

# inTENTions

TENT

TAOS ELDERS & NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

August 2018



## OUR VISION:

A community of elders and neighbors supporting one another

## OUR MISSION:

To connect elders to resources needed to maintain comfortable, dignified, vibrant lives in their homes and community.

## Our New Website

As you can see, this newsletter is part of our new web site design.

Poke around and let us know what you would like to see here.

[www.TaosElders.org](http://www.TaosElders.org)

## TENT Board of Directors:

Jim Schultz - Board President

Jim Ludden - Treasurer

Bette Myerson - Secretary

Caryle Zorumski - Director

Marianne Furedi - Volunteer Coordinator

## Next Public Event

Wednesday September 5, 2:30 pm

405 Valverde Commons Drive, Taos

### Preparing for our October Launch

Ask the Board: what is TENT all about and what's in it for me?

## Membership Levels:

**Supporting Neighbor** -- \$150/year -- No services, (Tax deductible, per Household)

**Individual Member** -- \$350/year -- Full services

**Household Members (2 or 3 persons)** -- \$450/year -- Full services

## Seeking Helpers:

We are looking for volunteers to lead the following areas:

Events Planning, Fundraising (grant writing, development), Community Relations, Volunteers, Technical Expertise, Social Media, Hospitality and Greeting.

If you will help, write to us at: [TaosElders@Gmail.com](mailto:TaosElders@Gmail.com)

## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Once again, I tell you: Do not miss our Sept 5th meeting! You will get to hear how Marianne Furedi has been recruiting and orienting our growing cadre of volunteers, who have been meeting regularly, developing connections, building relationships, creating community, and strengthening the foundation that they make up, which is TENT. How Bette Myerson is raising money to keep us going, how Jim Ludden is madly creating files and other mysterious electronic things to keep us on track, how Deb Branom has kept us in the news, how we are so glad to have Caryle Z., back after her recent absence to help her husband, how glad we are to have a Madison Avenue expert in Ron Furedi on our side, and to welcome Joe Mazza to our team as Membership Coordinator.



We have received many new membership sign-ups and several lovely large donations, but we still need you to jump off the bench. Please join us now.

-- Jim Schultz

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# GET TO KNOW TENT!

### **What is TENT?**

TENT (Taos Elders and Neighbors Together) is a developing, nonprofit, virtual village with volunteers providing support and services to TENT's members. TENT's goal is to connect members to resources they need to live comfortable, dignified, and vibrant lives in their own homes as they age. The TENT services will be simple, straightforward, affordable, and easy to obtain, either on the TENT website or by telephone.

A number of features will differentiate TENT from other organizations that support the elder community in Taos--staffing by volunteers, handling service requests as soon as TENT volunteers are available, emphasizing "community," and charging a reasonable price to members. On top of that, TENT's volunteers will provide meaningful personal contact and socialization to members, which are key components of healthy aging.

TENT expects to become operational in October of 2018.

### **What type of services will TENT provide?**

TENT's initial service offerings will include transportation, phone check-in to see how people are doing, reading, minor home repairs and garden work, caregiver relief, computer and technology support, pet care, meal preparation, social/home visits, and invitations to TENT-sponsored public programs. TENT services will evolve as members' needs and TENT's resources change with growth and time.

TENT generally will provide services within a 15-mile radius of Taos Plaza. This means that, subject to the availability of volunteers, TENT will serve Taos and the surrounding areas of El Prado, Arroyo Seco, Ranchos de Taos, Talpa, Llano Quemado, and Arroyo Hondo. TENT intends to expand its service area as its membership base and volunteer staff grow.

Who can become a member of TENT, and how much does a membership cost?

Anyone who lives in the TENT service area can become a member of TENT. TENT's membership levels and fees are:

- Household or individual **supporting neighbor** membership – \$150 per year, tax deductible – includes all social activities but no support services.
- **Individual membership** – \$350 per year – includes all social activities and all support services.
- **Household membership (2 to 3 people per household)** – \$450 per year – includes all social activities and all support services.

