Bensenville Community Public Library

Senior Advisory Council Technology Grant Report

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Senior Advisory Council Technology Grant Report

Overview:

After being awarded the Senior Advisory Council's Technology Grant last fall and receiving matching funds from the BCPL, we began looking for the instructional tools to put the combined $3,000 towards. We decided on purchasing ten Acer Aspire V5-131 11" laptops running Windows 7. We then began contacting organizations around Bensenville who might wish to partner with us in offering computer classes to local seniors. Three organizations that showed interest in offering such classes were: the Castle Towers retirement community, Bridgeway of Bensenville, and the Bensenville Park District. We arranged two months of computer classes at each of the partner organizations' facilities; the idea being to better serve residents with limited mobility that might not be able to attend technology classes at the library. There would be four different classes offered with one class given per week, which would then repeat over the course of two months. Our hope was that by offering each class twice, people who may not have known about the first session would hear about it by word of mouth and then have an opportunity to sign up for the subsequent session. Each organization would have a total of eight class periods scheduled on four different topics. The topics included were: Computer Basics, Email, Using the Internet, and Microsoft Word.

Of the three partnering organization, the classes at Castle Towers retirement community were scheduled to take place first, during the months of January and February 2015. Registration and attendance were good at the beginning of the first session- with the maximum capacity reached (8 registrants), but as the weeks went on registration and attendance both dropped to around half-capacity, and then to around ¼ capacity for the entirety of the second session. It seemed that all of the interested parties at Castle Towers signed up for the first session, with no new registrants for the second session. The registrants for the second session were all participants in the first session who wanted to get a refresher course.

Bridgeway of Bensenville was the second partner organization to host classes, with the sessions taking place over the course of March and April 2015. Registration was capped at 8 students, but Bridgeway overbooked to 11 (occasionally 12), so that during classes the students were asked to share their computers. This ended up working fine as many of the Bridgeway residents are friendly with each other and quite easy-going. Attendance was consistently high at all the classes at Bridgeway, but as with Castle Towers, no new registrants appeared for the second session. Virtually all first session registrants signed up again for the second session.

Classes at the third partnering organization, the Bensenville Park District, were scheduled to take place over the course of June to July 2015. Even though listings for the classes appeared in the Park District's events newsletter, registration was very low- with only one student registering for the first class in the first session. Also, during this class the student just wanted to research kidney disease instead of covering the normal "Computer Basics" subject matter. After the first class no one registered for any of the other classes offered at the Bensenville Park District.

