

VILLAGE VOICE

APRIL 2020

Message from Paula Lettice

President

I hope this newsletter finds you well and with the knowledge that Mount Vernon At Home is deeply concerned about its members during this difficult time and that we are doing the best that is possible under the circumstances in providing support and guidance to you. The Board of Directors is, of course, concerned about you and how our Village is doing. The phone tree that we recently established is a way to get information out to members as well as to check on everyone's welfare.

Rather than the normal printing of the monthly newsletter, we are distributing it electronically to those for whom we have emails and doing a limited printing for those who do not. Given that we are all working from home in multiple locations, this is the best use of our resources right now.

As this newsletter goes to printing, all Mount Vernon At Home programs and activities through the end of April have been cancelled and a decision on May will be at a later date. We are complying with Governor Northam's executive orders and following guidance and protocols from state and local officials. CELEBRATE! has been slipped into September – more to follow on that.

To close on a very positive note, we have just hired a **new Executive Director** – Jan Ridgely! She comes with a wealth of experience in several local non-profits and is excited to work with Mount Vernon At Home and serve our members. She will begin on April 1st but Jan and I are already talking about lots of ideas regarding membership, development, and general operations. We will still be working remotely at that time ... Marlene, Barbara Sullivan, and I will work the transition and orientation by phone, email, and document exchange. Please join me in



Introducing Jan Ridgely!!

Executive Director

Jan Ridgely, our new Executive Director, has been a resident of Falls Church, VA since 2004. Her most recent position was as the President and CEO of United Charitable, a non-profit that works with wealth advisors and their clients to maximize their contributions and charitable impact. Locally, Jan has led several associations, her neighborhood civic association, and a council of the Tysons Chamber of Commerce. Before moving to this area, she was a nutrition counselor and educator. Jan's management strengths are coupled with her interest in the Village movement, as evidenced by her attendance at recent area village events and conferences.



In Jan's own words: "Hello Villagers! I'm so very excited to serve this amazing community. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, our connection as a community can only be strengthened. I feel honored to be able to work with the Board of Directors, volunteers and staff to move through this time of survival to thriving. Being at home is the safest place you can be, and being connected, even remotely, to each other, supports and sustains us. I look forward to learning through this crisis to bring more community, care and connectedness to our Village."

President's Message *(cont'd)*

wishing Jan a hearty Mount Vernon welcome!

My best wishes that you remain safe and secure ... and are finding new and interesting ways to "socially distance."

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Calling for Committee Members

In order to strengthen our Village, we are enhancing and/or creating committees and are looking for volunteers from within the membership of Mount Vernon At Home. If you are interested in giving a little of your time and talents, we would love to hear from you! Tell us which of the committees sound interesting to you! And, if you know of someone in our local community who might be interested, please contact them and then let us know as we want to broaden our community outreach and input. Please send your responses to info@mountvernonathome.org ... thanks!!

The following are committees for which we are seeking volunteers – each is described below:

Development/Fundraising Committee – Develop fundraising strategies, sponsors, partners, etc. and assist in the planning and execution of the end-of-year campaign, gala, or other major events.

Membership Committee – Analyze membership levels and trends, member participation, dues, and other indicators of membership success. With the Outreach and Communications Committee, identify and staff events within the community to educate about Mount Vernon At Home and encourage membership and donations.

Program Committee – Work on new and recurring programs; scheduling speakers, venues, and logistical arrangements; collect attendance information; and seek feedback and ideas for the future.

Outreach and Communications – Establish relationships and partnerships with individuals and organizations within our community, assist with organizational marketing and branding, and develop and participate outreach programs to attract members and sponsors.

Member Caring Committee – Reach out to fellow members - e.g., periodically contact members as a sign of friendship, check on how they are doing, send greeting cards, arrange for meals when a member is discharged from the hospital or other care facility, and inviting them to events with offers of transportation and support.



Spring Cleaning

Everyone now has time for **Spring Cleaning**, even in small ways. Here are some tips:

- Start with a **small project**, so you don't get discouraged but rather feel a sense of accomplishment.
- Use the **right tools** (e.g., a duster with an extender for high places, a squeegee for your windows).
- Check your **smoke detectors and fire extinguishers** - the best rule of thumb is to change your batteries when you change your clocks forward or backward - if you haven't already, change them now.
- Clean out the **medicine cabinet** - properly dispose of medications that are expired.
- Put away the **clutter** - put everything away where it belongs and throw away the rest, making sure nothing poses a tripping hazard.
- Use **small bins**. When you regularly use bins for storage, you'll be able to find items easily.
- **What is used/what isn't**. The old adage - "If you haven't used it in the past year, consider getting rid of items (e.g., clothes, decorations, bedding, home décor, etc.)."
- Know your limits. **Don't overwhelm** yourself! Pace yourself and do a little at a time. And, most importantly, be careful – avoid falls and other risks.
- **Ask for help** when you need it!