

THE VINTAGE VOICE

ISSUE NO. 5

CONNECT. EXPLORE. BELONG.



FEATURED STORY

Unexpected Lessons

By Mary L. Flett, Ph.D.

It has been quite the year! A year ago, I was a novice learning about this new-fangled illness called COVID. Now I talk intelligently about viral shedding, physical distancing, and where to purchase the best masks. The lessons have been many. And, for me at least, many have been unexpected.

One of the lessons I learned this past year is how incredibly important local groups are to ensuring my needs get met. Certainly, those of us who have lived in Sonoma Valley for a while understand how our Valley residents can pull together in times of trouble. We've lived through too many fire seasons not to have that lesson down. COVID


was different though. It required me to shift my routines, shift my ways of thinking, shift how I connected with and supported others. It required persistence and creativity and commitment to seeing this through to the end. I didn't have a blueprint. None of us did.


Now, a year later, enough time has passed so that we can begin to look back and get some perspective on what we have lived through. I don't know about you, but I have become really good at Zooming! I have learned that I don't need to go to Peet's or Starbucks every day to meet up with friends. I've learned that while I prefer time spent with others in physical proximity, I can

(continued on page 5)

WHAT'S INSIDE

- From the Desk of the ED 2
- Our 2020-2021 Donors 4
- Meet the Board Member 6
- Leaving a Legacy 6
- What Else You Need to Know 7
- Volunteer Spotlight 7
- Upcoming Events 8

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From the Desk of Priscilla Call Essert, Executive Director



—
“We have been preparing for the day when we can once again open our doors to the public. I know many of you spent time cleaning out the nooks and crannies of your homes. We did something similar.”

Light at the End of the Tunnel

In the first quarter of 2021, our phone lines were busy with people wondering when, where, and how to get vaccinated. Scoring an appointment was no easy task for seniors without internet and even those with internet. Thanks to teamwork between Sonoma Valley Hospital and the Community Health Center, Vintage House was able to help seniors work around the digital divide and get vaccinated.

We are now in the second quarter (hard to believe), many seniors have been vaccinated, and the question we get the most is: When will Vintage House open? And the answer is, we are sort of open.

Since shelter-in-place ended, we have been – as we like to call it – open with restrictions. Meals are still being distributed curbside and delivered every Wednesday and Friday, virtual classes continue, and we are slowly adding in-person classes. Classes look a little different and here is what you can expect.

People attending in-person classes must register ahead of time, and everyone must enter into their class from the bike path and then have their temperature taken. Vaccinated or not, masks are required at all times. We are closely watching the CDC guidelines as well as our state and county sites and will adjust our protocols based on their guidelines. They change so quickly but we continue to adjust accordingly. Sometimes, it is just plain confusing.

You might ask, “How is it possible that I can walk into a restaurant, take off my mask, and then dine - but at Vintage House it is so different?” We are in very confusing times, right? But a senior center follows slightly different rules than a restaurant, and we answer to different governing bodies.

People are understandably anxious for things to return to normal.

(continued on page 3)

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VINTAGE HOUSE

264 First Street East

Sonoma CA 95476

707.996.0311

www.vintagehouse.org



Light at the End of the Tunnel (continued from page 2)

However, for a while longer, we have a new and sometimes confusing normal. Focusing on the future clears up the confusion a bit. So, we have been preparing for the day when we can once again open our doors to the public.

I know many of you spent time cleaning out the nooks and crannies of your homes. We did our own version of this: our closets are organized, we have new flooring, clean carpet, and a fresh coat of paint on the walls. We also installed acoustic panels in classrooms that were on the "live" side (it should be a lot easier to hear each other). Now, we are adding extra technology to some of the classrooms that will allow us to continue virtual classes and have people in the classroom as well (hybrid classes). Overall, things look clean, bright, and a dash more modern.

When California fully opens, Vintage House will once again unlock its front door and let people enter through our lobby. What is that date? Some say June 15, but that depends on many things that are not in our control. We will take it one day at a time. The safety of staff, volunteers, teachers, and students guides each step we take back to "normal." We will remain patient and hopeful. There is indeed light at the end of the tunnel!

With Gratitude,

Priscilla

READY FOR CONNECTION.

Are you ready to host an event? Stone Hall is ready for you! Just blocks away from downtown, with plenty of parking, and accessible from the bike path - rental of our hotel-style banquet hall includes:

- A commercial kitchen
- Theater-quality projection & sound systems
- A garden patio
- Air conditioning, controlled lighting, and more.

For more information, please e-mail rentals@vintagehouse.org

Our 2020-2021 Donors and Funders

Thank you to our generous supporters October 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021.*

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

\$50,000 and above

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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!

manage to connect by phone or computer or just sitting outside with masks on.

I've also learned there are things I shouldn't take for granted. Remember the empty shelves in the grocery stores and the run on toilet paper at the beginning of all this? I learned that some things, like healthcare, are not well coordinated and the gaps in these systems put us all at risk. I learned that different groups experienced this pandemic in different ways, and one size does not fit all. I learned that the virus doesn't discriminate, and I shouldn't either.