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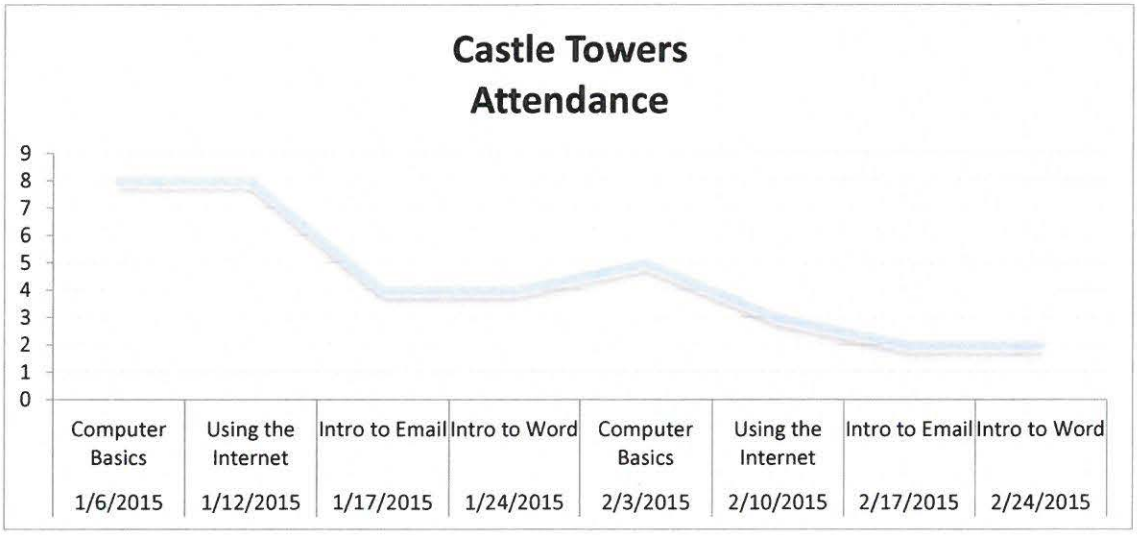
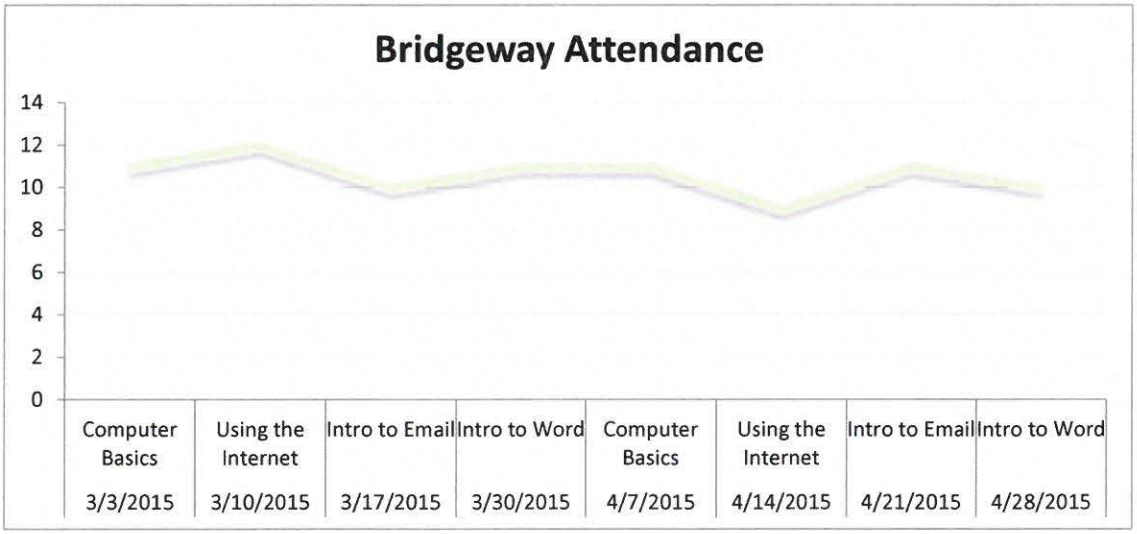
Conclusion:

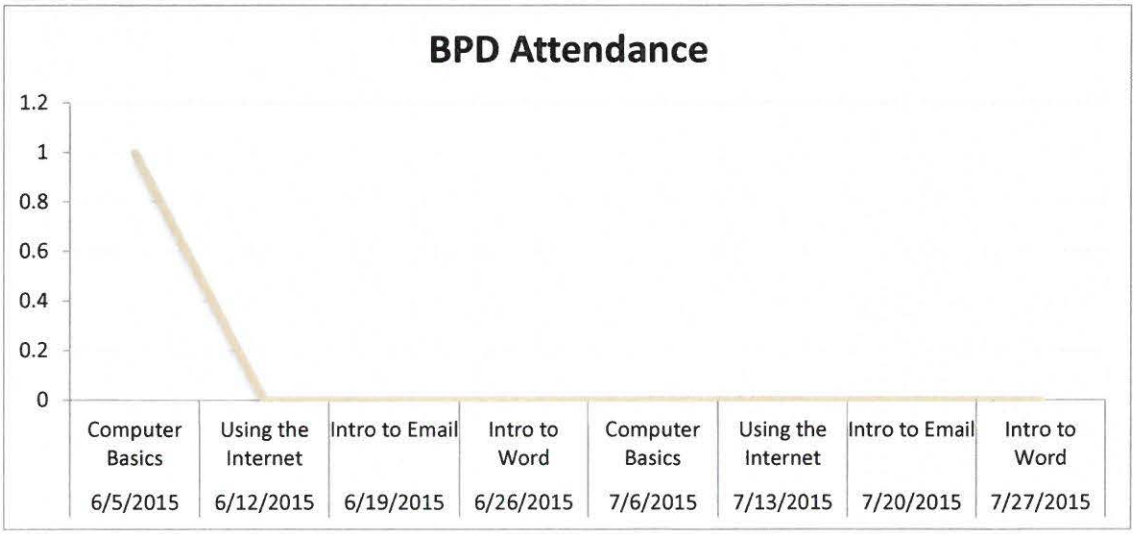
Registration and attendance at Bridgeway of Bensenville was the highest of the three partnering organizations. The reasons for this might be that they have the most resources and staff to organize and promote such events, as well as idividualized attention to remind registrants of the scheduled dates and times. Castle Towers was the partnering organization with the second highest registration/attendance rates. Reasons for this may be that in comparison with Bridgeway they lack the funding and staff to promote such events quite as heavily. Registration at the Park District was the lowest out of the three partnering organizations. One can only hypothesize, but it makes sense to assume that because the Park District is a separate location that seniors had to physically leave their residence to travel *to* in order to attend, that most seniors who would have come to these classes are already attending classes at the BCPL. The second session at all partnering organizations seems unnecessary in terms of targeting new registrants, but the repeat students seemed to be glad to have the lessons reiterated.

Overall, there were 122 separate registrations for each of the classes conducted, split between 22 unique registrants over the course of 6 months at the three partnering organizations. At the close of each class, each participant was asked how they would rate their experience and every single one was very satisfied with the way the classes were conducted and the information they received. We plan on offering a repeat of the program in the future, perhaps in late 2016.

	Date	Class	Attendance
Castle Towers	1/6/2015	Computer Basics	8
	1/12/2015	Using the Internet	8
	1/17/2015	Intro to Email	4
	1/24/2015	Intro to Word	4
	2/3/2015	Computer Basics	5
	2/10/2015	Using the Internet	3
	2/17/2015	Intro to Email	2
	2/24/2015	Intro to Word	2
	Date	Class	Attendance
Bridgeway of Bensenville	3/3/2015	Computer Basics	11
	3/10/2015	Using the Internet	12
	3/17/2015	Intro to Email	10
	3/30/2015	Intro to Word	11
	4/7/2015	Computer Basics	11
	4/14/2015	Using the Internet	9
	4/21/2015	Intro to Email	11
	4/28/2015	Intro to Word	10
	Date	Class	Attendance
Bensenville Park District	6/5/2015	Computer Basics	1
	6/12/2015	Using the Internet	0
	6/19/2015	Intro to Email	0
	6/26/2015	Intro to Word	0
	7/6/2015	Computer Basics	0
	7/13/2015	Using the Internet	0
	7/20/2015	Intro to Email	0
	7/27/2015	Intro to Word	0


Castle Towers
Attendance
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
Computer Basics
Using the Internet
Intro to Email
Intro to Word
Computer Basics
Using the Internet
Intro to Email
Intro to Word
1/6/2015
1/12/2015
1/17/2015
1/24/2015
2/3/2015
2/10/2015
2/17/2015
2/24/2015


Bridgeway Attendance
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
Computer Basics
Using the Internet
Intro to Email
Intro to Word
Computer Basics
Using the Internet
Intro to Email
Intro to Word
3/3/2015
3/10/2015
3/17/2015
3/30/2015
4/7/2015
4/14/2015
4/21/2015
4/28/2015


BPD Attendance
1.2
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
Computer Basics
Using the Internet
Intro to Email
Intro to Word
Computer Basics
Using the Internet
Intro to Email
Intro to Word
6/5/2015
6/12/2015
6/19/2015
6/26/2015
7/6/2015
7/13/2015
7/20/2015
7/27/2015