

## ***VILLAGE NEIGHBOR EXPERIENCE***

### ***Peg Cook***

My daughter and I first came to Chincoteague Island on a 2016 Road Scholar trip.

Thus began our Great Chincoteague Adventure!

This island exerts some kind of magnetic force that tugs at your heartstrings and pulls you back. Again and again.

As our stays lengthened, so did my desire to get involved in this community strengthen.

I learned about Village Neighbors, the organization dedicated to keeping alive the joy of being alive. The idea of offering services to Senior Citizens that enable them to live safely in their homes appealed to me.

Each year the list of seemingly simple in-house tasks that I once did with ease, but are now challenging, grows longer. Things like changing light bulbs in the ceiling and tall lamps, hanging pictures, reorganizing closet space (especially those "high-shelf" spaces (above the hanging clothes). I think you get the idea.

I signed up.

Volunteers who responded to my service requests fill in the gaps that crop up when my knees object to the up-and-down, stepstool climbing, lifting-and lowering of objects between floor and tabletops. And rescue me from desperation when my computer or cell phone refuses to follow my commands.

I decided that in addition to receiving services, I wanted to give them. Even though I need help with the "up-down-lift-lower" tasks, I believe I have skills that could help some folks. I can read to a person whose vision is failing. Help address Christmas Cards. Wrap Christmas presents. Be a "phone buddy" to check in with people who prefer not to use social media. I like to walk. So, I can be a walking companion to a like-minded person who may need to use a walker. How about just making a friendly visit to folks who want some company? And I know there are more.

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I completed the volunteer training and received my Village Neighbor Volunteer Badge.

Life has taught me the joy of giving and receiving. Village Neighbor volunteers give their time, talent and energy, putting joy into the lives of people who request services. The volunteers experience the joy of seeing smiles on faces and feeling the vibes of gratitude from- people they help.

Definitely a Win-Win.

That is why I choose to play the dual role of being a Village Neighbor volunteer and member.

*Margaret Cook*