

Students will help seniors get connected

Program at Sussex Elementary School makes students the teachers

By Laura MacInnis
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SUSSEX—On March 30, Grade 5 students at Sussex Elementary School won't just be going to class, they'll be teaching it.

The school is heading up a new community program where young students will pass on their knowledge of computer skills to local seniors through a series of workshops.

The project, dubbed Connecting Generations Through Technology, was dreamed up by guidance counsellor Raya Khedheri and teacher Nicole St-Cyr. Twenty-seven students will be charged with designing three programs to share with those wanting to learn more about the Internet – from emailing to Skyping to using social media websites.

"They're going to make videos for the seniors to watch during the class, and then they'll have one-on-one time with the students in front of the computer to see how it works. We're all really proud of this project," said principal Doug Bobbitt.

"Each group will be responsible for their own presentation. We give them the information, and you'd be surprised what they can come up with," Khedheri said.

The youth will begin preparing their lessons this week with the help of the school staff.

"I've told the students they have to be patient. A lot of the people who will

She said some of the kids were stunned to hear that because they've grown up with technology all around them from school to home, but she says they are eager to help.

Earlier this month they won a grant from the Canadian Teachers Association to help with the cost of the workshops, and she's thrilled the school is finding ways to integrate itself into the community.

Eric Nelson of the Sussex and Area Seniors Centre said he expects the workshop to be popular and thinks it's a fantastic idea, particularly the connections it creates between the young and the old in the community.

"I'm all for it. I think people will be really interested," he said. "A lot of the seniors have computers, but they aren't all that good at it. We put on basic courses on how to use email at the senior centre, but they never had one on Facebook or any of those websites."

Khedheri expects a lot of seniors are intimidated by the newest technology but are eager to find ways to better communicate with their children and grandchildren.

"My children saw their great-grandmother in England for the first time because of Skype," she said. "It was a special moment, and we want others to experience that as well."

The school will also be providing transportation to any senior who needs it. Khedheri said they want to make sure they are accessible as they can be.

"The middle school is letting us borrow the mini bus. I'm so excited because we were going to use some of our grant to pay for transportation, but this will free up funds for other things."

The first session will take place at the Sussex Elementary School library March 30 at 3:30 p.m. Seniors wanting



Sussex Elementary School students will help teach workshops at the school next month showing seniors how to use social media websites, e-mail, and the Internet. Pictured left to right are Isabella Khedheri, 10, and