



News from The Villager

February 1, 2013, Vol. 1, No. 1

The Kanawha Valley Village People
Established 2012

The KVVP Headquarters
The Hale House
4208 Malden Drive,
Charleston, West Virginia 25306
Tel. 304-741-9230

Steering Committee

James Thibeault
Hazel Palmer
Marilyn Witbeck
Melora Cann

Current VISTA Employee

Kassandra Kaas

**Tentative Schedule of
Upcoming Events**

**General Meeting &
Pot Luck Dinner**
2 p.m. Feb. 24
at The Hale House
In Malden, WV

**General Meeting &
Afternoon Treats**
2 p.m. April 20
At the St. Albans Public Library
in St. Albans, WV

General Meeting
4 p.m. June 22
A Gourmet Fundraiser Event!
Garden Tours
of Malden, WV

**SPECIAL THANKS AND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
GO TO HAZEL PALMER**

who purchased and donated a
DISHWASHER to the Hale House for
use by the KVVP gatherings!

Newsletter Editor
Melora Cann

Send letters, comments & suggestions
to meloracann@yahoo.com



Some of the participants at the December 2012 KVVP Gathering at the Hale House. Photo by Kassandra Kaas

KVVP Becomes Reality: The First Steps

by Hazel Palmer and James Thibeault

The question of how or where to live once retired was a topic for the Thursday Meditation group which meets at the Kanawha County Public Library. The subject turned over at least a dozen times citing articles, books, anecdotal stories and first hand research. There were continuing care communities, co-housing opportunities, sunbelt migrations, and pioneering Village models all informally looked at and discussed. If there was one conclusion of this Ad Hoc group, it was that there was no one direction or conclusion. While individuals were generally satisfied with their present housing, they were uniformly concerned about issues such as transportation, home repair, in-home care, social isolation or the financial challenges ahead if they chose to age in place.

After a year of informal discussions, the group decided to dig deeper and go public. Simultaneously, relationships with West Virginia State University, Cabin Creek Health Systems, WV Bureau of Public Health and Step By Step / VISTA, were cultivated to become partners in the process of exploring ways to support seniors in designing their own retirement. It was understood that the group was in a period of exploration and study to design a program which it hoped would meet its needs.

As one might expect from this freedom-minded group, one design will not fit all. However, participants were fairly certain that regional, age, income and diversity challenges and opportunities could be taken into consideration and a workable retirement support network could be created. It was also hoped that the visionary and community service orientation which was an inherent part of this group could be harnessed to benefit a much larger group.

The first meeting of the Kanawha Valley Village People (KVVP) was held July 21, 2012, at Booker T. Washington's African Zion Baptist Church (built circa 1872) of Malden and now owned by West Virginia State University. It was attended by 32 individuals from eleven zip code areas. The agenda included presentations on the demographics of aging, national models for senior living and a group discussion of participants' hopes for the group. It was decided that the next steps should be a review of current senior services offered in the area and an assessment of participants' needs. The agenda consisted of musical entertainment by part of the group, Bare Bones, singing led by John Palmer, and a discussion led by Hazel Palmer, James Thibeault, Barbara Frierson, and Karen Glazier to explain the Village concept and describe the hopes of the founding group of KVVP. A social potluck followed.

A second meeting was held October 7, 2012, also at African Zion Baptist Church of Malden. It was attended by 30 persons of whom around 13 were new attendees (There were several large events that conflicted with the meeting date). Three additional zip code areas were represented at this meeting. The meeting included an in-depth look at the Athens, Ohio, and Alexandria, Virginia village models as well as a review of a draft needs assessment. The work of the West Virginia Partnership for Elder Living and its



James Thibeault conducts a session on the Village concept at the December 2012 KVVP meeting. Photo by Mike Harman

study, *The State of Older Adults in West Virginia*, was shared. The group met a Vista employee, Cassandra Kaas, who is allocating ten percent of her time to the KVVP group and she outlined volunteer opportunities with the Step by Step program. There was a first look at a draft Needs Assessment – John Palmer (who also led Joyful Singing!). The meeting ended with group singing and a potluck.

A third meeting was held on December 15, 2012. Invitations were sent out for a Potluck and Meeting at the Hale House for the Holidays! Experimenting with different modes of meeting and to accommodate the small size rooms of the Hale House, four simultaneous meetings were conducted in a round robin of presenters to discuss a needs assessment survey (Kassandra Kaas); crisis casseroles and a telephone tree (Melora Cann and Karen Glazier); gifts & grants (James Thibeault); and the Village to Village National Conference, a potential St. Alban's Spoke, and a mission statement for KVVP (Barbara Frierson). A social potluck followed.

Grant Proposal Narrative by Hazel Palmer

Given the geographically diverse representation of KVVP attendees and the concern expressed by some about the distance they have to drive, KVVP considered adopting the Hub and Spoke Model for organizing its meetings and, perhaps, some of its services. However, at the December 2012 meeting, attendees decided they want to remain as one group for now and try to meet in different locations.

The headquarters will be located in Malden at the Hale House thanks to the partnership KVVP has with The Cabin Creek Health Systems and West Virginia State University.

