

Summer School DCV Meeting, October 20, 2009

Membership Presentation

Iris Molotsky, co-chair, Membership Committee

As the co-chair of the Village's membership program I want to talk to you tonight about the need to recruit additional members. Since I do the newsletter, I have access to many inside Village stories. I know we are on the right track when I hear about emerging friendships as people walk, discuss books and play bridge together, when I witness the gratitude on the part of a member whose city-wrecked garden was restored by volunteers, and when I learn about the food delivered to a household in crisis.

The Village started out as a dream supported by a few neighbors. Now it's a reality deemed so important that a national organization, AARP, is standing firmly behind us and the Village movement. Your being here tonight is proof that our mission corresponds to your aspirations. You've already heard from Peggy and Amy about what we've accomplished. I want to talk briefly about what's going to happen in the future:

- Reach out to more Circle residents (inclusiveness) subsidized memberships
- Lots more social activities: knitting, cooking, group dinners, jazz, theatre, museum tours
- Health and wellness activities: anti-balance classes, drivers' reeducation
- Increased interaction with other villages, locally and nationally, village network, conferences
- Increased interaction with other Dupont Circle organizations
- Increase the scope of volunteer activities
- Expand the "buddy" program and develop a "companion" service by volunteers
- Expand subsidized benefits like Senior Advantage and Washington Consumers' Checkbook, discounts for Village members at local restaurants

Many of you here tonight have given generously as volunteers. But quite frankly, you can't run a professional and effective organization without a day-to-day person responsible for coordination and oversight. Mundane but vital expenditures—insurance, supplies, telephone, computer, legal advice, audits, staff—all these require a stable income stream. It takes money to reach out to community

members who are not activists, have reduced incomes or are unable to attend meetings. It takes money to vet and research new programs. It takes money to be an inclusive, responsive organization.

Our three major income sources are membership dues, grants, and donations. We thank everyone who has already been part of this effort. We know what it takes to succeed: increase membership and vigorous fundraising. We are doing both – membership is now 71 and we have received two grants—but of course we need to do more.

I ask you to make an investment in the Village now. Our dues are about a dollar a day for individual, less for a household and for those whose incomes are under \$40,000 –those membership plus individuals pay \$100/year. Consider the peace of mind and services that membership brings. Experiences of computer help, Alaire saying one telephone call worth the price of membership.

If you haven't joined yet, do it tonight. But, as I look around, I recognize that many of you are already members. You are our best ambassadors because you understand why the Village is important and you know what we have accomplished—and because you believe in what we stand for. We need your help in spreading the word and in reaching out to new members. Make a pledge to yourself tonight to speak to at least one friend or neighbor about joining. Your personal appeal is the best approach and the most effective. We need your help in this vital Village component.

Dues can be made in partial payments. Talk to me or Abigail Wiebenson about our subsized memberships for lower income members. If for some reason you are not ready to join, please help us with a supporting donation at whatever level you can. Contributions to the Village are tax deductible. If you have experience in fundraising, we need you. Please let me know if you are willing to work with us in this area.

Become a member or recruit a member and help us ensure the Village will be here for you in the future.