

Neighborhood Group Celebrates 25 Years Together

The De La Vista North Club continues to bring together neighbors for fun social activities.

By **ABBY BITTNER**
Daily Sun Staff Writer

From line dancing to holiday parties, the De La Vista North Club has been providing fun social events to the community for 25 years.

"The group is purely a social entity," president Don Easterbrooks said. "We get people together and have fun."

The club celebrated its 25th anniversary with a party Sept. 24, featuring trivia from Ric Mitchell, cake and updates on the group.

The celebration also included recognition of past presidents, including JoAnn Keys, who led the group from 2015 to 2019.

"I really enjoyed it and all the people I worked with," said Keys, of the Village De La Vista. "We had Hawaiian luaus, Halloween parties with costumes, and bingos. We kept busy, and it was a great experience."

Easterbrooks, of the Village

De La Vista, got involved in the club in 2016 and became president in 2021.

"(My wife and I) had not even gotten our car unloaded before we got invited to dinner in our neighborhood, and it took off for us after that," he said about getting involved with the club.

Soon after, they were asked to become editors of the neighborhood newsletter.

"In 2017, we celebrated the club's 20th anniversary, and we wrote the group's history then," he said. "I'm somewhat of a history guy anyway, so the way the village and society came to be was always fascinating (to me)."

Since moving to The Villages from Massachusetts in 2014, the Easterbrooks find the club to be a major source of community.

The group's social event committee, which is headed by the vice president, comes up with events.

"There's not one (event) I haven't enjoyed," he said. "We have golf groups, mah-jongg groups and book groups of people mostly from the neighborhood. There are some very close friendships here."

With The Villages constantly



Submitted photo

Members of the De La Vista North Club celebrated Christmas last year at a festive gathering, complete with food and dancing. The group is celebrating 25 years of community.

growing, Easterbrooks commends the team for planning events for all interests.

"The older folks prefer the relaxing activities, but the younger people coming in are looking to do more things," he said. "I think our social event committee is doing a great job

at blending those together."

The group is open to anyone with an affiliation with the Village of De La Vista.

"Some of them are family members of people in the neighborhood, and some used to live in the Village De La

Vista who are still involved in the group," Easterbrooks said.

The group has around 160 members — some who have been involved for years, while others are newer faces.

"About 70% of houses in the neighborhood have (gotten) new owners since 2014," he said. "I think the key to success for the neighborhood is that people get excited about getting new people involved."

When Keys moved to The Villages 11 years ago from Maryland, she immediately joined the club and continues to be active.

"Our neighborhood is such a friendly neighborhood," she said. "Everybody cares about each other and works together."

She also commends past presidents and Easterbrooks for their dedication to the club.

"(The group) is doing a great job with the current president," Keys said. "It can be hard at times, but it's very rewarding."

Another former president, Carlo DeLuca, looks back fondly on his time leading the group.

"It's a great bunch of people,"

said DeLuca, of the Village De La Vista. "My saying is that De La Vista North is the friendliest neighborhood in The Villages."

He also enjoys seeing the ways the club has grown over the years.

"One of the major things we've done is get younger people in positions (to plan events), and one of them is Don Easterbrooks," DeLuca said.

DeLuca got involved in the De La Vista North Club shortly after moving to The Villages 25 years ago.

He led the group from 2000 to 2001.

"Over 25 years, you can imagine the changes we've seen," DeLuca said.

In the future, Easterbrooks aims to continue creating a welcoming community through the De La Vista North Club.

"I'm hoping that the new people who come are interested in the group and help us move it into the future with new activities and new opportunities," he said.

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