

Pass It On®...

Building Human Connection in a Virtual World.

Aadi is a 2025 winner of the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, an annual award that honors public-spirited young people across the U.S. and Canada who are working to make a significant, positive impact on other people and the environment. Aadi pairs tech savvy young people with senior citizens in his community to foster intergenerational relationships that build connections to benefit both.

Technology has been the great divider in many communities. Innovations happened so fast that the old way of doing things just twenty years ago felt like a centuries-wide gap. Senior citizens were becoming sequestered because of the language and technology disparity. Daily banking, neighborhood communication, even shopping became more difficult for those who grew up relying on a checkbook and a postal address. Even entertainment became complicated with subscriptions and services. To some octogenarians, it felt like the planet was taken over by space aliens who speak a completely different language. And for the youth, they didn't know that missing from their life experience was a rich connection to the past.

During the pandemic, Young Aadi watched his grandmother struggle to join family Zoom calls, open attachments, and fill out online medical forms. It was about more than staying connected in an online world. Aadi realized an entire generation was struggling with diminishing dignity and confidence and becoming increasingly isolated. He also wanted his own generation to have the same type of respectful relationship he had with his grandmother. "What if," he thought. "Students like me, who grew up with technology, could help seniors like her feel less left behind?" So he founded TechPals.

Aadi began with a few friends and a handful of seniors at the local library. They taught the basics of smartphones. What he thought would be a few sessions blossomed into regularly scheduled events. Seniors brought their friends. Aadi recruited more friends. He coded a central website to manage volunteer sign-ups. Classes expanded to help seniors develop texting skills, use FaceTime and recognize online scams. To date Aadi and

TechPals have held over 150 hands-on workshops at libraries, senior centers, and retirement homes, as well as online training sessions. More than 5,000 seniors have benefitted. "At first, my peers saw TechPals as just another service project," Aadi says. "That changed the moment they watched a senior smile after sending their first text or joining a family call. They began to see how their knowledge could change lives in simple but powerful ways. The experience has made them more patient, empathetic, and confident leaders. TechPals didn't just teach seniors about technology—it taught students about humanity."

Digital literacy crosses the divide and makes sure every generation has access to the amazing new world technology has delivered to our living rooms. But nothing can replace the face-to-face relationships created when a seasoned grandmother connects with a young grandson and both are eager to learn from each other. "Working with older adults has taught me that true strength comes from persistence. They've shown me that learning is not limited by age but by mindset. Their resilience reminds me that progress means nothing unless it helps people feel seen, capable, and connected. When I am older, I hope to see technology guided by fairness and empathy: innovation that protects, empowers, and includes, not just advances for a few."

Connection...[PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

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