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## House of Representatives

CELEBRATING BEACON HILL VILLAGE'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

## HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WEDNESDAY, February 2, 2022

MR. LYNCH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Beacon Hill Village in Boston. It's an anniversary with significance for the whole nation and they are to be congratulated on reaching this special milestone.

Madam Speaker, Beacon Hill Village was created by, and for, neighbors determined to continue to thrive and grow in the neighborhood they loved, as they aged. There was no ready model when they began. A core goal of Beacon Hill Village members was living active, independent, and healthy lives. There is not much choice about growing old, but there are choices about where and how to do so. The Village offers those choices to its members and so much more, including maintaining and enhancing quality of life, providing peace of mind, enabling purposeful lives, and helping to navigate the transitions of growing older.

From its start in 2002 Beacon Hill Village has spawned a movement that continues to spread across the U.S. and in other countries. Today there are 263 open and 70 developing Villages serving thousands of older adults from major cities to small, rural communities. These Villages are across the nation—in 43 states and the District of Columbia—and in four countries abroad. While many Villages were formed through grass roots efforts led by a few passionate people, Villages have also grown from faith-based groups, social service partnerships, and through existing community service organizations.

Beacon Hill Village was the chief force behind the creation of the Village-to-Village Network which remains dedicated to helping communities everywhere design their own Villages reflecting local needs and using local resources. Local Villages connect members to a full range of practical support services to help with non-medical household tasks, services, programs, and transportation. Villages also promote staying active by coordinating recreational, social, educational, and cultural programs. These social activities minimize isolation and promote interaction amongst their peers.

Madam Speaker, I am convinced, that the best days of Beacon Hill Village, the Village-to-Village Network and the Villages of the nation, are still ahead of them. Their message is simple, forceful, and optimistic: aging should be individual, and person-centered. Villages can help their members take responsibility for their own aging and make choices resulting in vibrant, purposeful lives lived on their own terms, in their own homes and communities. With this message the Villages are changing how elders experience aging and how our society perceives aging. Every American benefits from these changes. This community-based movement offers an economically efficient model for aging.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shined a bright light on the power of Villages to deliver essential services, keep members engaged and connected safely, and provide critical information during a time of great stress and confusion. Seemingly overnight, Villages turned in-person events and activities into virtual programming, trained their members to use Zoom, and partnered with existing services and resources to ensure members had what they needed, especially during lockdown. Not only did Villages and their members thrive during the pandemic, they demonstrated the power of community.

By 2030, every baby boomer will be age 65 or older, which means that 1 out of every 5 U.S. citizens will be of retirement age. The numbers are even larger in many countries around the world. The Village model and the importance of community and choice offer valuable insights and solutions for this challenging phenomenon.

Madam Speaker, in recognition of the positive impact that the village movement has had on the experience of aging, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Beacon Hill Village om its 20th anniversary and saluting all villages throughout the nation.