**Virtual Villages**

Many older Americans spend their final years in a nursing home or assisted living center. These places provide services that help older adults with activities they can no longer do on their own. However, most people say they would like to remain in their own homes. Now, there are nonprofit groups that help them do that. June Simms has more.

Philip Theil is ninety-one years old and lives with his wife in an old house in Seattle, Washington. And he wants to keep it that way.

PHILIP THEIL: "As far as I'm concerned, I would not like to leave this place. Living in a group situation is something I couldn't tolerate. I'd kill myself before I had to do that."

Mr. Theil says he and his wife can take good care of themselves in their two-level house. But he and his wife know they will soon need help with simple housework. Work like changing a light bulb that hangs at the top of the stairs.

PHILIP THEIL: "I have to bring in a stepladder and put it partly on the landing and partly on the stairs and to climb up. It's kind of trepidatious."

In the past, an older American would ask one of their children or a neighborhood teenager to change the light bulb. But here, those young helpers have grown up and gone.

PHILIP THEIL: "We have kids and we call them occasionally. But one lives in Munich, Germany, another other lives in London and the third lives in Los Angeles. They're not going to drop around for a weekend call type of thing."

So the Theils are considering joining a "virtual village." This is a local group of volunteers and service providers that help older adults age in place. They might help these adults with anything from transportation to small home repairs and dog walking.

The virtual village idea was first developed about ten years ago in Boston, Massachusetts. The idea has spread to an unofficial network of villages around the country. One hundred fifty are currently in development.

In Washington state, Judy Kinney directs a virtual village called North East Seattle Together, or NEST.

JUDY KINNEY: "When someone calls us, they may say, 'I need help with transportation.' We're going to be able to work with them to see if it is a volunteer that helps, if it's is a vetted vendor that helps or there is a community service in place. So that's a process we're going to do when someone picks up the phone. People have called it a concierge. People call and say I need this help. We help you figure out the best choice."

Ms. Kinney's group is one of about five expected to open in the Pacific Northwest in the next few months. Such a village is already operating in central Oregon. There, the most requested services are rides to the doctor, home repairs and help with buying food or medicines.

Tom La Pointe is opening "My Own Home" is Moscow, Idaho. He thinks snow removal will be among the most requested services there. But he says general yard work and computer support also will be popular.

TOM LA POINTE: "On the other hand if you need daily care, 24/7 care, that is not what we do. We don't do bathing services for example. We are here and we exist for the folks who might need a little extra assistance."

Tom La Pointe notes that "My Old Home" is not a charity. Senior citizens will have to pay to join his nonprofit group. Mister La Pointe says it will meet the needs of the seniors who are too rich for public assistance but too poor to hire workers. He hopes forty people will become members by the end of this year.

**Vragen bij de tekst:**

1. In de allereerste alinea wordt gesproken over een wens die veel ouderen hebben. Welke wens is dat?

2. “It's kind of trepidatious." Zonder het woord op te zoeken, zou je aan de context van de zin al kunnen aflezen wat het betekent? Zo ja, wat denk je dat het betekent?

3. Noem twee redenen waarom jongeren minder in staat zijn de ouderen te helpen.

4. Leg uit wat een “virtual village” inhoudt.

5. Wat zijn de meest voorkomende praktische verzoeken van ouderen aan de virtual villlage?

6. Welk bijzonder verzoek kunnen we in Idaho aan dit lijstje toevoegen?

7. Wat voor dienst doet de virtual village zeker niet?