character in myriad small but meaningful ways since our world started changing in March. A prime example: our Village joined with Mount Pleasant’s Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) to create *Neighbors*



Helping Neighbors, a volunteer effort first focusing on providing assistance to those among who are most vulnerable to COVID-19, and then adding the challenge of delivering food to our neighbors in need.

The Village’s clusters have mobilized to reach out to all Village members and keep us connected in this time of social distancing. The Village’s Diversity Committee has worked diligently to put significant action behind the forceful words of the Village’s statement on racial equity. The Village’s Partnership Committee has reached out to the

businesses on Mount Pleasant Street and helped develop policies and actions to keep them afloat despite the challenges arising from the need for social distancing and other safety measures.

Thanks to technology, our members have adapted to the circumstances, and various interest groups have continued to keep Village members in touch with each other and the issues and activities that mean the most to them, whether it's meditation, caregiver support, or the ad hoc book club. Across the board, many people are giving their time so that we, as a community, can function in new ways to meet the demands of 2020.

What's also true is that many of these activities could not have started and cannot continue without financial support. It's valuable to recognize where this support has come from, and it's important to look ahead to sources we can count on in the future. *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*, for example, needed very little money to get organized. Perhaps the biggest early expense was the cost of printing flyers for distribution by the volunteers. But as NHN has focused more on food aid, we have raised new money to pay for food and transportation through a couple of GoFundMe campaigns like this one – <http://gf.me/u/ysc3x9>. Many Villagers have joined the Mount Pleasant neighbors who have contributed to this ongoing campaign. Other funds for *NHN* have come from the ANC. In addition, there have been many in-kind contributions from individuals and organizations – including 2,000 bottles each of soap and hand sanitizer donated by Dr. Bronner's, the legendary soap manufacturer.



Volunteers organize food distribution

Another exciting initiative, developed by the Village's Diversity Committee, is the acquisition and distribution of 100 shopping carts to families receiving groceries at food

distribution sites such as Bancroft School and Spanish Catholic Charities. These carts will enable families to carry milk, canned goods, and other heavy items to their homes in different corners of Mount Pleasant. The Wessel Foundation has made a generous contribution to help the Village to purchase these carts; individual contributions from Village members and others will extend this program to more families in the neighborhood. You can donate at the Village website, www.mountpleasantvillage.org. Simply click on “Donate Now” and write “shopping carts” in the Comment section.

For the past several years, the Village has joined the other Villages in the District as recipients of grant money from the DC Department of Aging and Community Living. These funds have been used to improve the website and other technology used by the Village and to gather information that will be used in the coming year to improve the services available to Village members.

Mount Pleasant Village, like all other DC Villages, has also received two grants from the Washington Home Foundation, specifically to help defray the costs that have arisen as a result of COVID. For our Village, the biggest additional expense has been buying a Zoom account and adding users to it. This service allows many of our programs and meetings to continue online. We are grateful to Washington Home for these timely gifts that are helping us stay connected in disjointed times.

The biggest vote of confidence the Village receives, however, comes in the form of gifts received from Village members and other individuals. With three months remaining in 2020, it already appears Mount Pleasant Village will receive more in individual donations that has been the case in recent years. Our hope is that we can stay on this pace and finish the year with a cushion that will allow our Village to enter an uncertain 2021 with confidence. We know our members and neighbors will continue to need assistance, and we hope to continue the support for Village activities and aid to our neighbors begun this year.

You are likely hearing from many worthy causes asking you to give money, and the drumbeat will only grow as we near the holidays and the end of the year. Our request is that you keep Mount Pleasant Village in mind as you consider what entities to support. As an organization managed completely by volunteers, we use the money we raise for programs and projects, not for salaries. We believe that continuing to focus on what we, as Villagers, can do here in Mount Pleasant is responsible and effective, and we hope you agree. Please include Mount Pleasant Village in your giving plans for the rest of 2020.

The easiest way to donate is at the Village website, www.mountpleasantvillage.org. Checks, of course, are always accepted. They can be mailed to MPV, 1735 Lamont Street NW, Washington, DC 20010. The Village is a tax exempt organization under Section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code, and your contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. And thank you for your support!

Socializing During a Pandemic

BY Alice Kelly

It was a farewell party for longtime residents and Villagers Sarabeth Goodwin and John Racin, but in the age of COVID-19, where social distancing is a must, a bit more planning was required. Neighbors on Lamont Street took extra precautions before gathering last Saturday afternoon and found we can still enjoy socializing with friends and neighbors in a relatively safe outdoor environment.

Before even agreeing that it was safe to hold the outdoor gathering, Co-hosts Bonnie Cain and Alice Kelly talked to a medical professional and met at length to discuss and clearly establish the “rules” for the party. Among the decisions:

- The invitation made clear that all invitees must stay home if they were not feeling well and attendees must wear masks and be socially distanced.
- The number of invitees was limited to the number who could sit and/or mingle in the yard and stay socially distanced (no more than 30).
- The party was scheduled for a shorter than average duration (one hour); the theory being that the longer people mingle and imbibe the more likely the safety rules of COVID could be forgotten.
- The invitees were encouraged to bring their beverage of choice but wine was also available and poured into disposable plastic cups to minimize interpersonal contact.
- Perhaps the hardest decision was to forgo shared food platters - the best part of social gatherings in Mount Pleasant. The only food provided was prepackaged in individual serving sizes.
- And finally the invitation indicated that no bathroom facilities were available - an easy decision to make since all invitees live close by - but hand sanitizer was readily available.



Critical to the day-of set up of the party was a long tape measure so that, rather than guessing at distances, actual distances were measured. Tables with chairs were positioned with the recommended six feet of distance between them. Chairs were also set up around the perimeter of the yard, and

open space was provided for socially- distanced mingling and visiting with neighbors. Hand sanitizer was available with bottles placed on tables throughout the yard.

Parties are not the same as before, but then nothing is during these times of pandemic. Nonetheless, with extra precautions and planning - and extreme respect for the knowns and the unknowns of the unseen COVID-19 virus - we can still enjoy the company of our friends and neighbors.

JOIN MOUNT PLEASANT VILLAGE!

Membership Fee: \$50 annually per individual. For more information, contact Michael Burke at membership@mountpleasantvillage.org.

Donate: Make a tax-deductible donation by sending a check to Mount Pleasant Village at 1735 Lamont Street NW, Washington, DC 20010 or clicking the “Donate Now” button on our home page (mountpleasantvillage.org).

The newsletter is a cooperative effort! If you have questions, comments, or news to share, contact: information@mountpleasantvillage.org