

Fremont senior citizens turn to 'tech' Giants for help

[Rebecca R. Brooks](#), Reporter 8:21 a.m. ET Feb. 20, 2017



(Photo: Rebecca R. Brooks/The News-Messenger)

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FREMONT- Local senior citizens are turning to Ross High School students for lessons on how to use personal "tech" including cell phones, tablets and laptops.

Heidi Gallagher, who teaches Teen Leadership Corps at Ross, asked her students to work with area residents ages 60 and older at a monthly event called "Coffee with Giants."

So far, the students have had two opportunities to host the afterschool workshops — first in December and again on Tuesday. The January session was canceled due to inclement weather.

From 3 to 4 p.m. on Tuesday a half dozen seniors and juniors from the teen leadership classes aided local senior citizens who needed help on a large assortment of tasks — all while sharing a cup of coffee and enjoying some cookies in the high school school library.

Ross senior Samantha Florez was helping one resident with her Android cell phone. "I was helping her send pictures to Walgreens," the student said. Florez helped set up an

account using the woman's phone and uploaded her photos to pick up later at the local store.



Fremont Ross Teacher Heidi Gallagher, right, works on a Facebook page on a laptop owned by Phoebe Hetrick, left, with help from Ross junior Sam Durbin, center. (Photo: Rebecca R. Brooks/The News-Messenger)

Mary Lou Baker, age 72, of Fremont, was one of the senior citizens who attended the event looking for a little help with her iPhone. She heard about Coffee with Giants through two sources, she said.

"My grandson is a senior, and I read it in the paper," she said.

Baker said she did not hesitate to come in and get help from the Ross students, who helped her access The News-Messenger through her cell phone.

"I felt good about coming, and I did learn a lot today," she said. "It isn't as hard as you think it is," she said about using personal technology.

Gallagher said the students had been expecting a large turnout at its January session because of the number of "Likes" and comments on the school's Facebook page, but that session was canceled due to weather.

The turnout for February did not look as though it would be very strong, so the teacher invited a few family members to attend. Phoebe Hetrick, Gallagher's aunt, came with her

phone and her laptop. "I'm a nervous person," Hetrick said about working with technology and computers. "I don't get any of this."



Charlotte Urban, left, gets help with her tablet from Fremont Ross High School senior Kirsten Widman at the monthly "Coffee with Giants" workshop. (Photo: Rebecca R. Brooks/The News-Messenger)

Gallagher and the students worked with Hetrick on getting her Facebook password cleared up and installing apps on her phone.

Students also worked with other senior citizens on adding apps, and they introduced them to emojis and bitmoji in Snapchat.

Coffee with Giants continues through May on the second Tuesday of the month at Ross in the library from 3 to 4 p.m. March 14, April 11 and May 9.

Gallagher said Coffee with Giants is just one of the service projects conducted by the two Teen Leadership Corps classes at Ross. One class also volunteers at Bethany Place and the other class volunteers at Fremont Middle School. The students, who have to go through an application process to be accepted into Teen Leadership, also conduct personal community projects as well as other group projects.

"They do all kinds of things," she said about here students. Last year 90 students applied to be selected as one of the 35 to 40 students in the group.

Coffee with Giants

Time: 3 to 4 p.m.

Dates: March 14, April 11, and May 9

Location: Fremont High School Library

Enter the front of the high school and the library is straight down the hall on the left.

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