

THE VINTAGE VOICE

ISSUE NO. 4

CONNECT. EXPLORE. BELONG.

FEATURED STORY

Discovering Your Resilience Amidst Uncertainty

By Holly Seaton, Ph.D.

Remember the good old days, just eight months ago, when we woke up to our “to do” list with plans for an active day? Sure, we had already accepted uncertainty, yet we learned that we could expect and predict patterns of our life.

We may now feel that the pandemic and the general unrest in the country have shattered that “healthy” denial; the very fabric of our daily existence shredded. We are experiencing a collective loss, perhaps also very real feelings of grief, and for some of us, it is indeed more traumatic.

This uncertainty is loud and in our face daily but fortunately coming to terms with loss, change, grief, and altered

expectations is both a painful and hopeful process. The secret to how well we manage may be in how we honor ourselves, utilizing past coping strategies, and bringing new tools and practices into our lives that specifically fit us.

Start by asking:

- *What is my style and tolerance for the unknown?*
- *What am I willing to think about, change or try?*
- *Who can help?*
- *What resources are available?*

The Power of Talk – It’s not what you think

Talking helps, says every psychology article we have read. Well, it’s true
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From the Desk of Priscilla Call Essert, Executive Director



“Each week seemed to highlight a new need, and early on we adopted a new motto, which has guided us through these tumultuous months: “Vintage House Cares. We’re Here to Help.” We have been pivoting, dancing in the dark, inventing and re-inventing, and fearlessly creating while surrounded by uncertainty and frequently changing guidelines and restrictions.”

Silver Linings Everywhere

As I sit here writing to you, I can’t help thinking of a song by the Four Seasons called “Oh What a Night.” I am sure you Jersey Boys fans are singing in your head along with me. Oh what a night... late December back in ‘63...Well, I imagine someone is already writing a song about 2020, and I myself have a book full of lyrics that could describe this unforgettable year. We all know what went wrong and we could wax on about the unthinkable challenges our country and our community has faced, but instead, I’d like to shed light on the silver linings of the past 11 months.

Enter Stage Left: Positive People Power

You never really know how good a team is until it is tested, and boy has the Vintage House team been tested. Board members, staff, consultants, and volunteers worked tirelessly to figure out how best to serve our community in these unprecedented times. As essential workers, staff have continued coming to work at Vintage House every day despite the fact that the Center was closed to the public. Long days were spent having deep conversations with stakeholders and with one another, and it has been a gift to witness people coming together at a time when a national health crisis and racial tensions have spurred on disconnection and divide.

Each week seemed to highlight a new need, and early on we adopted a new motto, which has guided us through these tumultuous months: “Vintage House Cares. We’re Here to Help.” We have been pivoting, dancing in the dark, inventing and re-inventing, and fearlessly creating while surrounded by uncertainty and frequently changing guidelines and restrictions. While the sands have been shifting, our focus on how we can best serve the needs of our community has remained steadfast. Our dedication to “being there to help” shows up in every CareCall we make, every meal and bag of groceries we deliver, every bowl of soup that our volunteers fill to the brim, and in our classes where friends and community members come together virtually; outdoors; and in small, indoor socially-distant groups of 10 to remind one another of our

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Silver Linings Everywhere (continued from page 2)

connection and our need for community. Our ability to innovate and adapt has had an enormously positive impact on the lives of Sonoma Valley seniors, particularly for those isolated and living alone.

Enter Stage Right: Farmers, Chefs, Donors, and Other Partners

For years, the philanthropic community has asked for greater collaboration. Well, the collaboration garden has been growing and thriving. Local farmers have been dropping off brightly colored baskets of vegetables while volunteer chefs chop and sauté in our kitchen. Businesses have donated both goods and services—even during these difficult times, and the generosity of donors has inspired us and re-affirmed that the community supports our mission and cares deeply about our growing population of seniors. The giving spirit continues to show up in many forms, and we are touched by the outpouring of help from our amazing community.

Center Stage: Sonoma Valley Seniors

We miss seeing everyone. Sure, Hollywood Squares (a.k.a. Zoom) is better than nothing (even better than anticipated) but being together in person once again is what we all long for.

We see some of you at the food distribution pick-up, at our classes, or when you drop by to renew your membership, giving us each a brief opportunity to re-connect. We hold you in our hearts as we plan for the now and for the ever-changing future. We tremble with you as we wonder what things will look like in the next six months. We miss you. But together, and with great thought and planning, we are taking baby steps, marveling at the amazing gifts each day brings.

We delight in knowing that we are learning new ways to serve you—ways that will far outlive this pandemic. Vintage House is not simply a place to go—it’s a community hub that brings together a diverse array of people and perspectives, programs and services, and that radiates a caring, generous spirit that still permeates our empty halls. We remain optimistic that before too long we will fully re-open and celebrate your return to Vintage House—a welcoming place for all. Until then, we wish you good health and a holiday-season filled with hope for today, for tomorrow, and for 2021.

With Gratitude,

Priscilla

Our 2020 Donors and Funders

Thank you to our generous supporters June 1 – September 30, 2020.*

*Please accept our sincere apologies if you made a donation which was inadvertently excluded from this list.

