



# VILLAGE OF PROGRESS

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE • 1969-2019

The Village View - Summer 2020

Volume LIII Number III



## Director's Note:

When I teach students about nonprofits, one thing I stress is that a nonprofit must have a mission. And that mission must be one that provides some benefit to the community.

A nonprofit without a mission is like a ship without a rudder – it may look nice but doesn't get you anywhere.

In our case, the Village of Progress' mission is this: challenging individuals with developmental disabilities to meet their potential in the community and at work.

Our mission is the touchstone for every program and project we do.

- **The Village Cleaning Service** provides work opportunities for those with disabilities.
- **The Village Bakery** allows those with disabilities to interact with the public and receive marketable job skills that increase their independence.
- **Our Community Day Services** provides various job opportunities that promote good work skills and provide a sense of purpose and worth. It also provides the opportunity to interact with others and build communities of trust and friendship.

Since mid-March, when the state ordered all Community Day Services, including the Village, to suspend services, the Village has had to put its mission on hold. Emotionally, this has been a struggle.

Yes, our staff still reports to work. But the work they do has shifted from serving our men and women to doing much of the production work that was intended for them.

Our Village Bakery has remained open (on a limited scale) but the staff has turned from mentoring those with disabilities to simply doing their jobs. Even our cleaning service has had to suspend taking our men and women with them to various cleaning sites.

Activities designed to increase social interaction – like our Bike Club, Library Club, craft projects at nursing homes – have all fallen silent.

## THE VILLAGE VIEW

A quarterly publication of  
the Village of Progress, Inc.  
PO Box 418, 710 S. 13th St.,  
Oregon IL 61061

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Brion Brooks

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## Director's Note continued:

To be clear, our mission hasn't completely stopped. We work very hard to stay in contact with those we serve.

- Every month we deliver care packages to their homes. They aren't extravagant – puzzle books, colored pencils or crayons, nail polish, some baked goods; each package is tailored to the unique interests of the recipient.
- We send a weekly letter and a weekly postcard to everyone updating our folks on how the staff is getting along this summer and telling them how much they are missed.
- We have regular Zoom meetings where our people can tour the Village, talk with each other and staff. We've even offered on-line, games, painting, cooking, and exercise classes!
- Our volunteers have stepped forward to help with grounds keeping, notes of encouragement, masks, and generous donations.

Even so, as our ability to carry out our mission suffers, so do our people. When one person was asked what they miss about the Village, he replied, "I miss everything." Another man, already thin, has lost even more weight – our hot lunch program was his only reliable meal of the day. Many other families have reported that their sons and daughters have gained weight, having no routine that keeps them occupied and active. Another man comes to the Village regularly just so he can take a hot shower.

For the staff at the Village, the work we do isn't just an occupation, it's a passion. A passion made possible thru our mission. I firmly believe that the same can be said for the people we serve.

As our mission suffers under the pressures of this pandemic, so do we all.

I look forward to the day we can start resuming services. To hear laughter in the workshop, small talk in the hallways, joking between our volunteers and our folks – these are the things we all long for.

In the meantime, we move forward as best we can.

*Brion Brooks*



# A much needed sidewalk added at the Village



**Rogers Ready Mix** donated the cement for a fire exit sidewalk, creating an additional exit out of the portable. We have been wanting to complete this project for a while. Thank you Rogers Ready Mix for making it possible. Denny and Karen displayed excellent cement finishing skills and everyone is very excited to have this project completed!

## We appreciate our volunteers!



**Dave Gesin** -You made the Herrmann Building and The Village of Progress grounds look fabulous! Dave is such a professional and we appreciate him!



Thank you **Steve James** for helping us with mowing - we sure appreciate you! When our folks are inside - you can usually find Steve laughing with every one while playing Wii Bowling, Bingo or Uno!



Our gardens look beautiful thanks to Master Gardener **Liz Brooks** - She donated her time to prepare them for the year and they look wonderful! Thanks Liz!



# Keeping Production Going



Many of you have expressed concern about how the Village is weathering this storm. We are happy to report that we were able to secure a Federal Payroll Protection Loan. That loan, much of which will hopefully be forgiven, has given us a considerable amount of financial breathing room for the next few months. Wahl Clipper has continued to rely on us for packaging and assembly; while staff is doing all the work (instead of consumers), the Wahl contracts helps offset some of our expenses, as well.

