

Published January 20, 2021

Community partnership brings vaccines to local seniors

By Pippa Fisher



Seniors aged 75 and older roll down their windows to receive vaccinations Jan. 16 at a drive-through event. Photo Pippa Fisher

Hundreds of seniors were able to get their first round of COVID-19 vaccinations at a drive-through event that was the result of a true community partnership.

In an effort coordinated by Lafayette resident Suzy Pak, Dr. Rebecca Parish and Dr. Denise Hilliard, both of Comprehensive Wellness, partnered with Lamorinda Village Operations Manager Kathryn Ishizu, and City of Lafayette Parks, Trails and Recreation Director Jonathan Katayanagi, to request an allotment of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for distribution to members of the community aged 75 and older.

The event was put together in less than a week following a conversation Pak had with Parish who was wondering how best to get the vaccines to those most in need. Pak, through her work with Lamorinda Village, said she realized LV had the seniors and could play a key role.

"Having the personal connection to these folks made all the difference," explained Ishizu. "We were able to tell our members, and help them go online to register."

Having secured 500 doses, the drive-through took place Jan. 16 and 17 at Stanley Middle School and required the logistical help and support of many including the Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department, Lamorinda Spirit Van, Lafayette Police Department and Public Works, as well as local school personnel. Lamorinda CERT provided volunteers, working shifts to ensure a smooth operation.

With volunteers organized by Ishizu, and a team of volunteer medical personnel on hand to administer the shots, the cars came by at their appointed times in groups of eight. They showed their paperwork, drove to the next station for the shots, and then moved to a "recovery" station.

Due to limited supply the event was promoted first to Lamorinda Village, the Spirit Van and Lafayette Senior Services members and required pre-registration. All slots were quickly taken. Pak says those who qualify for the shots if interested, and those wishing to volunteer to help, should contact Lamorinda Village at <https://lamorindavillage.org>.

Pak says the plan is to continue the effort as long as they can secure vaccines.

For more information about changes to state regulations regarding the vaccine and its distribution, see the story on Page A8.

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