



## 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.

## Upcoming Events

January 30, 2018 at 3p.m. Ellen Wood will speak at Valverde Commons.

Wood is a frequent contributor to the Taos News. She writes and speaks on anti-aging. Wood is the author of *Think and Grow Young* and the recently published *Joy, Joy, Joy*.

## Board of Directors

**President:** Jim Schultz

**Treasurer:** Jim Ludden

**Secretary:** Bette Myerson

## Members at Large:

Caryle Zorumski  
Marianne Furedi  
Barbara Crews

## A Busy 16 Months for TENT

### By Board President Jim Schultz

In the spring of 2016 a group of us read *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande. In this book Gawande searches for models of care that address the ability of our aging population to live meaningful lives—imbued with purpose and enhancing the ability “to keep shaping the story of their life in the world.” One of those models is Aging in Place.

We were inspired to replicate the Beacon Hill Village in Boston described in *Being Mortal*. The term “Village” refers not to a physical village but a support system that helps elders “Age in Place” comfortably and confidently.

Our goal is to create a locally run, locally supported, non-profit, volunteer organization to assist Taos area elders to stay in their

own community or home as they grow older. As we get older we begin to find that accomplishing the everyday tasks we see as fundamental to our independence more difficult. We experience isolation as a result of difficulty with issues of transportation, involvement in our accustomed activities, and maintaining our homes. We start thinking of moving somewhere where support is available. Our view is that, with the appropriate support, many of us would and could choose to stay right where we are, remain active participants in the life we chose when we came here, be comfortable and secure.

TENT is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization preparing to deliver support to some of the 4,000 elders residing within five miles of Taos Plaza.

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## Board Member Jim Ludden

Each of us has a personal story of why we consider Taos Elders to be important. Here is mine:

In 1977 I was finishing graduate school in Seattle and my wife was working full time. Her mother was living alone and dying of cancer in Maine. Carol asked if I would go back to Maine and take care of her mother.

That seemed reasonable, as she was paying the bills and most of what I had to finish was to write my dissertation.

So I flew to Belfast and prepared meals, helped Marian on and off the bedpan, washed, cleaned, ... you know the drill. After about two weeks of this I really needed to get out of that apartment. Fortunately someone arranged for the visiting nurse to come by for an hour each day, so I could get out, take a walk, and have a break. Without that relief I would not be sane. The highlight of a week would be when a friend would come by to have tea or just chat.

In 1984 Brian, a young artist in our congregation, got sick and was diagnosed with AIDS. In those days that diagnosis made him a leper — someone to be banned. Being a poor, starving artist without medical insurance, he could not afford care. So we took him into our house and gave him the spare bedroom. By this time he was bedridden, meaning that he needed care.

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We joined the Village to Village Network <http://vtvnetwork.clubexpress.com>, a national organization of more than 200 established groups and 150 in development—elders committed to helping one another “age in place.” Since then we have been guided by the invaluable developmental tools available to us as members of The Village to Village Network. Our board meets twice a month to work on the tasks necessary to become operational.

We are making steady progress as we take the steps necessary to build a solid foundation. We have:

- Opened a bank account
- Obtained a PO Box
- Acquired a Telephone Number
- Incorporated as a New Mexico non-profit organization
- Achieved our Federal Tax non-profit status
- Selected a governing board of directors
- Established bylaws
- Established initial marketing plans
- Established a preliminary business plan
- Developed our communications plan—designed a logo and are developing promotional materials
- Created our website: <http://www.taoselders.org>
- Established a schedule for bi-monthly public programs
- Committed to publishing a quarterly newsletter – **inTENTions**

Offers by over 50 neighbors to serve as volunteers, a mailing list of 300 interested parties, and a dedicated Board of Directors give us confidence and encouragement that we will be providing services by the summer of 2018.

Historically it takes from 1 to 5 years from inception until readiness to establish a functioning “Village.”

How soon until we are ready to go is up to you. We need to get more of you involved to share the workload and to expand our pool of skills.

