

SAN FRANCISCO VILLAGE, CONT'D FROM PG. 3

to add subsidized memberships as funding is found to do so.

The fees allow access to services that may be discounted or provided at-cost for members, and some that may be provided by volunteers without charge, but all providers will be screened and vetted by the staff of San Francisco Village – Northside. The services will be accessible with a single phone call instead of having to go to multiple sources, which is a real convenience, Rev. Gaines said.

Services would include intake interviews to assess interests, goals and needs. Free services with membership would include health and wellness assistance, such as requested weekly phone check-in calls; participation in health and wellness activities or classes; daily living assistance including volunteer help with gro-

cery shopping or transportation to medically necessary appointments; and social, cultural and educational activities, Poor said.

Social activities could include program-sponsored movie or book clubs, walking groups, and periodic member events to keep members in contact with each other and to foster community and friendships.

Paid services available through San Francisco Village – Northside would be discounted through contract arrangements with local providers such as home health care, prepared meals, home repair, computer assistance, financial, retirement planning, and more. Volunteer connections could be made for transportation, companionship or outings.

It's an innovative, multigenerational membership program that provides many of the benefits of a

retirement community without giving up one's independence, identity and own home, Rev. Gaines said.

The need is clear, as 40 percent of residents in San Francisco over 60 years of age live alone, Gaines said. Further, the first Baby Boomers hit age 65 in 2011 and will create higher population numbers in this group for 18 years. Of those over 65, she said, 60 percent will have at least one chronic condition from mild to more so, and will need to have help with the day-to-day details of living.

The area for service defined by the San Francisco Village – Northside is bounded by Van Ness, Golden Gate Park, and the north and west boundaries of the City. Neighborhoods included are the Richmond, Presidio Heights, Pacific Heights, Jordan Park, Laurel Heights, Western Addition, Japantown, Cow Hollow, and the Marina.

The overarching concept is that this program will be a model for other neighborhoods in the City to replicate, but it would also benefit additional groups by using common resources and concepts without having to reforge the wheel, Rev. Gaines added.

"We're connecting to other existing programs to build networks around people according to their individual needs," Poor said. Among those agencies and organizations are

the Mayor's Office, California Pacific Medical Center, Episcopal Senior Communities, the Institute on Aging, Silver Ride, Sage Elder Care, On Lok, St. James Episcopal Church, Congregation Emanu-El, Share the Care, Osher Life Long Learning Institute, Congregation Beth Shalom, San Francisco Bay Area Network for the End-of-Life Care, and Episcopal Homes Foundation.

"It's really a way of being neighborly in an organized way," Rev. Gaines said, quoting a neighborhood supporter.

"We want to promote inclusivity so that this will be of value to all members of the community. The Richmond is a very diverse area, with a 40 percent Asian population. Our goal is to bring everyone in and create community. If we can't create community in the midst of the diversity of the Richmond, how can we create that in the world?" she asked.

Hoping for a launch in the fall, they have raised \$70,000 of the needed \$150,000, she said. "We are asking for charter members who will have extra perks by buying in now, even though services will not begin until later," she said. Other outright donations are welcome as well. Volunteers are also being sought.

"Sometimes, in neighborhoods where people have lived for a very long time, children have grown and fledged

and the remaining adults can tend to become disconnected. San Francisco Village – Northside is an intentional reconnection. Everyone is paying attention," Rev. Gaines said.

"We are working now on the idea of creating small area groups we are calling 'pods' to build this concept, much like the way people come together on a block-by-block basis for disaster preparedness or Neighborhood Watch. People coming together in a small area know each other and their homes and can respond quickly. They are looking at this not only for their own safety, but watching out for others: it's a movement that is organic and personal," Poor said.

"There is an enormous element of trust involved in asking someone to come into your house and help you, but that's one big step in building a stronger community," Poor added.

"So much of what we are talking about is trust and friendship, but first you have to have the trust," Rev. Gaines said. "I believe there is a deep longing for connection, trust and joy."

The San Francisco Village – Northside is about making life fuller, with more meaning and joy, she added.

"It's a powerful concept in making futures as bright as they can be," Poor said.

People involved early in the process of developing San Francisco Village – Northside, in addition to the Rev. Mary Moore Gaines, include: Gladly Thacher, nonprofit founder who started Enterprise for High School Students, Alumnae Resources, Life Plan Center, and the San Francisco Educational Fund; Jack and Nina Herndon of Sage Eldercare; Mark Higby of Beacon Hill Village; Susan Poor, health care consultant/coordinator; and Duff Axson, a nonprofit mental health consultant. St. James Episcopal Church is the founding partner of the S.F. Village project.

The Board of Trustees now includes all the above individuals as well as Eva Auchincloss, Gayle Geary, Jude Lange, Claudia Lewis, Kay Parekh, Carolyn Pon, and Judy Spain.

Those interested in more information may contact San Francisco Village – Northside at www.sfvillage.org or by calling 415-395-8418.

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