

LICENSING TESTIMONIAL: **Tina Barnett**

Tina Barnett has a passion for serving older adults. A certified senior advisor and co-founder of a consulting firm that assists older adults with technology, Barnett, a Texas native, had been living in Boise Idaho for almost 30 years when she discovered the local nonprofit LEARN Idaho. Inspired by its mission to provide free education to older adults, she joined as a volunteer.

Barnett became LEARN's program manager and came across Senior Planet from AARP and its licensing program online. The program seemed like a perfect fit, one that promised to work with organizations like LEARN and help them develop local trainers to deliver classes. LEARN applied to be a Senior Planet licensing partner and was accepted in February 2022.

In the first year, the program was already a success among local LEARN Idaho seniors and in 2023, they renewed their licensing agreement. With Barnett's energy, professionalism, and passion for serving older adults it was a seamless partnership.

“In the evolving realm of technology, inclusion is as important as innovation”

“In the evolving realm of technology, inclusion is as important as innovation,” Barnett said. “As LEARN's tech education program manager using Senior Planet curriculum, I am deeply committed to bridging the digital divide for our older adults, ensuring they remain connected, empowered, and relevant in today's digital age.”

The licensing process begins with an information session and an application review process, said Kristina Demery, Senior Planet licensing program account manager. Upon acceptance licensees

find trainers to deliver the programs and choose an administrator. In the critical role of administrator, Barnett sets up local programs, securing classroom space, devices, trainers, and staffing. She chooses which programs to offer based on extensive input from older adults in the community and serves as the main point of contact and support for trainers.

Senior Planet has quarterly data reporting requirements, which Barnett oversees. She provides schedules and participant data, ensures that all program surveys are administered and submitted on time, and orders books for classroom use. Basically, she does it all.

“Tina embodies what we look for in an administrator,” Demery said. “She is really enthusiastic and driven to make the licensing arrangement a success. We

are very comfortable in what they are doing, and in their ability to provide timely data.”

Administrators also collect client success stories, which are plentiful at LEARN. One student didn't have a checking account or credit card; to pay bills he relied on cashier checks, which he delivered all over town on his bike. Now, he is completely comfortable with online banking. Another student without a computer drove over five hours to Utah for each doctor's appointment. Today, many of those appointments are online.



OF LOCAL TRAINERS TRAINED:

3 currently active, plus 5 more who are on-track to complete training this month

OF SENIOR PLANET CLASSES OFFERED:

92 programs between April 12, 2022 - December 15, 2023.

OF LOCAL OLDER ADULTS SERVED:

477 engagements to date

OF SITES:

4 sites



“I have had students who have been to every class,” Barnett said. “It is so rewarding to see them move along the trajectory from fear to believing it is possible and then figuring out how to do it.”

The Senior Planet licensing program has benefitted the community in so many ways. Before, LEARN programming was mostly online; now, there are close to 200 in-person engagements per quarter. The training curriculum is deep and varied, including classes in Telemedicine, YouTube, Money Matters, Staying Safe Online, Graphic Design, Facebook, Smart Phones, Zoom, Rideshare Apps, and much more.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the Senior Planet experience for Barnett is the myriad ways that older adults in Boise forge personal connections with each other. Two



students connected over a mutual interest in steel mills. Two others learned they had both worked in South/Central America and now meet after class to practice their Spanish. There’s a “we’re all in this together” vibe that fosters a sense of accomplishment and empowerment.

The success of the Senior Planet/LEARN licensing arrangement is reflected in a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 93 and participant comments including:

“The trainer is very knowledgeable and does a great job of including everyone in the discussion in a nonjudgmental way. It’s a very comfortable venue in which to learn and explore technology.”

“The instructors were patient and thorough.”

“I’ve benefited greatly from the classes and have a much greater sense of confidence about using my computer. It has made me less anxious when having to undertake a task on the computer.”

“I have learned so much about using Google photo. Now I’ll make a mug for my granddaughter’s graduation and Christmas presents for this year.”

Looking to the future, Barnett has plans for expanding LEARN’s reach and impact. She hopes to install more devices at the senior center and look into creating a telehealth appointment pod. AT&T reached out to LEARN based on its robust website and invited the organization to apply for a \$25,000 corporate gift—which they won!

At least five other funding applications are in the works.

“LEARN’s tech education program using Senior Planet curriculum isn’t just about teaching skills; it’s about forging connections, breaking barriers, empowering individuals, and creating a stronger, more connected community for all,” Barnett said.

The Senior Planet licensing program serves as an open-ended framework for administrators like Barnett to develop programs and activities based on unique needs of their community. You can learn more about the free program at www.oats.org/licensing