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THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD

STUDENTS CONNECTING WITH SENIORS TOOLKIT

Connect with Senior Citizens from your home!

In partnership with Charter Communications, The Congressional Award Foundation invites Congressional Award participants to engage with seniors virtually as a Voluntary Public Service activity.

Because the risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, older adults are especially vulnerable and isolated. While it may not be safe to gather in person, we can take advantage of virtual opportunities to connect with a different generation.



GET INSPIRED

A special message from
Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)
and Rep. Yvette Clarke (NY-09)
[Watch Here](#)



About the Congressional Award Program

The Congressional Award is a public-private partnership created by Congress to promote and recognize the achievements of young Americans. The program is non-partisan, voluntary, and non-competitive. Open to youth ages 14 to 24, the Congressional Award challenges youth to set goals in four program areas: Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, Physical Fitness, and an Expedition or Exploration.

The Congressional Award | Congress' Award for Youth
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Visit www.congressionalaward.org





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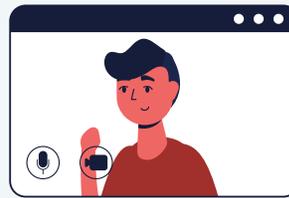
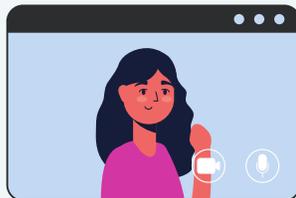
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How to virtually connect in 5 steps:

1. Identify a senior center or retirement community in your area. This can be done through a quick Google search, or by asking your parents, teachers, or advisor.
2. A senior center or retirement community will typically have staff in charge of managing and recruiting volunteers. Call or email the volunteer coordinator and let them know that you are interested in volunteering. You should share a little about yourself and the project. If you're not sure what to say, we've created a template [here](#) to guide you through!
3. Meet with your senior virtually for 30-60 minutes, depending on their availability. Lead the conversation using the virtual activities provided below. Be sure to share the activities with the center ahead of time so they can also be aware. Remember that the goal is to connect, get to know each other, and have fun.
4. Log your Voluntary Public Service hours in your Record Book.
5. Share your volunteer experience with the Congressional Award team [here](#)!



Virtual Activities

- [Ice Breakers](#) - Start with a fun ice breaker to get the conversation going!
- [Conversation Jar](#) - Pick a topic or question from a jar and discuss it with your senior buddy.
- Share Your Talent - Do you sing, play an instrument, or do magic tricks? Show your buddy what you got!
- Arts and Crafts - Are you a master of origami, or have you ever put together a Pinterest-worthy craft? Go step-by-step with your buddy and make a matching masterpiece.
- Online Games - Play B-I-N-G-O, checkers, chess, or even battleship through game websites.
- Tech Lessons - Help your senior buddy learn how to use technology and social media.



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Frequently Asked Questions:

What conversation topics should I avoid?

While the goal is to get to know our seniors better, there may be some subjects that are too sensitive or uncomfortable to discuss and should be avoided. This may include politics, loss of loved ones, service in the armed forces, or other difficult topics or memories. It may be best to ask the volunteer coordinator in advance if there are topics to avoid. They may have some restrictions or trainings in place for new volunteers. Please be sure to abide by any requirements or rules set by the senior center. If you realize that you have breached a topic that is too personal, you may say, “thank you, let’s move on to another question or activity”.

How can I stay in touch?

The hardest part of this project is getting started! Once you have established a way to connect, you can continue working with the volunteer coordinator to schedule additional times to meet. You can also send a “thank you” note to your buddy by mailing a letter directly to the center. Remember not to request personal information or send your own.

General Resources

REGISTRATION - Participants must register online or by mail before starting

PROGRAM BOOK - Program overview, sample activities, requirements, and FAQs

WORKBOOK - Optional fillable PDF used to map out activities before submitting online

SUBMITTABLE - Online submission platform for earning your Congressional Award

Contact the Award

If you have questions, please contact:

Rachel Mallory, Director of Partnerships + Corporate Engagement
mallory@congressionalaward.org.

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