





# Seniors and Technology Program

## Educating the Elderly

During the pandemic, many senior citizens in the East Preston township had to be isolated from their families in order to stay safe from being infected by COVID-19. To help remedy this, people decided to help seniors to connect with their families by giving their elderly residents smart tablets and other computer devices. While the intention was a noble one, the results were not what they expected. None of the residents knew how to use the electronic devices and were unable to do anything with them and some didn't even have emails to contact their families. When the East Preston Empowerment Academy heard about this upsetting situation, we decided to step in and lend a helping hand. The new "Seniors and Technology" program was developed as a way to help senior citizens become more familiar with modern technology. The project's intention is to break the isolation of the seniors, by teaching them tools to use technology to be in touch with families and friends. EPEA will have weekly training workshops to enable the seniors to be empowered to use their devices at their own pace. In addition, staff will provide individual tutorials to each participant once per week.





The program gathers a group of senior citizens within the Preston Township communities which include East Preston, North Preston, Cherry Brook and Lake Loon. The program instructors help the seniors to create an email account and how to use it. Although this program is still within its infancy, the overall outcome of what will be accomplished will be worth it. As of now the senior citizens are also being trained on how to work with Zoom, which has become a vital part of our current pandemic landscape. Down the road seniors will continue to be educated in other forms of online communication and internet expertise. To further help the seniors become more adept in how to use the internet better, instructors will deliver binders to the seniors with instructions on how to work with the internet and Wi-Fi by themselves, in between classes. All of this hard work can also be credited to EPEA's partnership with the East Preston Daycare Center. There are currently 40 seniors within this program and this is just part 1 of a much wider spread project that is soon to come. Project 2 of this program will go beyond the Preston Township and will be spread across the province of Nova Scotia.

With a strong partnership with the Association of Black Social Workers, this second project can get the support it needs. What makes this second part of the program unique is that each participant is partnered with a youth to help guide them through the process and allows them to have someone to contact while training. These youths are typically the grandchildren or immediate family member of the participants that are willing to aid their elderly relative. This project will educate at least 50 seniors and will again be conducted virtually with both the seniors and their youth to help with the learning process and carefully work through any misunderstandings the seniors might have.

As stated, this new program has only recently started and there is much more work to be done. But elderly people have been eager to learn these skills and to finally be able to connect with their loved ones on a much greater scale. The overall goal of this initiative is to alleviate the overwhelming mental health feelings that generate from isolation and loneliness, which are exasperated due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Down the road, we should be able to further see more amazing results

