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NEWS

Pace Students Walk A Mile In Senior Citizen Shoes To Bridge Digital Divide

April 15, 2011 11:11 PM

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(credit: CBS 2)

NEW YORK (CBS 2) — A group of New York students are making themselves old for college credit.

The Pace University group is simulating the aches and pains of senior citizens in an attempt to help bridge the digital divide by heading to a local senior facility to show them the basics of today's technology.

The students attempt to see the world through aging eyes in a class that has them going through just a few of the physical challenges that most seniors face every day.

Over the course of seven weeks, many students will head to the Hallmark Assisted Living Facility and give residents some tech pointers on how to use everything from iPads to computers and cell phones.

The students stick with the basics by helping the seniors use a mouse. They show them techniques to use on touch screens, instruct them on how to check email and help them get past the fear of what is unknown to them.

But before they head out to start teaching, the students use a number of props to simulate conditions that many seniors deal with. Those techniques include using earplugs or cotton to recognize the difficulty of not being able to hear clearly.

Some even strap on leg weights to slow them down and wear bulky gloves to perform everyday tasks. Others have used popcorn kernels in their shoes to simulate the pain of aching feet.



Reporting Maurice DuBois

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Dr. Jean Coppola, Hallmark Assisted Living Facility, iPads, Pace University, Senior Citizen



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During the senior simulation, student complaints ranged from "the more I stand, the more it hurts" to "I can barely hear anything."

Dr. Jean Coppola, a Pace University professor, said the program is designed to make sure students know what types of limitations seniors have ahead of their teaching sessions with them.

"The bottom line is they are thoroughly prepared before they set foot in that nursing home, before they teach that older adult," Coppola said. "It opens a new world. It doesn't leave them behind. It let's them know what's going on out in the community, out in the country, out in the world."

The end goal is for students to be hands off, so the seniors can be hands on.



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## VIDEO NEWS

## 3 COMMENTS

**Jean F. Coppola**

Thanks Tina. These students are absolutely wonderful and I am very blessed for this section and my other class that goes to United Hebrew (New Rochelle). Just this past Monday, one of the students baked a cake for her older adult student that turned 97. Everyone sang happy birthday and the older adult was glowing the rest of the day! 😊 This is just one typical example of what happens. Our research has shown a statistically significant change in attitude towards and advocacy for older adults by the college students just during the time frame of this course. Students are progressively continuing to see and stay in contact with their older adult past the requirements of the course. 😊 win-win situation all around!

April 20, 2011 at 8:48 am | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

**kendra**

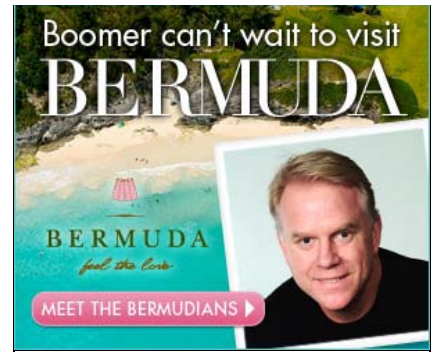
please...please dign these teenagers and younger generation up cause they have know kind of respect for any1 lwt alone a senior citizen until some1 desrespects there loved one,s then they start to relize it,s no a joke or a game to disrespect people older then you..

April 16, 2011 at 5:44 pm | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

**Tina**

What a great idea to help young people respect what older people live with and to help them connect. I am impressed by the students who choose this course. They must already have a certain level of empathy and compassion to be interested in their elders lives and the fact that they choose to understand more says something about their character. I take my hat off to them 😊

April 16, 2011 at 9:09 am | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)



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