Another lesson I learned was that I could count on Vintage House to step up to the plate and find ways to see that people in my community knew somebody was there for them. I saw Vintage House finding ways to distribute food and continue to offer classes online. I watched how staff and volunteers alike used their skills and abilities to keep up with each new chapter of the pandemic as it unfolded.

What has become even more evident to me is how valuable an organization like Vintage House is to the quality of life in our community. Vintage House is more than its physical location. It is a legacy of caring and vision that Jerry Casson and her crew left us. It is a focal point for staying engaged with all aspects of aging including learning, health, and building and sustaining community. Maybe that's the most important lesson I have learned this past year. None of us can make it without some kind of support and connection with those we love and who love us.

The end to this pandemic is now in sight. What remains are the stories of resilience, courage, loss, and triumph. We are forever changed by what we have been through. What should we do with those stories? Perhaps we should share them.



Are you interested in sharing your story of enduring the pandemic? The National Council on Aging is collecting stories on their website:

www.ncoa.org



LINDA GAVRON

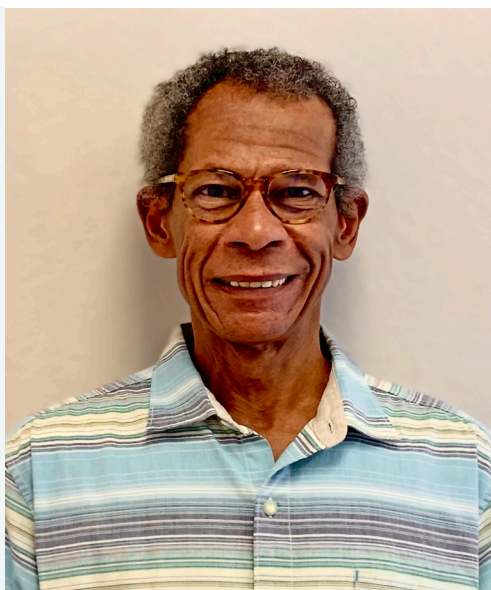
Dedicated. Kind. Reliable. Perfectionist. Friend. Helpful. Integrity. These are just some of the words that our Vintage House staff members used to describe former Facilities Manager Linda Gavron, a volunteer-turned-employee

who left Vintage House in December. In her 18 years with The House, Linda did a little bit of everything, and all of it with panache. Her contributions are so many that we struggle to fit them here. She was essential in the renovations of Stone Hall, made our many events and fundraisers shine, kept the building beautiful & the programs inside it engaging and always evolving. We celebrate Linda's heartfelt service to Vintage House – best of luck, Linda. We already miss you.

Donate Your Car, Support our Services

Donate your car, boat, truck, RV, jet ski, bus, snowmobile, or even airplane to Vintage House and receive a tax deduction. It doesn't even have to be running! If you have a clean title, our fundraising partner Donation Line LLC has a no-cost, no-hassle process. Contact Donation Line at 877-227-7487 or [click here](#) to visit their website and reference Vintage House's ID #3461.

Meet Hewitt Jackson, Board Member



Q: How did you come to Vintage House?

A: The first place my wife Linda and I volunteered when we moved to Sonoma was at Vintage House, serving Christmas dinner. I went on to volunteer other places – judging senior projects at the high school, with FISH, and Teen Services – and Linda volunteered with Vintage House board member Celia Kruse de la Rosa at the hospital. Celia asked if I'd explore joining the Vintage House board. I started to get more involved just as the pandemic hit and Vintage House had to pivot its programs.

Q: What are you excited about for when VH fully reopens?

A: I love events and seeing the planning work come to reality. Perhaps I inherited a bit of theatrical DNA. I started with staging rock concerts locally after high school, then with nation-wide tours and entertainment business travel planning. Eventually I got into developing, marketing and managing large conventions, trade shows, conferences and seminars. I'm excited to bring that experience here and help plan more gatherings to reach everyone in our community.

Q: We have a pretty fun event we're planning right now.

A: Yes, A Country Garden Party on July 31. We'll have an online auction of awesome birdhouses created by Sonoma Valley folks and then an outdoor gathering!

Q: What's been something positive that has come from the pandemic?

A: I get to spend more time with my wife, which is what retirement is all about. I'm finding more time to do some writing, gardening, exploring Sonoma Valley and keeping active.

Q: What's the best part of being 55 or better?

A: I could buy a house in a 55+ community! I never considered that question until I got to this age, because I worked well beyond 55. I'm having much more fun now. I've been very lucky – I strive to keep myself healthy and happy, and I landed in a community where I can contribute. We're fortunate to live in Sonoma! Anyone who lives here would agree.

Your Legacy. Our Future.

Everyone benefits from a gift that anyone can make. As a Vintage House member, you know the importance of ensuring the wellbeing and quality of life for Sonoma Valley seniors as they age in place. But you may not know the *vital role that you can play* in ensuring Vintage House remains a place for connection, support and belonging. We rely on individuals like you to fund more than 80% of our operating budget. The rising population of older adults in our community means Vintage House is more essential than ever, and your legacy gift helps promise current and future generations a rich and welcoming community where they can continue to explore and grow. Legacy giving can take many forms and need not be complicated: part of your estate set aside as a donation; an outright gift of cash, securities, or real estate; appreciated stock; pension plans or IRAs; or a life insurance policy you no longer need.