# ZOOM, ZOOM, ZOOM!

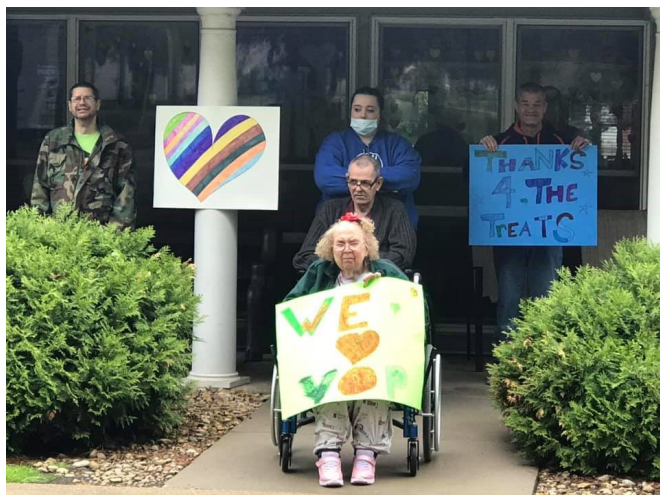


We started Zoom activities in May, with weekly game nights. In June and July, we went to daily activity opportunities, Monday through Thursday. We've had a great time playing BINGO and Pictionary, telling riddles and bad jokes. We've showed off our pets, toured VOP to see all the changes, and had a live feed of the workshop, where the consumers could see the staff working on Wahl Clipper. We've had rounds of Trivia that bring "oh yeah" moments and done some chair exercises and yoga together. During this closure, we've missed our daily routine of work and social activities at VOP, but Zoom has helped us stay in touch and have fun together.





# Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund



The Village of Progress was fortunate to receive a grant from the Rochelle Area Community Foundation with thanks to the Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund. <https://www.ilcovidresponsefund.org> to learn more about this effort of private philanthropy.

The grant assisted the Village of Progress in preparing care packages for everyone we serve.

As a result we prepared and delivered 252 care



packages that included a variety of activities, personal protective equipment, personal hygiene items, craft projects, activities, plants to care for, cooking and art projects along with food.

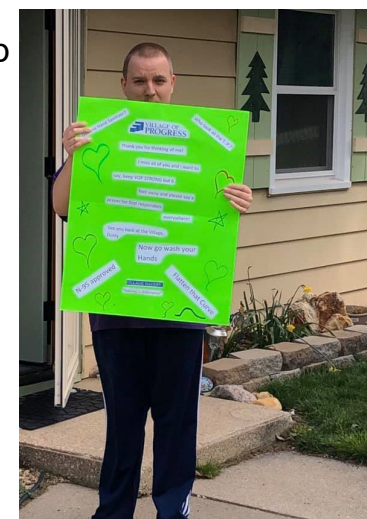
In addition, we purchased 1600 stamps to mail post cards and letters to everyone multiple times a week. We distributed gift cards to our highest need individuals to help with groceries and gas. And some money was used to replace a small portion of what we normally raise with our golfplay day to support attendance grants for individuals at

the Village.

We helped 84 families but with multiple contacts, packages, letters, and gift cards - not just a one-time help – over 1,000 contacts every month!

It is our hope that the care packages, activities, and contacts will show our folks the community cares; we are thinking about them and here to help.

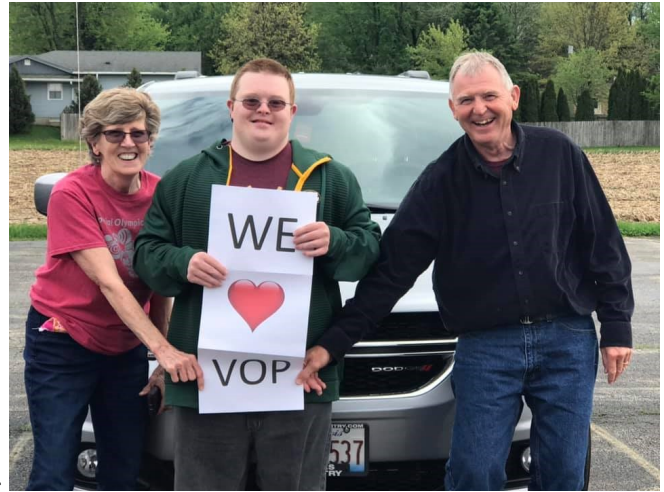
The care packages were all unique and created to meet the needs of each individual. They were hand delivered by their normal bus driver (honoring all social distancing precautions). The letters and post cards were created by numerous staff and volunteers. The case managers or Q's did the majority of face to face contacts and the planning of activities and care packages.





