



Potomac
Community
Village

2017 End-of-Year Report



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Potomac Community Village (PCV) is an all-volunteer Village, with no paid staff, and no office location. Our office phone number is on a dedicated cell phone, which moves from one Help Desk agent to another. PCV's service area is the entirety of the 20854 zip code, an area of more than 33 square miles.

We had a small gain in membership over the past year, from 176 individuals at the end of 2016 to 191 at the end of 2017.

We remained stable in the number of volunteers, at 91, though some dropped out and others became active. About 2/3 of our volunteers are also members. In all, about 220 people are directly involved with PCV.

In 2017, we provided 212 direct services to members at their homes, and an additional 150 friendly phone calls, for a total of 362 direct services to members. We provided 145 round-trip and 12 one-way rides (equal to 302 one-way rides and 2,950 miles), and 55 at-home non-transportation services: 20 were help with household chores; 18 were personal visits; 17 were computer and other electronic device help. In 2016, we provided just 18 instances of assistance with household chores or with personal visits. We are pleased to see that requests for personal visits and household chores have more than doubled, as that indicates to us a greater sense of ease among members in asking for more personal help than is the case when asking for tech support or transportation.

We also had a significant increase in the number of calls to our help Desk, up from the 400 received in 2016 to 522 calls in 2017. In addition to responding to requests for direct services and inquiries about membership and volunteering, these Help Desk agents also respond to member requests for names from our Suggested Contractors and Vendors List, and to RSVPs for PCV-hosted programs and social events.

Sixty of our volunteers are vetted and thus able to provide "direct services" (transportation, computer and other household help, friendly visits and phone calls) to our members. Thirteen of these are currently active drivers. Other volunteers, as well as many that are also vetted, provide "administrative" services to PCV by serving on our Teams (Communications, Program, Help Desk, IT, Volunteer, Membership, Administrative). We also have a small group of teen volunteers who assist us in a number of ways and to whom we give SSL credit. They help with room set up at the Potomac Community Center (we are required to do our own set up and take down of tables and chairs when using that space); provide one-on-one technical help to members just prior to our evening meetings; performed (cello and piano) at one of our events; and assisted us on Potomac Day by handing out flyers and enlisting their parents to also help out that day. One of these students also created a video for us.

We have a website (www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org), a Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/PotomacCommunityVillage), a monthly print newsletter and a listserv that is distributed 3 to 4 times a month to more than 530 email addresses. This past year we introduced a member directory that lists, in addition to contact information, members' sub-divisions and their interests and hobbies. The goal is to make it easier for members to identify other members who share similar interests as well as those who live near them.

We added many more social and cultural events for members this past year. In addition to the existing Book Group, Canal Walking Group and Chinese New Year luncheon, we added two lunches (St. Patrick's Day and Hispanic Heritage Month), an end-of summer wine and cheese party; five docent-led museum tours (National Gallery, Kreeger, Phillips, Library of Congress and Glenstone); a trip to see Hexagon; a monthly men's lunch group called ROMEO (Retired Older Men Eating Out; and a social gathering just for new members. We switched from holding morning coffees and afternoon teas to a monthly open-to-all lunch at a local restaurant. This upped the attendance, as well as offering an opportunity for members to get together and for non-members to learn about PCV in a friendly and informal setting. We continued to offer monthly evening programs, with average attendance up from 65 to 75. In all, PCV offered more than 70 social, cultural and educational events over the course of the year.

We continued two programs which were introduced in 2016, both of which are used by small numbers of members, but which are very significant in their lives; Holiday Friends, under which members invite a fellow member or two who would otherwise be alone to a meal marking a significant holiday (Thanksgiving, winter holidays and Passover); and Storm Buddies, for members who would like a phone call to check on their well-being when there is ice, snow, power outages, etc. We also continued our home safety program in coordination with the Montgomery County Fire Department.

We continued our collaborative relationship with the Potomac Chamber of Commerce, attending their networking events and being given a booth and space in the parade on Potomac Day. In exchange, PCV provides 10 adult volunteers who make sure that young children at the parade don't run into the street.

We also partnered with the National Institute on Aging's Go4Life program with a pilot workshop to assist the Go4Life Director and staff in their effort to create a nationwide workshop / program to motivate seniors to become more physically active.

We have a new collaborative relationship with the Potomac Library, hosting several programs at the library's Community Room this fall, with the space provided rent-free. We are also offered space in the library's display area for a rack holding our print newsletters – we put out about 40 newsletters each month and most are taken. We were also able to have a month-long display about our Village in the library's glass-walled exhibit area.

We also became a partner with the Potomac Community Center (PCC) this past year, under which PCV provides occasional daytime programming to augment the County Recreation Department's existing programming for seniors. Our first effort, in September 2017, was a program on preventing falls which attracted 80 people, a significant increase over the fewer than 20 who usually attend county-provided programming. In exchange, the PCC now provides rent-free space for our programming. However, under this agreement, all PCV programs at the PCC must be free and open to all, not limited to members and not used for any fund-raising activities.

We look forward to additional collaborative efforts with PCC staff and with the Potomac Library in 2018.