The following is a general work plan for the grant:

Months 0-6 of Grant:

Conduct KVVP needs assessment, summarize and prioritize results; Start an on-going study of the best design for the large geographical area for which KVVP envisions coverage and include efforts to move general meetings to different locations within the Valley; Explore potential membership concentrations in those areas and, as appropriate, establish steering committee representation for each geographic area with membership concentrations.

Months 7-12 of Grant:

Hire a Vista worker for the KVVP pilot project; Determine how to divide worker's time among the KVVP needs; Develop systems for meeting at least two of the needs specified in the Needs Assessment; Publish a newsletter and disseminate to possible new attendees as well as existing members; Hold at least one total group gathering and at least two subgroup meetings; Adopt a members' dues schedule

Months 13-18 of Grant:

Develop a KVVP brochure; Publish a newsletter; Solicit 50-70 members; Address at least two additional services that meet members' needs; Determine future staffing needs and if dues do not cover needs, raise funds to cover needs or adjust needs; Hold meetings as needed; Start developing sophisticated computer applications for KVVP needs.

Months 19 – 24 of Grant:

Hire a part-time coordinator; Implement systems to meet at least two additional needs as identified by members; Conduct a member satisfaction survey and make needed adjustments; Revise brochure as needed; Publish a newsletter; Hold meetings as needed.

Budget:

Cabin Creek Health Systems is encompassing KVVP within its 501(c)3 and will serve as its fiscal agent.

\$2,000.00	Wireless laptop, printer and software
4,000.00	Vista employee match in months 7-19
1,000.00	Printing and distributing newsletter and brochure
700.00	Two year's membership in the Village to Village Organization
600.00	Year's cell phone costs
800.00	Supplies, travel
100.00	Miscellaneous
9,200.00	TOTAL GRANT MONEY

Future Roles for KVVP: The KVVP will explore ways to improve its communications and services through creative utilization of the computer. This effort will be on-going as needs and talents allow. It is also hoped that with the support of this grant, KVVP will become successful and experienced enough to present its experience at the Social Work Conference and other relevant groups and, perhaps, host a statewide conference for interested persons in KVVP's third or fourth year of existence.

KVVP Acknowledgements

The Kanawha Valley Village People wish to thank the **West Virginia State University** for their allocation of office space (and use of the overall facility during meetings) at the Hale House; the **Cabin Creek Health Systems** for their willingness to include KVVP in their non-profit 501(c)3 tax designation status; and, the **West Virginia Partnership for Elder Living** for their grant of \$9,200.00 to help establish our village. Thank you!

Village To Village Network *from reports* by Barbara Frierson and James Thibeault

A National Gathering, held in Atlanta, Oct 15-17, 2012, was attended by KVVP representatives Barbara Frierson and James Thibeault. Barbara and James split the agenda since there were two distinct strands of presentations happening coincidentally. Barbara attended the Village 101, Villages In Development and James, the sessions for advanced groups (i.e. villages in existence and functioning for one or more years). Three villages presented at both sessions, Beacon Hill (Boston, MA), Avenidas (Palo, CA), and Capitol Hill (Washington, DC).



Barbara Frierson engaged in a group discussion at the Dec. 15 meeting of the KVVP in the rooms of the Hale House. Photo by Mike Harman

The Villages 101 sessions discussed Why Villages are Developing, Benefits of Villages to the Community, Steps to Getting Started, Funding and setting membership dues, Community Outreach and Connections, Strategic Alliances, Why Villages are Developing, Volunteers, Member Services, Technology & Record-Keeping, Database and financial management, Marketing, Organizational Structures, the Local Coordinator Model (such as the Monadnoc Village, NH) launched in 2010, the Hub-and-Spoke Model (such as the Marin Village, CA) launched in 2007, and the Timebanking Model (such as the Tierrasanta Village, San Diego, CA) launched in 2009.

Resources noted at the Villages 101 session included Elder law: www.naela.org (National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys); NORC (naturally occurring retirement communities); The Appalachian Service Project (ASP) www.asphome.org; and, Timebanking with the following links: www.timebankusa.org, www.communityweavers.org.

James attended the advanced Villages sessions and reported that topics included: what success and challenges did the Villages experience attracting and retaining members; innovations; outreach activities; emerging ideas; what success and challenges did Villages experience finding, engaging, and sustaining volunteers; building pools of volunteers, examining how business models have changed over time; sustainability – growing your Village; examining what mutual beneficial connections have been forged with other parts of the community, with policy makers, private businesses, religious institutions, and other non-profits; promising partners, and, focusing on the mission to keep people active and engaged in their community.



The Hale House by Larry Rowe

The Malden home of Dr. John P. Hale is now the home of Cabin Creek Health Systems efforts to establish a local health clinic; and, thanks to the generosity of the owners, West Virginia State University, is the location of the newly forming KVVP – Kanawha Valley Village People.

