

Normal High School – Costa Mesa, CA

Team Big and Strong

Grades 9,10, and 11

26 Students

Our Big Goal

Equip Senior Citizens with the skills they need to safely and effectively engage in a virtual world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has ravished the character of local communities, and our city is no exception. Participation in community activities, especially from Senior Citizens drastically decreased and they stayed inside to avoid getting sick. A study by the National Library of Medicine found that, “[A]ll participants described changes to how they connected with social networks, namely noting a shift from physical to virtual platforms.”

After considering that Senior Citizens were more isolated during and after COVID and finding out that, in the past five years, seniors have seen a 400% growth in online crime against them (Morgan Stanley), most often being targeted because they have not been properly educated on cyber safety, we decided to do something about it.

We created Friday Tech 101 and sought to address this issue with changing society: the lack of awareness and knowledge among older demographics regarding new technology. With Friday Tech 101 and our later-developed Family Story Time program, we were able to educate Seniors in our City and bring in additional programming for the City.

We were able to visit a Senior Citizens Center for 14 consecutive Fridays and teach Seniors how to setup their email on their phone, recognize potential scams, Facetime and Zoom with friends and family. We taught them what information is appropriate to share on the internet and what is dangerous and how to setup accounts and logins using their email and secure passwords. The result is seniors living safer and more connected online lives!

We are seeking an investment of \$6,250 that will allow us to secure a bus for two more semesters of transportation to and from the Senior Center, allow us to print training resources for the Seniors and allow us to purchase a projector so we can teach technology to dozens of Senior Citizens all at one time. The money would be donated to our school and designated to the Friday Tech 101 Project.

*Based on an actual project submitted by Fife High School (WA) and Laura Ramos in 2022. Aspects of this example have been embellished to provide the best example.