No matter the size of your estate, you can make a lasting gift for older adults who count on our programs and services year after year. Contact Priscilla@vintagehouse.org to learn more.

Coming up at The House...

What Else you need to know

Coffee at the House. How do you take your coffee? At Vintage House, of course! Join us every Tuesday and Thursday morning for free coffee near the fountain, weather permitting. There are often sweet treats, live music, and plenty of socially distant seating so you can connect with friends and make new ones!

May is Older Americans Month. The theme for 2021 is "Communities of Strength." Older adults have built resilience over the course of their lives. Their stories and contributions help to support and inspire others. In May, let's celebrate the power of connection and engagement in building strong communities.

July 13-16: GIVE65 Challenge. We're excited to share that Vintage House is participating in the GIVE65 event again this year. GIVE65 is an annual online fundraising challenge designed exclusively for organizations like us. This fundraiser runs for 65-hours, starting July 13 until July 16. Last year, Vintage House raised just over \$50,000 including donations, matching funds, and \$10,000 in prize money. Thank you, Sonoma! This year we hope to get those matching funds and win additional prize money in other categories to help fund our vital services. Stay tuned ...

July 31: A Country Garden Party. Save the date! Join us for A Country Garden Party at the Sonoma Garden Park on Seventh Street East on Saturday, July 31. Leading up to the event, we will hold a week-long auction of locally created birdhouses and garden art. Interested in building a birdhouse for our auction? Want to sponsor the event or reserve your tickets before they go on sale to the public? Contact Meghan Leerskov by email at meghan@vintagehouse.org or phone 707-509-3145. We hope you will come and enjoy the outdoors with us!

Sept. 1 – 30: Senior Center Month. Be on the lookout for some familiar faces from the Vintage House community around the Sonoma Plaza. In celebration of Senior Center Month, Vintage House will be displaying 21 banners around the Plaza. The banners will promote a positive image of aging and the important role that senior centers provide in aging well.

New Ongoing Classes! In-Person & Virtual

iPhone & iPad	Gentle Yoga
Zumba Gold	Feldenkrais
Jin Shin Jyutsu	Knitting

Visit www.vintagehouse.org/events for times and to register.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Leslie
Fuller



Q: How did you start volunteering at Vintage House?

A: I came to Vintage House's Curbside Meals to pick up food late last year because I was getting tired of cooking for myself all the time. I also volunteer at Pets Lifeline and I mentioned it to their program director Michael Fontaine. He thought I would like volunteering here and so he called and recommended me to the staff at Vintage House.

Q: You give so much to Vintage House. What do you get from volunteering?

A: In a single word? Joy. I'm not so isolated. I get to be in situations where I meet people and have fun. I get to know the people who drive up to get food and banter back and forth. I try to make it fun and not serious for them. And you can't get bored at Vintage House. You're always meeting different people and volunteers. And the staff is really friendly.

Q: What do you do for fun when you're not volunteering?

A: Well, volunteering is fun for me. I also volunteer with Pets Lifeline and am active with AMVETS. I like to garden. If I wasn't so lazy I'd get back into sewing. I do needlepoint. I like to cook, but I hate to shop with a passion.

Interested in being one of our Volunteers?

Contact Denise Wilbanks by phone 707.996.0311 ext. 308 or email denise@vintagehouse.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 15: Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Every year an estimated 5 million, or 1 in 10 older Americans, experience physical, mental, and financial elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Help stop abuse before it happens. Call the Sonoma County 24-hour hotline to report concerns at (707) 565-5940.

JULY 13-16: Give65.

This annual fundraiser runs for only 65 hours and offers up to \$10,000 first donated, first matched funds until they run out! Help us earn the matching funds by donating early on July 13. Get all the details at www.give65.org/vintagehouse

31: Vintage House presents A Country Garden Party.

We've reimaged our annual gala! Join us outdoors at Sonoma Garden Park for wine and delicious bites and an auction of garden-themed art and locally created birdhouses. Tickets go on sale July 1st at www.vintagehouse.org/events/garden-party

AUG 21-22: Quilt Show.

The 17th annual Quilt Show at Stone Hall will display a collection of talented art quilters in Stone Hall from 10 am to 4pm each day. The \$5 admission goes to benefit Vintage House. Vintage House will also feature a quilt handbag art display.

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

THE VINTAGE VOICE

SPRING/SUMMER 2021 | ISSUE 5



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SAVE THE DATE



VINTAGE HOUSE PRESENTS

A Country GARDEN PARTY

Join us for a festive, open-house style afternoon of wine and delicious bites at the Sonoma Garden Park.

Locally created birdhouses for auction will adorn the path, amongst beautiful garden art, roving acoustic musicians, and other surprises. We hope you can come enjoy the outdoors with us!

SATURDAY
JULY 31st
Festivities begin at 1PM

SONOMA GARDEN PARK
19996 7th St. East
Sonoma, CA 95476