



NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed for Release: May 6, 2021 1 p.m.

JJ The Robot Opens Up New Worlds of Connection for Isolated Seniors

Vancouver, B.C. (May 6, 2021) – Today the South Granville Seniors Centre launches the Enabling Connections program. Utilizing trained volunteers and digital literacy mentors isolated seniors in Vancouver can borrow tablets and connect into a curated offering of virtual programming, telepresence robot exploration of the community, and connections to their family, friends, and diverse community activities. The program is not about the technology, it's about enabling connections between seniors and others and a new telepresence robot named JJ will give isolated seniors new freedom to create connections.

"I am very excited about the launch. Not only does Enabling Connections enable isolated seniors to reach out to the community, to get inspired and build capacity, ... the Program also enables them to maintain and enrich relationships. In this global world with so many of our friends and family spread out across the country, the world,... being able to see their smiles, their frowns, twinkles in their eyes... makes personal connections feel more real and touches hearts." - Stella Tsang, Enabling Connections volunteer

The four elements of the Enabling Connections program are: a tablet lending library, digital literacy mentoring, a virtual senior's centre, and knowledge sharing with other organizations. The Enabling Connections' project is focused on creating connections between individuals and creating a sense of community and mutual support, peer to peer. The technology and digital literacy elements may seem to be the priority; however they are only a means to an end. No senior would hesitate to use a television or telephone, these technologies are familiar. The technical side of this project is to ensure that as quickly and easily as possible the "tech" becomes just another familiar device, and the focus is on the maintaining and building of interpersonal relationships and a sense of community.

"South Granville Seniors Centre's new Enabling Connections program is exciting for us at the 411 Seniors Centre and we are thrilled to be a partner. Seniors in our community are being left behind due to unequal digital access and digital proficiency. The Enabling Connection's program will address this need. We thank the South Granville team for this initiative and the benefit it will bring to the 411 Seniors Centre membership. " - Leslie Remund, Executive Director, 411 Seniors Centre

Working with the Seniors Collective of MetroVancouver the virtual programming element of the project consist of a curated list that features both in-person and virtual programming from diverse sources to assist with the issues of social isolation and related concerns (mental and physical health, depression, etc.) associated with physical and communications disconnection from others and a supportive community.

The tablet lending library will give priority to visible minority, low income seniors who currently do not have internet access, and may be living with memory loss. If you are a senior interested in borrowing a tablet please call us at 604-732-0812

About South Granville Seniors Centre

The South Granville Seniors Centre is a non-profit organization that provides drop-in programs and services that promote health, well-being, and independent lifestyles for seniors living in the South Granville/Fairview and surrounding areas. We are also one of the few places in Canada that run a regular Spanish Outreach Program for Spanish speaking seniors.

###

Contact: Douglas Dunn, Executive Director Email: ed@southgranvilleseniors.ca
Cell: (604) 649-8060