### ... Jim Ludden from Page 2

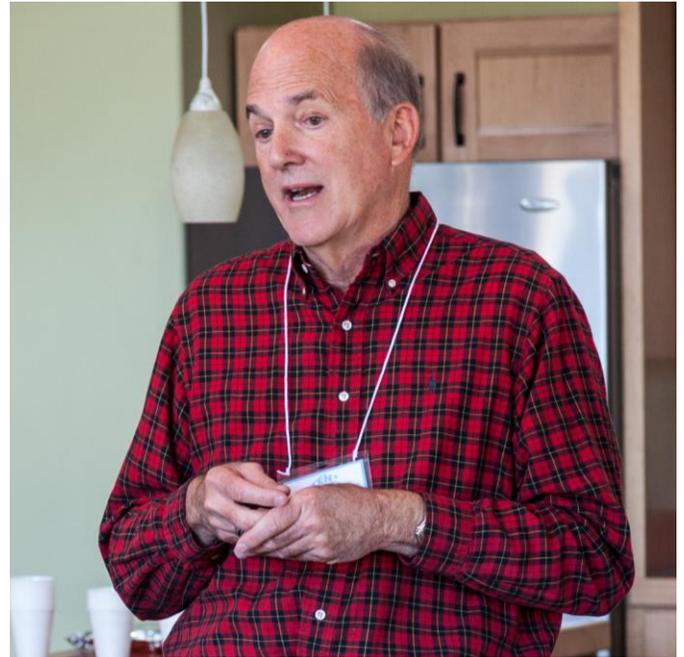
Fortunately for all of us Brian's sister was a nurse. Unlike the rest of his family who had shunned him when he came out as gay, she came to stay with us for the three months it took for Brian to die. I cannot imagine how much work it would have been without her care. In addition, members of the congregation came to visit, another big boost for Brian.

Twenty years later my wife Carol was diagnosed with a rare brain tumor. At first it affected her coordination, and that required some help. But the chemotherapy put her back on her feet for three more years. Then the second round of treatment overdosed her and she could not even turn herself over in bed. I was able to provide basic care, but she had very many friends who came to visit and help out. We lived right in the city, so it was easy for these friends to come and socialize.

After six months Carol was able to get back on her feet and even went to work. But in two more years the symptoms returned. This time she was not strong enough to endure the diagnostic procedures. Friends came to help once again, giving me both support and relief and giving Carol much-needed social contact.

When I moved to Taos I realized that most of the younger generations have left to find work, leaving their elders alone. In Taos it is hard or impossible for elders to walk to the store, to neighbors for a visit, or to the market for food.

I am not certain how I can help, but I know that, working together, we can form a community of neighbors who, with our varied skills and interests can make a big difference in the lives of Taos Elders.



Steven Oakley, Santa Fe Neighbors, spoke at Valverde Commons about the formation and current efforts of their organization. Santa Fe Neighbors became an active Village to Village community in February 2017. (Photo by Terry Thompson)

### You Can Help

Vital to TENT's success is raising start-up money. At this time we estimate we need \$10,000 to open our virtual "doors."

TENT also needs the following:

- a Community Relations coordinator
- an Events coordinator
- a Publicity manager
- a Grant Application writer
- a Volunteer coordinator
- a Fund Solicitor
- a Webmaster
- a Facebook administrator
- News reporters
- a Membership coordinator

If you can help, please email [TaosElders@gmail.com](mailto:TaosElders@gmail.com) or call 575 224-6335



Taos residents gathered September 25th to hear a webcast presentation by Atul Gawande, M.D., author of *Being Mortal, Medicine and What Matters in the End*. Dr Gawande spoke from Beacon Hill in Boston, at the 15th Anniversary celebration of the first Village to Village Network. (Photo by Terry Thompson)

## Las Vegas NM: Investigating another Village to Village community

### By Nancy Jenkins

Four members of the TENT board met with members of the Housing Opportunities Programs for Elders (HOPE) in Las Vegas, NM. HOME is an elder "Village" in Las Vegas, while their name incorporates housing they are not primarily focused on housing. HOPE moved from the planning stages to an operational organization this past October.

HOPE's Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Las Vegas provides them with free space in the Senior

Center and HOPE provides membership to all Senior Center members at no charge. HOPE membership includes six transports per quarter. They have teamed with local colleges and universities to enlist the aid of students to help seniors with yardwork and other services. The office also maintains a library of books and puzzles for members.

Las Vegas is a town with many similarities to Taos and provides a useful example of what can be achieved. It has a population of diverse

cultures and many local agencies that provide services. Seventy percent of the population identifies as Hispanic.

HOPE has networked with many other local agencies. Their President, Rosalie Lopez, is involved in many organizations throughout the community and provided us with information about statewide contacts for grants and other useful information.

We had lunch at a local restaurant and it was a beautiful drive back to Taos.