When Mirowitz Center in St. Louis was built, Joan Denison, President and CEO, made sure it had a high capacity for technology. Her forward thinking paid off when Mirowitz Center joined the Senior Planet licensing program in October of 2023.

“When we heard about the licensing program,” Denison said, “We had all the infrastructure in place and Senior Planet elevated our programming to the next level.”

Mirowitz Center occupies the first floor of a senior living center with 358 affordable apartments, and also serves residents from the broader community. It offers classes, programs, and events, and features onsite geriatric primary care, a bank branch, and a cafe.

Mirowitz Center previously offered in-person tech training with high school students as tutors. The program pivoted to virtual and went virtual during the pandemic. When lockdowns were lifted, in-person training classes resumed and expanded with Senior Planet classes. “Senior Planet has created an exceptional curriculum that makes technology accessible and useful for older adults,” Denison said. “Seniors enjoy the social component of learning with others and feel empowered in their ability to learn new skills.”

To date, Mirowitz Center has offered 13 Senior Planet programs attended by a total of 125 older adults. Larry Edison, a retired minister, is one of the center’s three outstanding trainers. He loves teaching tech and cherishes the “ah-ha” moments when someone finally gets it. “Seniors want to understand so badly and it is so satisfying when they do,” he said.

As someone used to running his own show, Edison had to adjust to a defined curriculum but grew to appreciate the high-quality materials and the Train-the-Trainer experience. “I love accountability and the fact that we had to take classes and exams and be certified. The handouts are very clear, and the students love them. I feel good to be part of a tried-and-true program that set me up for success.”

Denison appreciates the standardization that Senior Planet training offers. “It has given us a wealth of replicable curriculum and provides us with a library of materials that we draw from.”

The center had been fundraising for new technology devices since before it opened. Recently it received a grant to purchase 16 laptops and 2 new desktops. The timing was opportune as more and more people are coming in for Senior Planet classes, an increase driven in part by a great relationship with the local AARP State office.

“They help get the word out about Senior Planet programs,” Denison said. “Recently they mentioned Mirowitz Center in an email blast and within a couple hours, 9 new people had registered for Senior Planet classes.”

Seniors enjoy the social component of learning with others.