

Village Ringers

By Bonnie Fisher

It was back in the early part of this year that Bonnie Fisher, Director of Village Ringers, began to dream out loud about how she was interested in forming a semi-professional handbell organization in The Villages. In addition to talking about it, she used the Nextdoor site in her surrounding villages, as a way to gauge interest. Within 2 days, there were 14 people who made their interest known.

From a meeting at Panera with those interested, to working with The Villages Recreation Department to form an official club, to appointing a Board of Directors, to working through the ins and outs of becoming a 501c3, to receiving the incredible news that there was a (anonymous) couple who wished to fund the project, to obtaining

both new and used handbells and chimes to get underway, to holding auditions, *The Village Ringers* became official and held its first rehearsal on Monday, September 3, 2018!

Village Ringers is a handbell organization dedicated to attracting and challenging intermediate to advanced handbell ringers through the rehearsal and performance of quality music. It is our desire to expand the public appreciation of, and interest in, handbell music through engaging performances.

Village Ringers rehearses each Monday, from 3:00-5:00 at Elan Buena Vista, located on CR 466. This has turned into a unique and wonderful partnership. Residents of Elan (and others) often drop in on the rehearsals and enjoy watching a piece in progress become polished.



Concerts will be performed for all the residents twice a year. Village Ringers is currently playing 5 octaves of handbells and 3 octaves of chimes. There are 15 "core" players, 3 "swing ringers" (swinging in and out on various positions, and sometimes playing other instruments), and 6 substitutes to fill in for absences.

The Villages offers many performance venues. By making ourselves visible through the community with engaging performances, and by allowing our audiences (supervised) hands-on experiences with handbells, we believe we will draw a significant interest and following of the ensemble.

Village Ringers' inaugural concert will be held on Saturday, December 8th, at 7:00, at the Seabreeze Recreation Center. Tickets are on sale at The

Villages Box Office. This Christmas concert will feature some of your favorite carols as well as beautiful arrangements of both classical and more recent pieces.

Other opportunities to hear Village Ringers are on Monday, December 10th at noon in the Sharon Morse Performing Arts Center as part of the brown bag lunch concert series. If you happen to be attending "A Christmas Carol" at the Sharon Morse PAC on Dec. 16th or 17th, you will also hear them playing the pre-show music in the lobby. Our spring concert, entitled "Travelogue", will take place on Saturday, April 6th, at 7:00pm at the Laurel Manor Regional Recreation Center.

Make it a point to hear this new, unique, and talented group of handbell musicians! You won't be disappointed! ■

Save The Date!

Ringling Loud and Clear

A holiday concert performed by
The Village Ringer
Saturday, December 8th,
at 7:00 at the Seabreeze
Recreation Center.
Tickets are on sale at The
Villages Box Office.
\$15 residents / \$20 general
public