

Presentation sophomore helps older adults stay connected through social media

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As a young woman growing up in Silicon Valley, Stuti Vishwabhan is well aware of the many ways people stay connected these days. She knows all about Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, Skype, Facetime, Twitter and Tumblr.

It wasn't until Stuti's grandparents visited from their home in India that she realized that not everyone is as comfortable in the digital world as she and her contemporaries are. Her grandparents were having a difficult time staying in touch with friends and relatives at home because they didn't know how to take advantage of the many applications available to them.

That's when Stuti, now a sophomore at Presentation High School, went to work bringing her grandparents up to speed on the digital age.

Every day during the summer after the eighth grade, she worked with her grandparents until they were comfortable tuning in on laptops to the TV shows they enjoyed in India. According to Stuti, "My grandmother even opened up a Facebook account and became highly active in social networking."

Inspired by her success with her grandparents, Stuti realized she could use those same skills to help other older adults, and so she created Teach Seniors Technology, a nonprofit organization.

The organization's mission, according to Stuti is "to bridge the generation gap by educating seniors about technology, so that they can remain connected and play a meaningful role in the lives of their loved ones."

Early on, she volunteered to head a program at Belmont Village Assisted Living on Winchester Boulevard. At the time, Radhika Singh was activities director, and she said in a note to Stuti, "The course program you taught was well crafted, and your delivery to our residents was very person-centered."

Stuti and her parents also contacted Councilman Johnny Khamis' office to see if he could help her expand her program for seniors into local community centers.

Says Rayshelle Brant, a council assistant in the District 10 office, "Right away, we were impressed by her motivation. Stuti is an absolute pleasure to work with; she is incredibly bright, talented and thoughtful."

Brant set up a meeting for Stuti with Almaden Community Center and Library staff, Hal Spangenberg, Brian Hames and Ruth Barefoot, who soon agreed to start her technology classes at the Almaden Library, where Stuti is offering her training program to seniors on Fridays through January from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Khamis says of Stuti, "Being able to give bright, young people like Stuti a platform to use their skills is one of the best parts of my job. She is a remarkable young lady, and I am pleased to see her sharing her skills with our community."

Meanwhile, Stuti continues to grow her nonprofit, and counts among recent members Sanjana Garg, Samika Kikkeri and Kathryn Poeschel. Swathi Ramprasad is vice president of the organization.

To volunteer for Teach Seniors Technology, visit teachseniorstech.org or contact Stuti at teachsrttech@gmail.com.