

Thelma Hall

The Affordable Connectivity Program can change lives. Just ask Thelma Hall.

Hall, a 62-year-old San Antonio resident, worked for a regional grocery chain, starting at entry-level and rising to equipment specialist operating a machine that filled over 100 prescriptions per minute. She was fast on her feet and strong enough to pull palettes weighing 100+ pounds.



In April 2022 Hall broke her tibia and knee, a devastating accident that left her out of work and without income. Forced to cancel her wireless service, she was almost completely isolated. Meals were delivered to her home, but it wasn't until four months after the accident that Hall ventured out of the house to visit a community center where she could use exercise machines and enjoy a hot meal.

"I used to be so active but when I broke my leg I was shut in, and it was driving me crazy not to see people or go outside. I needed to do something for my mental and physical health."

The center offered free classes as part of collaborations between the City of San Antonio, University of Texas San Antonio and Senior Planet from AARP, a program of Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP. Hall had no intention of taking a technology class but after listening in on a class about iPads, she knew what needed to be done. "I was terrified but motivated. I said to myself this is out of your comfort zone, but now you really have to learn this."

Hall was introduced to the ACP in class. She applied for the benefit and soon had free broadband that she could actually use. "It was a godsend for me because I had to cancel my internet service after I broke my leg. I had no income, but ACP came along just in time. It covers the full cost of my internet. I have no internet bill at all."

The training and ACP benefit have had a transformational impact on her life. "I can go on the web and understand what it is. I know how to send emails. I do online banking. I love browsing and I shop on Amazon. I've had a guitar for years but now I'm taking lessons online, and I love playing online puzzle games. I check in for medical appointments online and bring my iPad when I go to the doctor's office."