Changing from a supporting neighbor membership to an individual or household membership: pay the difference between the supporting neighbor membership fee and the fee for the next level of membership that you wish to obtain.

In addition, TENT expects to begin a donor solicitation program in the near future to help fund financial assistance for prospective members who qualify for it.

### **What kind of an organization is TENT?**

TENT was formally organized as a New Mexico nonprofit corporation in June 2017 and received Federal 501(c)(3) tax status soon thereafter. Also in 2017, TENT formally became a member of the Village to Village (VtV) Network, and has tapped into its many resources on a regular basis since then.

TENT is governed by a local, five-member board of directors and will be staffed by volunteers under the direction and supervision of a paid volunteer coordinator. The VtV Network, which has grown to over 250 villages, is a national organization that helps communities establish and effectively manage their own villages. This alliance provides village leaders with an ongoing exchange of information and views on a wide array of topics. This is a significant, cost-effective service to organizations like TENT.

### **How does someone interested in TENT, either as a member, a volunteer, or a donor, contact TENT?**

Anyone interested in knowing more about TENT can:

- visit the TENT website at [www.TaosElders.org](http://www.TaosElders.org)
- telephone TENT at 575-224-6335
- send an email to [TaosElders@gmail.com](mailto:TaosElders@gmail.com) or
- write to TENT at P.O. Box 3561, Taos, NM 87571.

*–Debbie Branom and Nancy Ewing*

## Hello Fellow TENT Volunteers and Those Yet to Become Volunteers!

First and foremost, I want to thank all you wonderful people for coming forth and volunteering. Not only are you helping grow the program we all see as so important to our community, but you are affording me, personally, an incredibly heartening and beautiful experience. It has been so gratifying to meet you, to get to know you and to--together--start building a community that strengthens our interconnectedness and that will provide support to all of us as the years pass.

Our numbers are growing. Folks are calling, emailing, asking our board members about joining us. There are currently 20 people who have been meeting and "Getting to Know One Another and TENT." (There are 12 more "in the wings," and that's just counting the ones already on our list!)

In our meetings we learn, we share information, ideas, suggestions, experiences, and wisdom to prepare ourselves and the programs we are developing. Our orientation program draws on the experiences of virtual villages in the 16-year-old, more than 250-member Village to Village Network. And it draws on the experience all of us bring from lives lived following many varied pursuits--all contributing to the rich, deep concern for the well-being of the elders and neighbors in our community.

And, an offering from Volunteer Virginia Saporta: translation of our brochure into Spanish! We will have it printed and available ASAP, enabling us to offer TENT to our wider community. We have several Spanish-speaking volunteers who are eager to help.

I've been telling all who'll listen about the great pleasure, and yes--the fun--I've been having being involved in TENT! Thank you. Thank yourselves. And let us thank this magical place that is Taos for bringing us together in this important and valuable venture.

Please call me, email me, and join us!

With my very warmest regards,  
*Marianne Furedi, Volunteer Coordinator*

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## TECHNICAL NEWS

The technical staff of TENT is preparing a computer platform that will support our operations. What does that mean? The "operations" of TENT are primarily as follows:

- A member phones in a request for service--say a ride to the grocery store.
- A volunteer answers the phone or listens to the message and enters this request into a computer program.
- The computer figures out who has offered to provide local transportation and is available at the time that the member wishes a ride.
- Periodically the computer sends an email to volunteers with a link to the unfilled requests.
- Volunteers pick the request(s) they wish to fulfill and commit to fulfill them.
- If no one volunteers, a dispatcher (the Volunteer Coordinator) starts phoning volunteers to get help for this member.
- The member gets an email (if she is a computer user, a phone call otherwise) telling her who will pick her up, when, and confirming the destination.
- After the request is completed, we ask the volunteer to go to the computer and report "How did it go?" as well as the amount of time it took.
- We also ask the member "How did it go?" to make the experience better for both volunteers and members.

