

THE VINTAGE VOICE

ISSUE NO. 3

CONNECT. EXPLORE. BELONG.



FEATURED STORY

What the Pandemic Has Taught Us

By Priscilla Call/ESSERT

In January, as news of the outbreak of COVID-19 started to be reported in Europe and in the United States, I couldn't help wonder what the future was going to hold here at Vintage House and in Sonoma Valley. In particular, how would the virus change the lives of people 65 and over, a segment of our population that had been identified as a "vulnerable" population in this pandemic? Is it true? Or is there a bit of ageism in the mix?

Author and Geriatrician Louise Aronson published an article in the Atlantic titled, "Ageism Is Making the Pandemic Worse." Check out the article here: www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2020/03/americas-ageism-crisis-is-helping-the-coronavirus/608905.

In her article, she says that the pandemic further highlights how alive ageism is in our medical system and that it is, "...baked into how the field approaches education, research, and the most fundamental procedures, structures, and policies." (This would be a great virtual conversation to have. Stay tuned.) Ageism or not, the pandemic has changed and will continue to change how seniors move through daily life. However, it has highlighted our interdependency and the beauty of being in community with others and so much more. So, what have we learned?

I'm very proud of our staff and board for coming together and making a swift decision to change course. This grand

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From the Desk of Priscilla Call Essert, Executive Director



“I do see a day in the not-too-distant future when we understand more about coronavirus and we will once again have live teachers in our classrooms with live students safely distanced and with other students connecting and engaging from home.”

Where We Go From Here

Since early March, most of us have been at home adapting to the “new normal” called shelter-in-place. Here at Vintage House, some of our staff are working from home while others have been here at “The House” busy keeping soup and supper going while also fielding calls and assessing need so that we can determine how we might provide the greatest service to the community. Before I explain life as it has been since early March, let me first say that NONE of what we have been able to accomplish over these last three months would have been possible without the donations we received, which came in many shapes and sizes including food donations, checks, cash, and grants – from foundations, businesses, individuals, the City, and the County. The generosity that has been flowing to Vintage House from so many is truly remarkable and it has made it possible for us to mount a swift and well thought out response to COVID-19.

Since March, thanks to our partnerships with Sonoma Family Meal, Ramekins, and Council on Aging, Vintage House has been distributing over 500 meals per day from Monday through Friday. While at the time of this printing it is unclear how long we will continue our current distribution levels, rest assured, we remain committed to addressing food insecurity among our local population of seniors. We will continue to safely distribute meals through Supper’s On! and Soup’s On! as part of our core programming. The distribution will remain curbside or home delivery until the day when we can all gather together again to break bread, share a meal, and reconnect in person. And when we do, you’ll be delighted to discover that the dining room now has a brand new floor and freshly painted walls, giving the space the facelift that it badly needed.

In addition to distributing 2,500 weekly meals, staff members Peter and Denise have been busy scheduling volunteers to shop and deliver groceries as well as prepared meals. This is a service we had been wanting to provide and COVID-19 pushed us into action. We know that the volume might decrease when it is safe to go out, but we now have a

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Where We Go From Here (continued from page 2)

solid program in place to provide for local seniors that may be permanently or temporarily homebound for a variety of reasons. We will be better able to serve the most vulnerable whether due to age or health.

What about our classes? As businesses in the community are talking about opening back up, for the safety of our seniors we will be very conservative as to how and when we will re-open our doors to the public. I also believe that it will take some time for some seniors to feel safe gathering, even after it is allowed. So, in light of this, we have been busy building Vintage House beyond our four walls.

We are beginning to offer classes online, starting with the all-time favorites. Each week we are bringing back some of your beloved teachers and classes using a virtual platform called Zoom. By now, I am sure many of you are expert Zoomers, and if you're not, we can help you become one! Once we have our "regular" classes up and running online, we will begin to develop new content including webinars based on the presentations that the community has come to enjoy such as the Active Aging Series. We will be here to help all of you grow accustomed to this new way of engaging and connecting with us and with one another.

I do see a day in the not-too-distant future when we understand more about coronavirus and we will once again have live teachers in our classrooms with live students safely distanced and with other students connecting and engaging from home as they Zoom into these "hybrid classes." I believe the hybrid model has tremendous potential for a richer experience for everyone—students and teachers alike—and we are looking forward to creating it and continuing this model for as long as it is necessary to keep all of us safe.

And finally, because social distance gatherings will always be safer outdoors, I am thrilled to share that our community garden patch at the Sonoma Community Garden is coming right along and will offer a beautiful, new Vintage House space for us to share in connection, exploration, and belonging. We're looking forward to sharing the beauty and the bounty of the garden and hopefully getting together with you later this summer for some safe yet meaningful time together discovering the wonders of nature.

Like all of you, we are taking things one day at a time and keeping focused on how to stay "in community" while staying safe. Until we gather together again, be well.

Our 2019-2020 Donors and Funders

Thank you to our generous supporters October 1, 2019– May 31, 2020.*

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

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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!

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What the Pandemic Has Taught Us (continued from page 1)

pivot revealed a team that is dedicated to serving this community no matter what it takes. I didn't know for sure that we were capable of this. So, we learned that indeed, we can successfully pivot on a moment's notice.

What about the community we serve? Seniors of all ages came forward to help in any way possible, whether doing research, making greeting cards, or making care calls to others from the safety of their home. The desire to help, to be of service, to pitch in has been both heart-warming and encouraging. We learned that support is there in spades!

The community at large also showed up - young adults, teens, and business owners - and demonstrated generosity and compassion. We learned that the Sonoma Valley community cares deeply for its seniors.

