



COVID-19 Update/Status Report August 9, 2020

Dear Friends,

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, ANV has made sure our members have what they need—food, medicine, cleaning supplies, and human connection—to stay safely at home. As an organization that serves seniors with a corps of volunteers (many of whom are 55+), our village is comprised of the most at-risk age group for this virus, and their safety has been our highest priority. This is no doubt a challenging time, but our important work continues. Following are some of the ways we've adapted to meet the needs of Arlington's seniors during this time:

Safety-Based Services

We, as a village, commit to wearing masks, frequent handwashing, and remaining distanced when possible. One staff member is always at the office to fulfill member requests and address critical needs, while other staff work remotely. Recently, our Office volunteers have come back into the office, reflecting the increase in demand as our members resume critical medical visits and the commensurate increase in transportation request.

We've hit pause on in-person services that require people to share indoor space for an extended period of time, like friendly visits, home organization, and non-essential transportation requests. We are responding in the home on a limited basis to those requests that are related to health and wellness. ANV is following the virus data for our area very closely, and will add back services only when it is safe to do so, always erring on the side of caution.

Creative Connections Through Technology

ANV's usual social calendar is a tremendously important element in helping our members feel engaged and connected. It is traditionally full with our weekly speaker series, happy hours, dine arounds, and special interest groups. Much to our delight, the move toward virtual gatherings has been a great success! With the help of volunteers who lead technology (including Zoom) training sessions and the willingness of village members to try new things, we've seen our online community grow dynamically. For example, our happy hour group added a cooking element to their gatherings, our weekly speaker series is attracting even more attendees, and new groups have formed—including a gardening group, a book club, and a private group on Nextdoor.



In addition, our new phone buddy program, has matched over 120 members with volunteers who call periodically for friendly conversation and to ensure the member has what s/he needs to be safe at home. The friendships and connections made through this initiative are brightening this time at home for members and volunteers alike.

Our Volunteers Carry On

We are fortunate to have a steady stream of applicants to our volunteer program. It is inspiring to see how many Arlingtonians have been moved to help their neighbors through this challenging time. Volunteer training is now online, and the process of onboarding volunteers continues to run smoothly. Thanks to the dedication of our steadfast volunteers, ANV has been able to fulfill almost 100% of the 520 service requests during these past five months.



ANV Without a Fee

ANV has sought to play a greater role in helping Arlington's most vulnerable stay safe at home during the pandemic and began waiving its membership fee to be able to extend its services to any senior in need. Since March, ANV has brought on 50 "temporary" members, mostly referred by the County or the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). Our volunteers bring these new members food (from the grocery store or AFAC), prescriptions, supplies, and peace of mind knowing they have another friend looking out for them. Thanks to the Arlington Community Foundation and the Washington Forrest Foundation for needed financial support to support this effort.

So that we are able to keep assisting the most vulnerable seniors in our community, we are placing a priority on fundraising to strengthen ANV's Financial Aid Fund over the next three years—more information will be shared on that in the fall.

Looking Ahead

ANV, as an organization, remains on solid ground. Our board leadership, organizational strategies, processes, and financial pragmatism are serving us well and allow us to be nimble and flexible, adjusting our course when we need to. However, we know that challenges remain ahead. We are aware of issues that may arise and are developing strategies to mitigate them.

- To maintain our financial stability, we continue to seek funding from loyal donors and are applying to new funding sources.
- ANV is deepening our partnerships with the County government and senior-serving nonprofits like AFAC, Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH), Meals on Wheels, and other local villages to strengthen the social safety net for seniors in Arlington.
- We are looking for more ways that technology can help our members, whether by enhancing social connection or through practical applications like telehealth appointments.

ANV is focused not with just surviving this pandemic, but thriving—increasing our reach, the number of people we serve, our partnerships, the diversity of our village. All of which will contribute to the strength of our community and help us increase our impact.

This global pandemic has brought home how important it is to have a caring, supportive community around us. These are the times when we need to know we can count on each other. All of us at ANV are heartened by the commitment of our volunteers (those providing services and those working tirelessly behind the scenes), the support of our friends and donors, and the resilience, wisdom, and creativity of our members. We are getting through this together.

Thank you all for your friendship, concern, and willingness to help. We will continue to send updates but in the meantime, please feel reach out if you have questions, concerns, or ideas.

Stay well,



Wendy Zenker
Executive Director