

# CIF FEATURE STORY:

## Seniors Tech Buddy



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## FEATURE STORY: Seniors Tech Buddy; Saskatoon Council on Aging

The goal of the Seniors Tech Buddy program is to develop technology skills in older adults through one-on-one personalized training sessions, presentations, and hands on learning. The program pairs up youth from local high schools with older adults who have signed-up for one-on-one personalized instruction on a technology device (tablets, iPad, iPhone) and/or on specific computer applications (Skype, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) of their choosing.

Both older adults and youth benefit from this experience. Seniors benefit by being able to use technology independently to access important information that they are seeking and by being able to connect with their friends and family. The project allows youth to pass on technology skills to older adults and gives youth the opportunity to be positive role models for other young people. The youth-senior pairing is a good structure for learning and sharing skills with each other.

**“There was an increased demand by older adults asking for one-on-one technology training,”** shares Virginia Dakinewich, Fund Development and Communications Coordinator. **“Older adults who contacted the Saskatoon Council on Aging (SCOA) indicated that they needed to know how to use new technologies such as mobile devices and applications. Numerous focus groups and surveys of Saskatoon and surrounding rural communities undertaken as part of the Age Friendly Saskatoon Initiative found that seniors who are not computer literate feel left behind. It was suggested by some participants that SCOA offer accessible, affordable lessons on computers and the internet that accommodate seniors' learning styles. The Seniors Tech Buddy project is a key initiative to support SCOA's goal of positive aging for all in an age-friendly community.”**

The Seniors Tech Buddy project promotes volunteerism and leadership of youth by providing youth with the opportunity to gain new skills by teaching older adults. Pairing youths with seniors may help dispel some myths about ageism and increase understanding among generations. As they work and learn together, youth and seniors will become acquainted with the other generations. To remain independent it is vital for older adults to have the tools and skills to successfully navigate websites, access information, and gain access to networked communities. It also supports social participation and inclusion of older adults through helping them stay connected with their family and friends. As information shifts exclusively online, it is even more important for older adults to learn new technologies to stay independent and connected.

The Next Seniors Tech Buddy workshop will be held in February 2019. Phone 306-652-2255 for more information.

“Allow(ing) grandparents to connect to grandchildren (leads to) lots of fun and learning.”

– Senior participant

“I do this with my grandpa and find it helps both of us.”

– Student participant

