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Library/community collaboration empowers seniors with technology learning

Newton, NC, April 14, 2014:

More than 100 local seniors are able to use tablet computers and access helpful websites, thanks to a technology grant from the State Library on North Carolina and efforts by the Catawba County Library System and the Department of Social Services Seniors Morning Out Program.

Since November, library staff has conducted free workshops at all five Seniors Morning Out nutrition sites.

Librarian Phillip Overholtzer explained that the sessions covered the basics of using tablet computers and how to navigate health and nutrition websites.

“We’ve been working on this since November and it has been a wonderful success,” Overholtzer said. “Those who were reluctant to try the tablets were amazed to see how easy it is to use a hand-held device.”

The outreach effort involved seven staff members and five sessions at each of the nutrition sites: First Presbyterian Church in Newton, Maiden Community Center, West Hickory Senior Citizen Center, Highland United Methodist Church in Hickory and Bethlehem United Methodist Church in Claremont.

“The workshops definitely helped us bridge the digital divide between generations,” Overholtzer said. “The participants and staff had fun together.”

The \$7,400 LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant was used to purchase 16 iPads, protective cases and equipment that can be reused by the library system for future workshops.

Catawba County Library System is headquartered in Newton and serves some 95,000 registered users. The library system offers free adult computer workshops at various branches throughout the year. ###