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Marcie Waldron		
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And our sincerest thanks to all of our donors who have made gifts of less than \$500. We couldn't do it without you!

Discovering Your Resilience Amidst Uncertainty (continued from page 1)

and not just for the obvious reasons of helping us gain perspective, normalizing our feelings, and opening windows to new ideas and experiences. The physical act of speaking has a neurological benefit in activating new firing patterns in our brain. It turns out that when we talk about ourselves, compared to talking about ideas and facts, this brain benefit is heightened even more. With this in mind, Vintage House launched CareCalls early on in the pandemic to ensure that isolated seniors had someone to check-in on them and to talk and share in conversation every day. We recently launched Coffee on the Patio and Garden Gatherings—each of which offers opportunities for small, socially distant outside group chats over coffee in our community garden patch and on our back patio. Free transportation is provided for those who need it. For more information about these programs, please contact Vintage House at 707-996-0311 or info@vintagehouse.org.

The Relaxation Conundrum – Take a second

I hope you have figured out that talking about the same thing over and over will not stretch the talking benefits in our brain. Racing thoughts or the “thought balls” that lead us into our future-worry can be harmful. This is why having practices that interrupt these stress thoughts is so important. Having tools that curb the “what if” of anticipatory anxiety can be life-saving. Some people use the phrase “being mindful,” which means getting better at pulling ourselves away from the escalating “hot thoughts” that we all have and doing our best to re-focus instead on our breathing as we watch those disturbing thoughts drift away like clouds in the sky and allowing any bodily sensations that may have accompanied those thoughts to also dissolve.



Research documents that we can interrupt our worry thoughts with a few slow deep breaths, an uplifting fragrance, soothing sounds—whether listening to birds in your garden or Mozart on your stereo. We can further shift how we are feeling by taking a moment to bring in thoughts of what we are grateful for even amidst uncertainty. This simple practice takes just seconds, yet the interruption has long-term benefits,



decreasing the stress hormones that bathe our organs and negatively impact our immune systems.

Cultivate Good Emotional First Aid – Find your bandage

Current events can trigger feelings and behaviors associated with past trauma and loss. We can feel fearful and vulnerable leading to isolation. Social and emotional withdrawal is unhealthy. Stay grounded by keeping a daily routine as best as you can.

- Sign up to receive CareCalls from trained volunteers who want to know what you are thinking about
- Art and Writing classes at Vintage House can boost our interaction with others while helping us create and expand our wisdom.
- We can surround ourselves in nature in the Vintage House Community Garden.
- We can take care of our physical and emotional bodies by participating in the many movement classes such as Yoga and Stretching that Vintage House offers. These classes help us practice putting attention and care to our body and quieting the mind.
- Bird watching classes and volunteering in the Vintage House Community Garden can engage our energy away from ourselves and bring us outdoors into where we can witness the changing of seasons and the beauty of Sonoma Valley.

Living with uncertainty is largely a matter of perspective, but there are ways we can challenge our beliefs and take actionable steps to build our capacity for finding meaning in the unknown. We are all in this together and Vintage House is our resource for support and inspiration and a place where all are welcome to come to Connect, Explore, and Belong. To learn about classes, programs, and supportive services that Vintage House has to offer, please visit www.vintagehouse.org

Remembering Marcie Waldron, 1951-2020



Before her passing in July of this year, Marcie Waldron had been planning a birthday celebration for herself to be held at Vintage House, a place that had long held a special place in her heart.

To honor her many contributions and her love of a good party, Vintage House hosted a series of events in celebration of Marcie's life, beginning on October 13th—what would have been her 69th birthday. The events included Marcie's Parade of Canes, a live-streamed event, a *Dia de los Muertos* altar for the public to view and contribute to, and a small costumed themed ice cream social—a recurring event at Vintage House spearheaded by Marcie.

Marcie left a legacy of giving of her time and talents, and she was a generous patron to Vintage House and to many nonprofit organizations in Sonoma Valley. Her indomitable spirit will be missed.

"Marcie played an integral role at Vintage House over the years serving as a member of the Board of Directors, and even as its President. She had also been an active volunteer and donor throughout her many years of involvement with us. Her loss is felt by everyone at Vintage House and the community at large," said Priscilla Call Essert, Executive Director of Vintage House.

What Else You Need to Know

The Vintage House Board of Directors has approved the following amendments to the organization's Bylaws.

1. Article II, Section 4 has been amended to provide for a comment period that is open to members at regular monthly meetings of the Board of Directors. The remainder of each meeting will be closed to the public and reserved for board business.
2. Article II, Section 5 has been amended to provide for the General Membership Annual Meeting to take place in December of each year rather than January.
3. Article II, Section 6 has been amended to refine the content of the Annual Report.

