Getting one step closer  
By Carol Harrison

After six weeks of research, the 45 volunteers who stepped up to join work groups for the Redwood Coast Village movement will share their research with the public Wednesday from 12:00 to 1:15 p.m. at Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center in Eureka.

The meeting is part of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute’s Brown Bag luncheon series and a prelude to the next step in the village process: the selection a 12-person steering committee with decision-making ability and a charge from Area 1 Agency on Aging to get at least a pilot village up and running by November.

Applications for the steering committee and information about Redwood Coast Village are available at redwoodcoastvillage.org.

RCV work groups formed Feb. 21 around marketing, operations, fiscal and fundraising, and the business plan. Their work product will be analyzed and evaluated by the steering committee, which will then make the decision to move ahead on the project or pull the plug.

“We all looked at some specific questions in our areas, researching existing villages and what Humboldt County wants,” said JoAnn Schuch, member of the Senior Action Coalition and part of the 14-member marketing committee. “It will be the first time all of the groups are back together to hear what each of the others has learned.”

The business plan group has analyzed the Northcoast at Home Survey produced by Area 1 Agency on Aging and the operations group looked at volunteer management, membership, policies and procedures.

“Our job wasn’t to figure out the services, but to figure out how to implement those services once they are identified,” said Dan Birmingham, A1AA’s volunteer driver program coordinator and co-chair of the operations work group. “Whether that’s time banking or a variety of other things, we have to figure out how to manage volunteers and members.”

Sherman Schapiro, chairperson of fiscal subcommittee, said his work group’s research is leading to three budgets, two with paid staff and one with volunteers.

“We need to learn what we can about the operations and costs from a number of existing programs,” he said.
Senior Action Coalition and A1AA are leading the effort to design a “village” that will help people remain in the home of their choice as long as possible by accessing services that address the needs of aging.

“Aging in place is a term that carries with it a certain amount of expectation for independence,” marketing committee and SAC member Sylvia Shaw said. “That’s misleading because what people want and need as they age is the interdependence that comes with support systems.”

The steering committee will be selected by a joint committee from A1AA and the Senior Action Coalition. Those respective organizations will fill six of the 12 steering committee slots.

The first review of steering committee applications is April 16.

A1AA Executive Director Maggie Kraft and Schuch said the application deadline has been extended to April 15 as a result of the April 16 review date.

“We are looking for thoughtful people who do well in a group working environment and have the time to put in the work that is needed,” Kraft said. “We need people who are willing to listen and learn from each other so that we come up with something better than any one of us could do on our own.”

“We are going to stay focused on the core demographics of people over 50, and target people who want active engaged lives and need help to do that by connecting with volunteers and trusted contractors,” Schuch said.

For the past year, OLLI has designated the first Wednesday of every month to the topic of the national village movement and the local effort to create a village on the North Coast.

OLLI membership is not required to attend the brown bag seminar.

For more information about the national village movement, go to the Village-to-Village Network at vtvnetwork.org.

*Area 1 Agency on Aging paid Carol Harrison to write this article.*