



MONDAY, JANUARY 4TH, 2021



Happy New Year! While we all have hope that 2021 will move us quickly past the COVID-era, the reality is the next few months will still require a serious effort to keep our participants engaged and fulfilled. We've already heard that some Centers have no plans to open to the public until May at the earliest.

In a typical New Year's issue of Fun Facts, we highlight the most popular programs from the past year. In this atypical issue, we'll focus on virtual programs and examples of combining bricks-and-mortar with virtual.

As we've said before, your ability to adjust and care for your participants - no matter what the world throws at you - is truly inspiring!

Welcome to...Fun Facts - the *Let's Go Virtual* edition

Instructor at Home

Although we joke that Senior Centers are becoming television studios, inspiration can strike anywhere! We've seen great cooking classes streamed from home kitchens, walking clubs recorded with selfie sticks in the local mall, or like this yoga instructor in Southwick, MA recording [on her porch](#). This makes it fun and familiar.



Enjoy!

Come On In, The Water's Warm

Do you feel like your Center has become a television study? Or that you're a producer, or the hot new internet sensation? Well, you're not alone - and you're RIGHT! We've joked with many of you over the past few months about your newly found AV skills. Who knew that would be one of the requirements for this job? We've seen innovative online content recorded in the Center (or even in your homes): cooking classes, exercise programs, book groups, and more. All created with a sense of fun and passion. Take a look at the trend of virtual programs in 2020. This graph shows the number of programs by month across the Network.

Watching the Full Class

Here's a great example of a program at the O'Connor Center in Knoxville, TN showing not just a [familiar instructor but a group of participants as well](#). People like to see their friends! When it comes to creating your online material, the most successful programs prioritize personality over professionalism.



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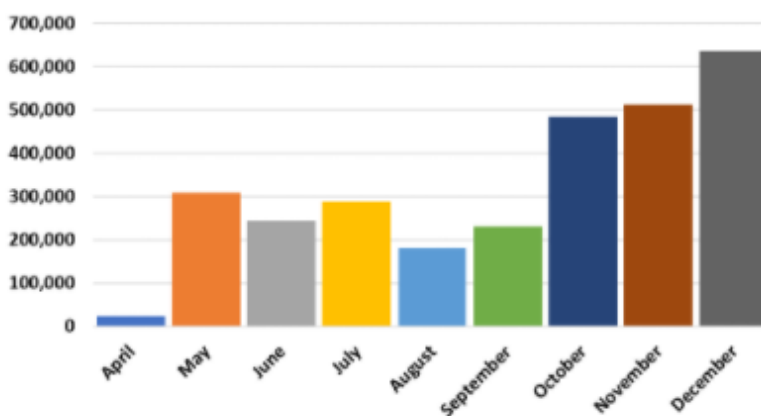


The Memes Will Continue!

We're glad that the memes have made you chuckle. We're taking a break from the COVID theme though and just sharing a few that made us laugh.



Virtual Programs by Month



As the weather started getting colder and gathering restrictions tightened, the number of programs offered online jumped. Almost without fail, the most popular classes were those that were recorded with a local instructor or showed participants from their local Center. People like seeing their friends, even if it's online. Here are some of the most popular classes from the past few months:

- Cooking
- General exercise/workout/active
- Cardio - line, Zumba, Jazzercise, aerobics
- Yoga - Gentle, chair
- Armchair travel
- Bingo!
- Ceramics
- Tai Chi
- Poetry writing and reading
- History
- Music classes - ukulele, guitar
- Painting, crafts, knitting
- Meditation
- Medicare discussion
- Self-care
- Conversations - open topic, book club
- Cards - bridge and poker
- Trivia
- Language lessons

And that's just a sampling!

Julia has two passions in life:
cannabis and horses



"You don't have to get dressed up for our Zoom meetings. But you do have to get dressed!"

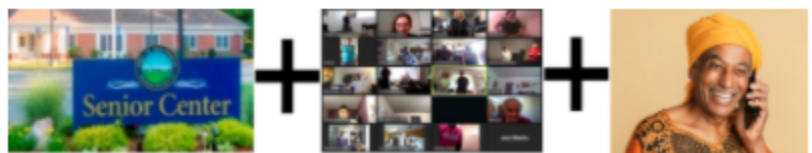
Texting FOR Seniors

- BFF** - best friend fell
- BTW** - bring the wheelchair
- TTYL** - talk to you louder
- BYOT** - bring your own teeth
- LMDO** - laughing my dentures out
- FWIW** - forgot where I was
- IMHAO** - is my hearing aid on?
- OMMR** - on my massage recliner
- ROFLACGU** - rolling on the floor laughing and can't get up

Bricks and Clicks

Just as retailers have adapted to changing consumer habits, Senior Centers have too. Whether the pandemic has forced a temporary need, or this is the beginning of the next Senior Center model, combining the bricks-and-mortar operation with a virtual offering is a critical component of engaging participants. Here are a few incredible examples of that combined approach:

- Tenafly, NY had a party last week to celebrate New Year's, which included a party bag of food and decorations that could be picked up at the Center, followed by a Zoom call at 5:00 pm with live entertainment and shared merriment. Here's a link to the [invite](#)
- The Mill Race Center in Columbus, IN is in the middle of a 100-mile challenge; encouraging their members to log their miles of walking, biking, swimming or whatever and drop off their sheets at the Center for a chance to win a prize. The prize is secondary, of course, to the sense of community that they're maintaining. Here's a link to the relevant section in their email [newsletter](#)
- Groton, CT organized a tour of houses decorated for the holidays. Home owners submitted their addresses, maps were created by Center staff and available for pick-up at the Center, and tours were self-guided from the safety of each participant's vehicle. That's an excellent low-tech example of an activity organized by the Center but occurring outside in a pandemic-friendly way.
- People Plus in Maine organized high schoolers to do some caroling for the their members in the Center's parking lot. It was all done [socially-distanced and with masks](#)
- Sudbury, MA organized a conference call recipe swap. We all get tired of making the same meals, and this was a great way to connect socially AND add something new to the weekly routine.



Important Tutorials

- [Voice Connect](#)
- [MyActiveCenter Overview](#)
- [Creating Event Series](#)
- [Accepting Online Payments](#)

Bill has created some tools to help you efficiently navigate MyTutorialCenter and even create custom lists for your staff. He calls them *Tutes Tools* and you can check those out [here](#).

If you'd like training on MySeniorCenter, either as a refresher or for new staff, just send an [email to our training team](#) or use the self-guided tutorial process [here](#). You'll need to create a login name but it's well worth it. There's some great stuff on there!



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Shoot The Poop

Conference calls have been a lifesaver for many people, especially those without computers or internet at home. Here are the most common themes and some of our favorite activity titles:

- Conference call Bingo
- Group calls - *Mad Hatters* was our favorite
- General gossip and catching up - *Shoot The Poop* was by FAR our favorite
- Trivial Pursuit
- Legal and medicare Q&A
- Book and movie reviews

We've launched a super simple conference line that provides a unique number for each Center and doesn't require participants to dial a code or password. Just dial the number and you're in. If you'd like more information on MySeniorCenter's conference calling service, [send us a note](#).

Thank you!

Next month's issue will be about the tools Centers are using to create, host and stream online content. We'll include information about cameras, tablets, cloud and streaming services. If you have any technology that you'd like to recommend, please [send us a note](#). We're also going to ask for your votes in the **annual logo contest**. We've received 50 new logos from across the Network in the past 12 months and look forward to highlighting your favorites.

Happy New Year!