Dr. Hale was a physician from Hales Ford, Virginia, who became the area's best known salt industrialist and early coal entrepreneur. He built Charleston's first elegant railroad hotel, Hale House, which burned and was replaced by the Ruffner Hotel. Dr. Hale helped move the state capital from Wheeling to Charleston. He financed the world's first brick street on Summers Street in Charleston. In 1871, he became mayor of Charleston, succeeding Henry C. Dickinson, a co-founder of former Kanawha Valley Bank and a Confederate War hero who was part of the prominent Dickinson salt-making family. Their ancestor was Revolutionary War Colonel John Dickinson, whose 10th generation descendants reside here.

Dr. Hale's *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers* is a major history of the Kanawha Valley. It chronicles the 1755 captive journey and escape of his great grandmother, Mary Draper Ingles, later made famous by a best seller, *Follow the River*. This area was a hunting ground in that century and home to mound builders and ancients centuries before.

The Hale House was built in the Ruffner family's 1830s "Saltborough Subdivision" development, now known as Old Malden, during the peak years of the salt industry. Dr. Hale's home is across from "Women's Park," site of the home of Booker T. Washington's beloved sister, Amanda Johnson.



Special thanks to Larry Rowe for this article on the Hale House.

Photo by Mike Harman

Mission Statement Discussion

From a report by Barbara Frierson

Participants showed a clear preference for this statement: "A sustainable senior community that supports members who wish to live independently in their own homes by providing or helping arrange a wide variety of services to meet their needs."

It will now be considered by the Steering Committee.

Village to Village Presentation

by Barbara Frierson

During the Dec. 2012 meeting, a couple of people stated a strong interest in good communication and transparency between the steering committee and the members. One person thought meeting minutes should be made available to the membership. Hopefully having a newsletter will help meet this need. Regarding the Village to Village Conference, people were interested, impressed by the breadth of the VTVN program. Twelve people requested complete copies of James' and my notes. Please contact Barbara at b03b13f@msn.com if you would like a copy.

Everyone understood the issues involved in having such a large "interest area" -- roughly 625 square miles if we include outliers like Hurricane, Hamlin, and Pinch. Although there was interest in the Hub/Spoke and Local Coordinator models, mostly what I heard was "We'd want to be in the Charleston group" and some concern that they might miss something if they were in a western region group. Most people present seemed to be from the Charleston area, and were fine with coming to Malden for meetings. They did suggest having some events in different areas as a way of informing and recruiting members: in Charleston, someone offered to see if First Presbyterian Church would make a meeting room available. Someone else said there are lots of older people in the Clendenin/Sissonville area. They thought having informational meetings in churches and senior centers is a good idea. I mentioned having a meeting in St Albans in the spring, but only one other couple reported being from St Albans.



Crisis Casseroles

*A Concept for Neighborhood Support
from Hazel Palmer*

The basic concept is that when one of our prospective members (or at least, someone on our database) has

a family crisis, or a personal health crisis (operation, debilitating illness, etc.), then those persons on our Crisis Casserole list will be notified and will spring into action, providing simple meals delivered to the door, thus alleviating one worry for those suffering in crisis. We are gathering the names of volunteers willing to participate.

At the Dec. 15 meeting, eight people signed up to participate (they understand that it is not in a final program format yet). Recipes: A column was added to the sign-up entitled "recipes" so that if any of the participants wished, they could share a favorite simple recipe that might be useful for this type of endeavor. Several of the participants did indicate that they had such recipes and this could be pursued. We could even consider publication of a single recipe in each newsletter, if there is an interest.

Do you have a recipe for a tasty dish that you'd like to share? ...something that might fit the bill for the Crisis Casseroles team? Please send it to meloracann@yahoo.com and you might even see it in the next issue of this newsletter!

Invitation to Join a Book Club Team

From Marilyn Witbeck

The public library and the Cultural Center library are having a special reading program for 2013. Because it is the 150th year of the State of West Virginia, they are challenging folks to form teams to read 150 books this year. Although the team reads 150 books in a year, each member might only read one or two. The teams can be up to 15 people, or as small as two. I have volunteered to be the captain of a team and have recruited 5 people, so only 10 more to go. We'd like to be associated with the Village People, so what about it? Depending upon



Marilyn Witbeck greeted everyone with a smile and a nametag at the Hale House for the December meeting of the KVVP.

Photo by Mike Harman

the responses I get, new people can form a new team, and another new team, etc. The details are on the library website www.kanawhalibrary.org. Does this sound like fun to you? If you'd like to join this team, let me know. We can talk about it at our KVVP February meeting! The contest is January 1 to December 31. I predict we'll finish well before December comes! To join in or get more information, contact Marilyn at marilynwitbeck@aol.com.



The Social Telephone Tree

*A Concept for Building the Village
through Socialization*

Presented by Mel Cann and Karen Glazier

The basic idea of a social telephone tree was presented by Melora Cann and Karen Glazier at the December 2012 meeting. Once-a-month calls through a short tree will begin during a non-meeting month with a heads-up call about the upcoming meeting. After the regular meeting, a second call could reconnect the participants. This would be an opportunity for building a relationship through conversation, thus enlarging the personal socialization aspect.



Hope you can join us for our next meeting!

Photo by Cassandra Kaas