

# It Takes a Village

By Kari Martell

**Betsy Clarke\* is a Mountain View resident who recently joined Avenidas Village, primarily because she lives alone. She was worried about falling and not having someone she could call to help her out. She also worried about being hospitalized and not having anyone to look after for her, especially since her family lives so far away.**

These are very common reasons why people join Avenidas Village, a “Living in Community” program offered by the non-profit social services agency Avenidas. However, not everyone is familiar with the concept of a Village and all the benefits it offers. “At first I thought it was a housing division,” Betsy admits.

Avenidas Village is part of a growing national movement of “Villages.” The first Village started in Boston with Beacon Hill Village. Avenidas Village became the first on the West Coast to open when a group of grass roots supporters brought the idea to Avenidas who launched it as a program in October 2007.

Since then, Villages have popped up in communities around the country with the sole purpose of helping people age well while remaining in their homes and having access to supportive services.

“This year marks the 9th anniversary of Avenidas Village and we are excited to continue to grow and help new members in their desire to remain healthy and active in their own homes,” said Avenidas Village director Vickie Epstein.

“A trend we are now seeing that is different than when we first launched is more people are joining Avenidas Village as a way to prolong having to move into a retirement community,” Epstein points out. “Or they are currently on a three or four year long waiting list and want the extra security their Village membership gives them as they wait to move.”



For around \$3 a day, an Avenidas Village membership can help simplify your life, reduce your stress, keep you mobile and connect you to others in your community. Avenidas Village members especially love the fact that they have access 24 hours a day/seven days a week to a non-emergency help line, answered by a live person for assistance with various situations that require immediate attention. Open for single and married memberships.

Membership gives you access to a wide range of service providers who offer everything from personal transportation to plumbing, grocery delivery, gutter cleaning and more. Avenidas Village has screened these providers so you don't have to and made arrangements for discounts with many of them. You can contact Avenidas Village staff to coordinate the details for you or use your

members-only directory (available in both a printed and an online format) and make your own arrangements—your choice!

“What I've discovered about being an Avenidas Village member is that it allows me to be prepared for the unexpected and gives me a safety net of support when required,” said new member Betsy.

“It also gives me a sense of belonging to a group, and has strengthened my ties to the community, as I am now more active and involved. The Avenidas Village staff members always make me feel better as they help me deal with tasks I previously had to deal with on my own,” she happily concludes.

To find out if Avenidas Village is right for you, call (650) 289-5405 or visit [www.avenidasvillage.org](http://www.avenidasvillage.org).  
(\*Name changed for privacy)

## BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- One phone number to call for help with any issue
- Access to network of 200 service providers
- Service discounts
- Free emergency preparedness review
- Transportation to and from medical appointments when your doctor advises you not to drive
- Daily social call, if desired
- Free “Med-Pals” to take notes at doctors’ appointments
- Members-only website and directories
- Members-only social and cultural activities
- Benefits of Village partnerships with healthcare providers
- Social connections
- Legal assistance service
- Peace of mind