To receive a copy of our bylaws, please email info@vintagehouse.org

The Annual Member Meeting will take place on **12/18/2020 from 2:00 PM to 2:45 PM PT** via Zoom. For more information and to register, please visit www.vintagehouse.org/annualmeeting

Holiday Gift Boxes will go on sale on Black Friday 11/27/20. There will be a variety of boxes to choose from with something for everyone on your list. All proceeds will support our Vital Services for local seniors. For more information visit www.vintagehouse.org/holidaygiftbox

Community Thanksgiving Meal Delivery Event – **Thursday, November 26th in partnership with the Sonoma Community Center.** Visit www.vintagehouse.org/thanksgiving for more details.

Mark your calendar for **Giving Tuesday**, which takes place on 12/1/20. Help us get a strong start to the year-end giving season! **You can give beginning at 10:00 PM on 11/30. Please give early and help us leverage up to \$5,000 in matching funds.** Gifts are matched on a first donated first matched basis until funds run out so early giving on 11/30 is crucial. Thank you again for your support. Give online at www.give65.org/vintagehouse

Your Legacy. Our Future.

As a Vintage House member and supporter, you have demonstrated your commitment to providing for the needs of older adults in the Valley of the Moon and you've helped us to assist seniors at every life stage to enjoy a better quality of life as they age in place.

Whether you are still working or are retired, planned giving can benefit you and your loved ones while helping to ensure that the organizations you care about most will continue to benefit from your support for generations to come.

There are many types of planned gifts—certain gift types have an impact now, while others benefit the recipient after your lifetime.

What are the 3 basic types of planned gifts?

- First, *outright gifts of an appreciated asset*;
- Second, *gifts that return income or other financial benefits to the donor in return for the contribution such as charitable annuities and charitable remainder trusts*;
- Third, *gifts payable upon the donor's passing*.

What are the tax benefits of planned gifts?

- Donors can contribute appreciated property, like securities or real estate, receive a charitable deduction for the full market value of the asset, and pay no capital gains tax on the transfer.
- Donors who establish a life-income gift receive a tax deduction for the full, fair market value of the assets contributed, minus the present value of the income interest retained; if they fund their gift with appreciated property they pay no upfront capital gains tax on the transfer.
- Gifts payable to charity upon the donor's death, like a bequest or a beneficiary designation in a life insurance policy or retirement account, do not generate a lifetime income tax deduction for the donor, but they are exempt from estate tax.

Regardless of the size of your estate, you can make a lasting impact here in Sonoma Valley and a lasting impact for Vintage House and the growing number of older adults who count on us year after year by making a legacy gift.

To find out more about the benefits of having an estate plan, or to create or amend an existing plan to ensure you have made provisions to support the needs of seniors in Sonoma Valley for generations to come, talk to your financial advisor, accountant, or estate planning attorney. If you have included us in your estate plans we'd love to know. Please email Priscilla.call.essert@vintagehouse.org

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Gary
"Buz"
Hermes



Q: How long have you been a member and what inspired you to join?

A: I think I have been a member for about ten years. I joined when Vintage

House began providing a meeting room for our Sonoma Valley LGBT Seniors group and I became aware of all the other classes and services that were being offered there. I really appreciate that Vintage House makes a special point of making sure we LGBT elders feel welcomed as we have a history of exclusion.

Q: How have you been coping during the pandemic and what has been most challenging?

A: Well, it was hard enough coping with the pandemic, but now the persistent fires and smoke have added another level of limitations and increased anxiety. I live alone and am really missing opportunities to socialize with my friends.

Q: Have you been able to benefit from any of our new services, like free grocery shopping and delivery, meals-to-go, or CareCalls?

A: I am 81 years old and a cancer survivor, so I am being extra cautious about being around others during the pandemic. Having meals delivered weekly as well as the Wednesday lunches and Friday soups have made it possible for me to limit my grocery shopping trips. Also I have never been much of a cook so now I am eating healthier! An added benefit is that it is comforting to know someone will be regularly checking in on me.

Q: In a nutshell, what does being a member at VH mean to you?

A: I love feeling a part of such a vital and vibrant community organization that I know is there for me and that continues to creatively evolve to meet the changing needs of such a large segment of our local population!



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FALL/WINTER 2020 | ISSUE 4



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UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV 11/26: Community Thanksgiving Meal Delivery. The annual tradition continues with at home delivery. For more details and to place your order visit www.vintagehouse.org/thanksgiving

11/27: First day for Holiday Gift Box Orders. Replacing our holiday shoppe fundraiser this year, we will offer a beautiful array of Holiday Boxes for sale for everyone on your list. All proceeds will support Vital Services for Sonoma Valley Seniors. Order online at www.vintagehouse.org/holidaybox

11/30-12/1: GivingTuesday. This annual kick-off to the holiday giving season will take place for 24 hours beginning at 10:00 PM on 11/30. **Please make your gift on 11/30 to help us qualify for matching funds** which will be granted on a first donated, first matched basis until funds run out. www.give65.org/vintagehouse

DEC 12/18: Annual Member meeting. The meeting will take place on Zoom this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. For more information and to register visit www.vintagehouse.org/annualmeeting

12/21-1/3: Vintage House will be closed for the holidays. We will resume normal business hours on 1/4/21.

For more information, or to register for events, please visit us at www.vintagehouse.org/events