## Village of Progress & Foundation Donations:

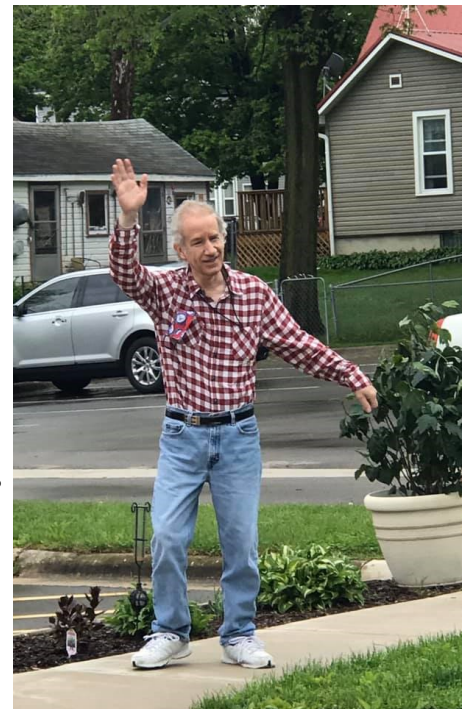
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# Village of Progress & Foundation Donations Continued:

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**IN KIND** Liz Brooks • Debra Drew • Dave Gesin • Steve James • Merna Lang • Life Line • Jan Prose • Mary Rick • Roger's Ready Mix



**IN MEMORY OF** Ralph & Edith Davis • Betty Donaldson • Eldon Leisson • Mike Mc Nett • Robert & Eleanor Moehle • Maggie Nye • Ben E. Rogers • Dennis Shearer • Tammy Sigler • Charles Snyder • Ed & Rose Sowa • Karen Tambura •

**THANK YOU.... Our ability to maintain meaningful and effective programs for Ogle County adults with disabilities depends on your donations & volunteer efforts!**

## Masks, Masks & More Masks

Merna Lang & Deb Drew have been busy making masks for a number of businesses and agencies since March. They have made around 500 masks for the Village of Progress alone. As a result we were able to give each person that attends a free mask to stay safe. Thank you Merna & Deb, we appreciate all you have done for us and the community!



Pictured above - Merna Lang.  
Pictured to the left - Sherri Drew, Deb Drew and Donna Mattison (from VOP).

**THE BAKERY'S DRIVE THRU IS OPEN**



**M-F 6AM - 3PM  
SAT & SUN 7AM - 3PM**

The Village is funded in part by the Ogle County Community Mental Health (708 Board), United Way, Etnyre Foundation & Rochelle Area Community Foundation



NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Oregon IL 61061  
Permit No. 17

**Village of Progress**  
PO Box 418, Pines Rd.  
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# What have people been doing?



**Sandra** has been busy spring cleaning her house!

**Brian** has been busy exercising by walking around.

**Angela** has been enjoying getting her nails painted and spending time with her housemates.



**Abby** has been going for bike rides, practicing for TOSOC! She's been working hard! Abby has helped her mom re-finish two benches (one she's sitting on)! She helped sand, stain, and put them back together. She also helped clean out a small pond, and washed the rocks that go in it.



**Carla** has been spending time with her Therapy Dog, Phalin. Phalin is a three year old mini pincher. Carla has also been picking veggies from her garden and grilling out with her Mom.



**Lila** has enjoyed going for rides in her van—she took a ride to see the bison at Nachusa Grasslands. They're really big! She has enjoyed walking around for exercise and sitting outside in the nice weather



# What have people been doing?



**Tim** has been enjoying his daily bike rides with his Dad. Tim loves the Zoom visits and the care packages from The Village of Progress. The best surprise was a new deck of cards from a friend's trip out West. Tim misses everyone at The Village and is working hard to stay healthy.



**Julius** has been spending his time doing some of his favorite things —creating and building. Julius built this flag pole for his yard, and it looks great!



**Jimmy** took a trip with a friend to Chetek, Wisconsin, about five hours North of Oregon.

They camped, went out on Potato Lake in the pontoon, and took the ferry across the Wisconsin River in Merrimac, WI. They had a great time!



**Jenni** has been spending her time cleaning the house, feeding the birds, riding the 4-wheeler, helping her dad with road signs, and working down at Meyers' Repair