This could all be done by telephone, without any computer involved. But that would take time away from serving our members, and providing excellent service to our members is our primary goal.

There are many other functions of TENT that the computer platform will support, such as sending announcements of our public events, tracking who has donated, and helping people sign up to become members or volunteers.

-- Jim Ludden, Technical Support

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## CREATING A SAFER HOME

The *New York Times* recently reviewed *Age in Place: A Guide to Modifying, Organizing, and Decluttering Mom and Dad's Home*. This book, written by Lynda G. Shrager, an occupational therapist who has worked with seniors in their homes for more than 13 years, is a valuable guide for those who want to help an elderly friend or family member remain safely in their home as their health and capacities decline.

The review marginally addresses some of the road bumps one may encounter in getting an elderly family member or friend to the point of recognizing the need and accepting the changes necessary to age-in-place. People generally approach the final stage of life as they have lived, so there may be some challenging conversations requiring patience and tact. But for those ready to take it on, this book considers the home, including entry and outside access, and room by room, it identifies potential issues that can put someone at risk of a fall or other accident. It suggests simple things that can be done, such as removing rugs and notes the real peril of pets that tend to lie in places where they can be tripped over.

Ms. Shrager's approach to decluttering and organizing is simple. Her five categories are: keep, give away to individuals, charitable donations, sell, and throw away. To keep from being overwhelmed, this can be done one room at a time. There can be no category for "maybe I'll use this someday."

Modifications to entries, such as railings and ramps, bathroom modifications with walkers and wheelchairs in mind, kitchen cabinet access and use of appliances may require hiring professional help, preferably by someone sensitive to an individual elder's needs. You might check with Habitat For Humanity to see if they do home adaptations in your area.

The article can be found here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/21/well/how-to-age-well-and-stay-in-your-home.html>

-- Justine Nauman-Greif

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## AUTO INSURANCE – YOU GOTTA HAVE IT

Have you ever thought about why you're required to have car insurance and not most other kinds of insurance? It's because the state you live in has laws that attempt to protect all of its residents against the unfortunate things that happen when they're sharing the road. If we all have good car insurance, we shouldn't go broke when we crash into each other.

One portion of your car insurance--liability--is required. It pays for damage to the other person's car and other property that you may damage, as well as for personal injuries. There are minimum limits, but you can opt for higher limits. How to decide? Think about how a terrible crash that's deemed to be your fault would affect your life savings if your coverage isn't high enough to pay the other person's bills.

The other portions of your policy are optional, but that doesn't mean you should turn them down to "save money" without serious thought. In New Mexico (other states may be different), you may get insurance for the people in your car (medical payments) and damage to your vehicle (collision) that result when a crash is deemed to be your fault. You can add comprehensive coverage that addresses non-crash damage to your car, by hail, for example, or by hitting a wild animal. If you have a loan or lease on your car, collision and comprehensive coverages will be required by your lender to protect their interest in your car. Paid off your loan? Congratulations! But think twice before you cancel your collision and comprehensive coverages (what a lot of people call "full coverage"). What's your car worth? We all know you'd never cause a crash (winky-winky), but are you willing and able to buy a new car out of your own pocket if you skid on the ice and hit an 18-wheeler?

Similarly, you get to choose your collision and comprehensive deductibles--the amount you pay out of your pocket after a claim. Higher deductibles cost you less in premiums, but how will the deductible affect your budget if you have to pay it after a crash or a hailstorm? It's your decision.

You can also add towing and/or rental car coverage. Both are very handy for emergencies or your-fault crash situations and are relatively inexpensive.

Of course, you (and the insurance company!) hope you'll never need any of these coverages, but there's a reason that auto insurance costs so much--things happen, people need it, and the insurance company pays claims. So ask yourself "what if" and make the best decisions you can on yes/no and how much.

-- Nancy Ewing – Retired, State Farm Insurance

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Feel free to send us suggestions regarding the newsletter.

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