



Enabling Connections Backgrounder

"As a member of the Alliance of Seniors' Centres of BC, the West End Seniors' Network is excited to collaborate with the South Granville Seniors Centre on the Enabling Connections project. Many older adults are facing both technology barriers and loneliness due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This project will help them reconnect with friends, family and their community." - Anthony Kupferschmidt, Executive Director, West End Seniors' Network

Partners

The Enabling Connections Project has many wonderful partners including: 411 Seniors Centre, West End Seniors Network, Brock House Society, YWCA Techlink, GLUU, Westside Seniors Hub, Mount Pleasant and Kitsilano Neighbourhood Houses, BC Technology for Learning Society, Vancouver Public Library.

Business Partners: Best Buy Digital Health, FamliNet, Rogers Communications, Samsung

Funding is provided in part by: UBC School of Nursing – Building Capacity for Meaningful Participation by People Living with Dementia, City of Vancouver, Canadian Emergency Response Fund, Donors and Members of the South Granville Seniors Centre.

Why Tablets?

Samsung Galaxy 8 Tablets are available to be borrowed by low-income seniors who currently have no devices allowing access to the internet. Units will be lent out with full one on one support by South Granville Senior Centre volunteer Mentors, backed by YWCA TechLink program. All software and internet access is provided. Borrowers must agree to work with the Mentor to connect with friends and family, and participate in virtual programs offered by the South Granville Seniors Centre (SGSC).

Handheld tablets, which are easy to use and connect to cellular networks and therefore do not require Wi-Fi hardware or connection, are the choice for this project for several reasons. Low costs, easy maintenance and upgrading, established and proven applications, and ease of use for the participant.

Research shows that new users find a smaller tablet, 8 or 9" screen size more approachable in format as it resembles a traditional paperback book, and the weight is low enough that holding it is not straining. Based on extensive research the Samsung Galaxy 8 Tablet has been identified as the most cost effective solution. Data service from Rogers will allow tablet users up to 3.8 Gigabytes of data per month.

Cleaning and Maintenance will be done at SGSC by staff and volunteers trained by technology partner Best Buy and their Samsung experts.

The majority of software applications to be utilized are free however we have partnered with FamliNet to provide a unique, seniors focused application which will easily allow seniors to connect with and create their own community connections.

JJ the Robot

JJ (Jingle Jangle) is a Boteye autonomous telepresence robot which seniors can remotely control and pilot through gardens, galleries, or our seniors centre. We also have a desk top telepresence unit – Kubi which can be remotely moved in a 330 degree arc allowing a remote user to "look around" a room allowing a more realistic interaction with those physically in the room.