

Area One Agency on Aging announces volunteer teaching

October 25, 2022



Area One Agency on Aging and Senior Planet are announcing a call for volunteer technology trainers to bridge the digital divide with older adults in our communities. To teach is to touch a life forever, please help us meet the growing demand by sharing your passion and enthusiasm in service to others.

The trainer course will cover the Senior Planet curriculum. – The class meets five times in November. Upon completion, volunteers will be able to teach the following: what an iPad computer is and what it can do, how to access the internet, setup and use email and download and use common applications, like Zoom. This training course is just the beginning--A1AA would like to offer more free id workshops, courses, lectures, and training locations. To do that, we need more volunteer teachers. Please contact Shauna McKenna at smckenna@a1aa.org with any questions or to sign up to become a volunteer.

When the pandemic hit in mid-March 2020, the need to order prescriptions, connect on-line with family members or schedule doctor appointments, became a real challenge, especially for older adults who didn't

own a computer, know how to use the internet, or own a smartphone.

A1AA received an initial supply of iPads, with two-year data plans, as part of the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These funds were designed to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis by directing vital resources to the most vulnerable.

The original statewide rollout was slow with no training offered to recipients. A1AA partnered with Senior Planet to become a certified trainer of Senior Planet courses, initially training three staff. Other service providers were invited to the second round of the trainer classes.

Since then, the training has gained traction as a reliable way to meet extreme community needs.

The ongoing interest by older adults in iPad and training means more instructors are needed.

Recent funding through the State Master Plan on Aging will provide A1AA with additional iPads and data plans.

While this new funding includes access to online training or telephone support, A1AA prefers to offer the iPad courses face to face with local trainers.

“For some, this is the first time they have used any kind of tablet or device and they have a lot of questions. Having the teacher in the room just makes it easier for them,” says Meghan Gallagher, director of social services at A1AA and one of the certified instructors.

Ginny Burstein said, “I loved that the class gave me the opportunity to be with someone who could take the time to work with me and answer all my questions. It was a great learning environment. I feel more comfortable communicating with email now.”

Katy Garrison said, “I loved the class and enjoyed learning to make albums of my pictures and using the Kindle application to read.”

In the first training class, they received more applications than they had instructors to teach. Older adults want these classes and want to learn how to use these tools to improve their lives.

To make a difference in the lives of others, please help us bridge the digital divide by volunteering to teach the Senior Planet’s curriculum to older adults in Humboldt and Del Norte counties. Contact smckenna@a1aa.org today to sign up.