

View from the Village

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News & Announcements

Rebuilding Together in Fairfax City—Fairfax Village in the City member Sigrid Schipper has lived happily in her 1953 ranch home for more than 40 years. But time takes its toll, and in recent years things in the house had begun to fail. Lights ceased to work, outside handrails became untrustworthy, and clothes came out of the dryer still damp. Sigrid, who lives on a fixed income, had to set priorities. Small repairs were not among them.

The last straw was when a fan fell out of a bedroom ceiling. She contacted the Village for help, and Village coordinator Jason Scadron stepped in. He reminded Sigrid, who serves as a senior center rep on the Village Advisory Board, about a possible resource, Rebuilding Together.

This national network of 120 local nonprofits works with corporate and community partners to mobilize skilled volunteers for home repairs at no charge to low-income homeowners. In our area, the affiliate is Rebuilding Together-AFF (Arlington/Fairfax/Falls Church). Their primary focus in helping homeowners is health and safety. Sigrid was well within their annual income limits (\$68,500/yr for a single Fairfax homeowner; \$78,250 for a couple).

It took a while to fill out the application, which asks for a list of household members, verification of home ownership, and copies of two pages from the most recent federal tax return (with social security numbers inked out for privacy). Under "Repairs to be considered," Sigrid listed the bedroom fan and two loose outdoor handrails. As part of the approval process, a team from Rebuilding Together-AFF visited her home, along with Jason, to assess the needs in person.

Last month Sigrid learned her house would be part of the annual National Rebuilding Together Day, celebrated by affiliates this year on April 26. The volunteer team chosen to help her would include workers with specialized skills matching the needs identified at Sigrid's home. On the day appointed, nine of them showed up cheerfully and set to work.

The results far exceeded Sigrid's expectations. Not only did the team replace the two handrails (one even lights up now at night); they added a third railing for her side deck



Sigrid, left, and Jason, far right, with the Rebuilding Together-AFF team.

steps. Some of the crew replaced the bedroom fan with a new ceiling light, installed a handsome overhead light in the kitchen, and replaced a missing towel rail in the bath. Others reframed two outside doors, rebuilt the threshold of the door from the kitchen to the basement, and replaced the defective dryer venting.

"I was happy with everything they did," Sigrid says. "The kitchen wasn't even on my list. And they were so nice about it. One told me my house is actually in good shape." She thinks other homeowners should know about Rebuilding Together. "Everything is bright and beautiful now," she says. "I'm thrilled!"

Rebuilding Together-AFF has been an exhibitor at all three annual "Home for Life" Expos. To learn more and download a copy of their homeowner's application, visit <https://rebuildingtogether-aff.org>.

Timely Opportunities

Lunchtime Learning sessions meet at noon at the Young at Heart Senior Center, 4401 Sideburn Rd. Free for Senior Center members. Call 703-273-6090 to register.

Friday, May 16. Healthcare and Healthy Aging for Over 60. Dr. Chethana Rao will discuss various conditions and treatment options.

Friday, June 6. Things to Consider When Deciding Whether to Age in Place. Zinta Rodgers-Rickert covers pros, cons, and safety concerns, plus tips for negotiating with contractors.

Friday, June 13. Aging Well. GMU Speakers Bureau. Strategies for active participation in a healthy future. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing.

Friday, June 20. Overview of Aging Services. Fairfax County Office on Aging. Local services for older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers.

Monday, June 30. Estate Planning 101. Alison Mathey-Lambeth. Topics covered: wills, revocable living trusts, advance medical directives, and power of attorney.

Decluttering Club. Wednesdays, May 7, 14, 21, 28. *Special for Older Americans Month!* Four free sessions for Senior Center members, 11 a.m. to noon, led by a KonMari professional at the Young at Heart Senior Center. Drop-ins OK.

Village in the City Friday Morning Speaker Series

Free events at the Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd. Coffee at 9:30 a.m.; presentation at 9:45. To preregister or to request needed transportation, call 703-385-5738, or email village@fairfaxva.gov.

Friday, May 16. "Get Tips on Getting the Job." Job search workshop led by AARP Speakers Bureau representatives.

Friday, June 6. "How Do We Treat Memory Loss?" Presentation by cognitive behavioral neurologist Jennifer Pauldurai.

Fairfax Village in the City

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