

MEET A MEMBER

DIANA CRANE

Better Together



Diana Crane always considered herself to be fiercely independent. She traveled the world solo for years and happily visited Boston museums, concerts and theatre events alone. So, it took Diana by surprise when she embraced Beacon Hill Village's group dynamic soon after joining. "Doing the things I love in the company of friends is even better," she says. "It has really changed my life."

A resident of Beacon Hill, Diana worked at Massachusetts General Hospital teaching English literacy and computers to service employees before retiring at 69. She was constantly busy – at work and with her family. "My son and daughter-in-law live nearby and between work and helping with my grandkids, I didn't have time to think about what I'd do in retirement," admits Diana.

When the time came, Diana quickly realized that a quiet retirement was not for her. She also discovered that her social circle had shrunk dramatically. "My friends were either still working or lived far away," says Diana, a longtime resident of New Hampshire before relocating to Boston and MGH.

To get answers about retirement, Diana attended a lecture series at the Boston Public Library co-hosted by Beacon Hill Village. "I learned about social and health issues associated with aging and how retirement has changed dramatically since my parent's generation," she says. "The series got me excited to look at different opportunities and ways of staying active."

Diana also learned about Beacon Hill Village and took advantage of a half year membership offer. "I enrolled for half a year and never looked back," she laughs. When the Village's monthly calendar arrived in the mail, Diana says, "I signed up for everything!" She became a faithful member of the exercise group. "Our instructor is the best fitness teacher I've ever had. She's certified in senior fitness and knows when to push us and when to modify."

Soon Diana's schedule became chock-full of Village happenings—from Conversations With lectures to involvement in the program committee to the Creative Kitchen's Tour. As an Ambassador, Diana came full circle, orienting new members to the Village and accompanying them to events. Of her experiences with Beacon Hill Village, it's these personal connections that mean the most to Diana.

"I didn't know a soul in Boston when I retired and now I walk down the street or go to a restaurant or a concert and see people I know," she says. "I'm in a major city, but because of the people I've met through the Village, it feels like a small town."

Have you indulged your love of travel since joining the Village?

Absolutely. I went with 15 Village members to a resort in Mexico owned by a member's family. It was gorgeous in February, warm and sunny on the ocean—an opportunity of a lifetime and open only to Village members. This summer, I'm traveling to England with a member I've

become close friends with.

What about local excursions?

I'm learning about Boston in ways I never knew. I visited the North Bennet Street School, one of the country's oldest for hands-on craftsmanship. The State house is in my back yard, but I never stepped foot in it until I went on a tour organized by the Village. It's fascinating to learn about the city's rich history.

Have you learned anything new about yourself?

I'm learning new skills all the time. I took bridge classes and now play bridge with a group. It's fun and interesting and challenging. I learned to knit and am now an obsessive knitter! Our knitting group meets twice a month and I also make knitted goods for an organization that gives them to babies. Early on I joined a Village book group that is still going strong.

What have your Village friendships meant to you?

I have a core group of friends I met early on and continue to do things with, but I'm constantly meeting new people. On a van trip to Newport, RI, I got to talking to members I didn't know during the drive and made new friendships.

I was the oldest person at my job, so my friends were often younger than me. It's been nice meeting people my own age and older who share my interests and who I can have fun with.