

CT REPORTS

Combating Social Isolation with Tech

Shining a light on innovative technologies

Social isolation is a core issue for the CTA Foundation. The CTA Foundation continues to support technologies that help connect older adults and people with disabilities and one way the Foundation does this is by supporting the initiatives of our 2021 class of grant recipients.

Gaining digital literacy is one effective way to combat social isolation. Using technology to communicate with individuals, provide entertainment and perform daily tasks can help to bring people closer. Many of our grantee organizations provide free or discounted services where older adults and people with disabilities can gain knowledge and training with tech that is useful in their everyday lives.

Our grantees have formulated programs to connect people using a variety of methods. Following is a sample of some of the work our grant recipients are doing to help others:

- **AbleGamers** mission is to create opportunities that enable play, combat social isolation, foster inclusive communities and improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. This is done using accessible tech that has been engineered and modified to fit each individual's unique situation, enabling people with disabilities to interact with the gaming world.
- **Access Hears** educates older adults with hearing loss on how to use over-the-counter technologies to provide them with the ability to hear better. The inability to hear can cause a sense of isolation between those who have this impairment and those they are communicating with.
- **Avenidas'** program provides tech education to those that are low-income in the Vietnamese and Mandarin speaking Santa Clara County community.
- **Byte Back, Community Tech Work and Older Adults Technology Services (OATS)** serve older adults by bettering their understanding of tech and helping implement it into their daily lives.
- **Front Porch** is using its grant to promote social connectedness and wellness with older adults and their caregivers through telehealth activities and the use of mobile carts that help enforce engagement with family, friends, community staff and the outside world.
- **Gallaudet University** is creating a universal captioning application that gives deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) people the ability to use auto-captioning or automated speech recognition (ASR) on meeting platforms in multiple languages. This new platform will help to eliminate the isolation deaf or hard of hearing and late-deafened individuals experience every day.
- **Lutheran Services in America** provides programs that support family caregivers and issues tech devices to allow them to participate in virtual education using GoogleGlass and iPad tech.
- **St. Barnabas Senior Services** works with older adults to increase their awareness of tech solutions to improve their health. With your support, we can help fund these initiatives to help combat social isolation and support older adults and people with disabilities. There is still much work to be done within these communities and we appreciate any help you can give. To join us, please visit SupportCTAF.org. ■



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Jane and John Shalam

The John and Jane Shalam Award

In an effort to recognize the work being done to combat social isolation, the CTA Foundation announced the [John and Jane Shalam Award to Combat Social Isolation in August](#). This award will be given yearly to one winner who may be a non-profit organization, company, university or individual creating and implementing innovative products, research or programs that use tech to combat social isolation for older adults and people with disabilities. John Shalam, founder, and chairman of VOXX International, serves as the founding chair of the CTA Foundation and was instrumental in setting its mission. We look forward to recognizing solutions to this critical issue, while honoring John and Jane's contributions to the consumer technology industry through this new awards program.



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