While it may feel odd to have empty classrooms and hallways, the spirit of Vintage House is still alive and well. Another lesson we have learned through all of this is that even when we can't gather in-person, we can still feel connected. We can still share funny stories; talk about what's going on in our lives; and, express our collective gratitude for our health and our community. Whether it's a phone call, an email, a handwritten letter I received, a masked hello during food distribution, or, the people walking by on the bike path offering an encouraging smile. It all makes a difference and has kept our spirits lifted.

The Pandemic has taught us that we are nimble, able to adapt quickly, and we do it with compassion, confidence, and a heaping dose of kindness. It has taught us that we have an incredibly generous and supportive community.

And, with your continued help, we will get through this; we will create new ways to connect, explore, and belong; and together we will follow a path towards the new day.



Meet Paul Chakmak, President



Q: What inspired you to get involved with Vintage House?

A: When I arrived in Sonoma a few years ago I knew I wanted to get involved in the community and to give back. I asked around, and a neighbor mentioned Vintage House. She filled me in on all of the exciting changes the organization was making and she knew they were looking for someone

with a strong financial background to join the board and that dovetailed well with my professional experience. The rest I guess you can say, is history!

Q: What do you see as the organization's greatest strength?

A: The way that the organization engages with the community. We connect in so many varied and expansive ways. It's inspiring.

Q: What's one thing you were surprised to discover about Vintage House?

A: The most surprising thing to me was just how many people in the community didn't know about Vintage

House or all that the organization had to offer. I think some had an image of a place where old people just sat around. Nothing could be further from the truth! Once people come down to Vintage House and see all that is happening, they begin planning their days around their favorite activities!

Q: When you are not carrying out your duties as board President, how do you like to spend your time?

A: As relative newcomers to the Valley, my wife and I love enjoying the food & wine lifestyle here in Sonoma and exploring all that northern California has to offer. I am also a bocce enthusiast and an active member of our local league that plays in Depot Park.

What Else You Need to Know

Ever since we began sheltering-in-place, it has been anything but business as usual here at Vintage House. In mid-March, we had to close the Center to the public in order to keep our staff and members safe. What you may not know is that we also had to cancel many events—including three planned fundraising events whose revenues fund our core operations. So, what does one do when faced with a whole lot of lemons? You make lemonade, of course! We hope you will join us at the following virtual events:

July 3-Until We Sell Out: Sip, Savor, and Support! Have a beautiful wine or tea gift box delivered right to your door, or send one to a friend! All gift boxes include Silk Road Tea or Buena

Vista Wine paired with music and delicious nibbles. Also included is a raffle ticket. You could be the lucky winner!

August 3-12: Are You "In It to Win It?"

If so, mark your calendars for our fabulous Online Silent Auction Fundraiser—You don't want to miss this incredible array of one-of-a-kind experiences and fabulous items ranging from jewelry to food & wine pairings, and so much more, donated by more than 20 businesses across Sonoma Valley. Get ready to make the winning bid!

August 13th: An Evening with the JazKatz featuring local trumpet player, Bill Essert. Let Vintage House take you on a virtual getaway to an Italian

garden where you'll enjoy the sweet Bop sounds of the likes of Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter, John Coltrane, and other jazz legends. Join us for this one-hour concert and let the JazKatz light up your living room! For tickets, visit www.vintagehouse.org/events

August 28: Come Explore the New Vintage House Community Garden.

Join us for what we hope will be an in-person event at Sonoma Garden Park. See what's growing in our garden and enjoy a safe social-distance visit with others. If it is still too soon to gather in-person we will bring the garden tour to you, virtually.

You can find all of the details on our website www.vintagehouse.org/events

Cozette and Terry Shenks



Q: How long have you been members of Vintage House?

A: I can hardly remember a time when weren't members! My husband, Terry, and I joined 15 years ago when I was 60 and he was 66.

Q: What inspired you to join Vintage House?

A: When we first moved to Sonoma we were looking for a place to hang out and meet new people and Vintage House was one of our first stops.

Q: Do you have some favorite activities that you regularly participate in?

A: I love the Gentle Yoga class and Terry attends the men's support group. We've also attended many Thanksgiving dinners, which is our favorite Vintage House event!

Q: What do you appreciate most about Vintage House?

A: How Vintage House helps us feel connected and provides so many vital services to seniors. Terry is confined to a wheelchair and we both have some health issues so during this time of "shelter-in-place" we have relied so much on the kindness and support of Vintage House. We have benefited from many delicious free meals, and from help with our grocery shopping. Through all of this, Vintage House has really helped take a load off of our minds.

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 in the community.

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* that use appreciated assets as a substitute for cash;
- 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.

Have you already named Vintage House in your will or estate plan? We'd appreciate knowing so that we can include you in our legacy circle. Please contact Executive Director, Priscilla Call Essert at priscilla.call.essert@vintagehouse.org.



SONOMA VALLEY'S
SENIOR CENTER

264 1st Street East
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THE VINTAGE VOICE

SPRING/SUMMER 2020 | ISSUE 3



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UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY **July 3 - Until We Sell Out: Sip, Savor, and Support!**
Wine & Tea Gift Boxes delivered to your door. Purchase online at www.vintagehouse.org/tea

July 15 - 17: GIVE65
Online fundraising challenge: Pledge in advance and help us secure a \$5,000 match. To register and pledge, please visit www.give65.org/vintagehouse

AUG **August 3 - 12: Are You "In It to Win It?"**
Online Silent Auction Fundraiser. Register at www.vintagehouse.org/online-auction

August 13: An Evening Concert with the JazKatz
Let us transport you to a virtual Italian garden for a fabulous hour of live Jazz. For tickets, visit www.vintagehouse.org/events

August 28: Vintage House Community Garden
Join us for mimosas and a morning tour of our new garden. Register at www.vintagehouse.org/gardentour

For more information, or to register for events, please visit us at
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