

**COMMUNITY:**  
Chair Chats set in June in Tollgate

*Continued from page 3*

larger “Sisters Village,” which is one of the AFSC Action Teams.

The initial Village to Village concept was developed 20 years ago by residents in a corner of Boston’s Beacon Hill neighborhood. The concept was developed to help elders “age in place” in their homes. With advancing age, home ownership and/or maintenance of their lifestyle can present hurdles to the elderly for which they need assistance.

A neighborhood organization was established to help with running errands, raking leaves, and changing a light bulb or smoke detector batteries. The services, provided by neighbors for one another, created a safety net for residents and increased avenues for social connection. The Beacon Hill Village, and another one in Washington D.C., proved very successful and word spread across the country to neighborhoods in large cities and small towns. At present, there are over 240 open Villages and more than 100 in development in 41 states and the District of Columbia. There has been a Village in Bend for 11 years.

The “Village” builders in Sisters have done a meticulous job of researching all the possible options and have crafted a Village concept they hope will be beneficial for Sisters residents – friendly for *all* ages, not just elders.

AFSC, which is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, already has all the pieces in place to provide an umbrella for “Sisters Villages.” The first Village to organize is Tollgate Village. Each Village will have its own organizing committee to oversee establishing of the Village; for example, Timber Creek, Coyote Springs, Rolling Horse Meadows, or perhaps a few streets in one section of town, can form its own Village.

They will be a separate organization from any established homeowner’s associations. Neighbors can opt in

or out. Privacy is protected. Dues are minimal, to be established by each Village individually. The bottom line is, within each Village, needs can be met, skills and talents will be shared, a sense of community will be strengthened as connections are made, and new neighbors (and old) can become easily integrated into the Village.

A buddy system allows for neighbors who live alone to arrange to receive regular, occasional, or temporary check-in calls. If a need arises or an emergency occurs, neighbors will know who to call for help – and they will be just down the street.

Social, educational, athletic, and seasonal activities can be organized around shared interests. Rather than living on a street of 12 houses, and knowing perhaps one or two other people, couples, or families, the Village concept encourages stronger neighborhood bonds, creating a deeper sense of community, regardless of overall growth occurring in the area.

Encouraging involvement of all ages – children through elders – provides the opportunity for intergenerational interactions and activities. Are you 65 years old and you just can’t manage to conquer your “tech phobia?” The teen down the street is a computer whiz. He doesn’t have any grandparents who live nearby. He might be happy to help you learn and you each make a new friend.

Social isolation and loneliness for both teens and elders have been identified as serious health concerns. Village membership

can help create connections among neighbors. The small town feel that we all prize can continue to exist, despite growth, creating emotional, physical, and mental connections by supporting each other right where we live. A more connected community creates a safer community.

The preview period for the Tollgate Village has begun, with their website up as of June 1 at [www.sistersvillages.helpfulvillage.com](http://www.sistersvillages.helpfulvillage.com). All Tollgate residents should have received a postcard in the mail this week. Watch for people wearing T-shirts, with the words “Ask me about Tollgate Village” on the front.

Beginning the week of June 8, a series of “Chair Chats” will be held outside around Tollgate cul-de-sacs. These chats will be socially distanced (no more than 12 people), spread out by location and time of day to fit most people’s schedules. Any resident of Tollgate is invited to bring a chair, a mask, and their curiosity and questions to learn more about Tollgate Village. There will be four gatherings to start and then randomly as interest arises.

For more information visit [www.sistersvillages.helpfulvillage.com](http://www.sistersvillages.helpfulvillage.com). Tollgate resident Jane Killefer is the team leader for the Tollgate Village and Chris Laing is the AFSC board member and liaison for the Sisters Villages program. Email Killefer at [tollgate@agefriendly SISTERS.COM](mailto:tollgate@agefriendly SISTERS.COM) and Laing at [villages@agefriendly SISTERS.COM](mailto:villages@agefriendly SISTERS.COM). The Age Friendly Sisters Country website can be found at [www.agefriendly SISTERS.COM](http://www.agefriendly SISTERS.COM).

# Volunteers acted quickly in COVID-19 crisis

By Sue Stafford  
Correspondent

With support from the Ford Family Foundation and The Roundhouse Foundation, Sisters Villages were able to speed up their formation in order to respond during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Although planning was already underway for the Village project in Sisters, the arrival of the coronavirus in Central Oregon served as the springboard for establishing the first Village in Tollgate. The two pillars of the Village concept – strengthening community and helping each other – will prove invaluable in these difficult times.

The person-to-person outreach will, by necessity, increase; deepening friendships and developing trusted connections among members and volunteers. Volunteers will be offering phone check-ins and donning masks and gloves

to provide members with essential services by making sure they have food and medicines, are safe at home, and have transportation for necessary medical appointments.

With most of the organizational groundwork already done, other areas in town will benefit from an established framework on which to build their Village. If you are interested in the possibility of establishing a Village in your neighborhood, contact Chris Laing at [villages@agefriendly SISTERS.COM](mailto:villages@agefriendly SISTERS.COM) or leave a message for her at 458-206-0169.

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**SUDOKU SOLUTION**

for puzzle on page 29

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8	5	1	2	6	3	7	9	4
4	3	6	7	9	1	8	5	2
3	8	4	9	1	7	5	2	6
9	1	7	6	2	5	4	3	8
2	6	5	4	3	8	1	7	9
1	4	9	3	5	6	2	8	7
5	2	8	1	7	9	6	4	3
6	7	3	8	4	2	9	1	5

Comments? Email [editor@nuggetnews.com](mailto:editor@nuggetnews.com)