

Connectedly Sabbatical Year Report to Friends Foundation for the Aging October 2025

1. What problem were you addressing?

Connectedly addresses the lack of social connection and significant rates of loneliness among seniors in Philadelphia. Lack of social connection and loneliness are significant public health issues, and older people are especially vulnerable. Social isolation is a crisis that impacts our health as much as smoking, blood pressure, and obesity. The physical health consequences of poor or insufficient social connections include a 29% increased risk of heart disease, a 32% increased risk of stroke, and a 50% increased risk of developing dementia for older adults. Additionally, lacking social connections increases the risk of premature death by more than 60%. The health risks of isolation are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day!

2. What solution did you propose to address it?

Connectedly's Telehealth Services are a responsive web of services for older adults:

3. What actions did you take? What did you learn?

Connectedly provides telehealth support groups 50 weeks a year to isolated seniors in Philadelphia. We have expanded the scope of our Connect4Health pilot program as a referral source for our telehealth program. Connect4Health uses an integrated care approach linking “social care” with Penn Medicine and Jefferson Health. Older adults who are identified as high risk for social isolation, loneliness, and lack of social connection are being referred to our telehealth services for potential enrollment via Connect4Health.

Via a partnership with the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Nursing and School of Engineering Penn4C program, Homebound participants are being interviewed for an innovative approach to combating social isolation. In a multi-phase project, the objective is to develop an AI companion prototype for homebound older adults. The interdisciplinary team, in collaboration with Connectedly, is developing the AI companion with input from Homebound participants to determine the prototype's design and functionality.

4. How do you know your actions had an impact? Please describe those who participated, outputs, and outcomes. Stories or photos are welcome.

Connectedly is a data-driven organization with strong measures and data collection tools to track and analyze our impact. We conduct regular outcomes evaluations using quantitative and qualitative methods. Our Connectedly Survey measures key goals and program impact. The survey is conducted at intake for baseline data and yearly intervals. The survey includes a core component measuring outcomes common to all programs, including items adapted from the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale and the PHQ4 depression screen, and additional questions to measure outcomes relevant to specific programs. Connectedly’s unique model has a profound impact. In our most recent annual evaluation in 2025, we were provided the following data points regarding our telehealth program:

- 100% felt in their Connectedly group that they belong to a group of people who understand and accept them
- 100% of participants felt that they were not alone

- 100% felt they were helping others and having an important impact on their lives
- 100% feel comfortable asking for advice
- 80% feel that participating in a Connectedly group has helped them to feel more in control of their life.
- 80% felt participants in Connectedly telehealth groups help them deal with difficult situations
- 100% felt participating in a Connectedly group has helped them handle their stress
- 100% of participants felt their Connectedly group has made them more confident in their own abilities
- 100% participating in a Connectedly group has helped them reach out to others when they need help or support
- 100% found participating in a telehealth group helped them make adjustments in their lives

Number of telehealth participants: 25

Since our proposal, we transitioned all but one Healthy Lives group back to in-person at the request of our participants. We maintain one telephone group for Healthy Lives since those participants in that particular group did not want to return to in-person programming, preferring the convenience of the phone.

Demographics:

Race:

66% Black/African American

26% White

7% Latino

1% Multiracial

Gender:

100% women

Age:

% of Clients Age 50-59

7%

% of Clients Age 60-69

20%

% of Clients Age 70-79

40%

% of Clients Age 80+

33%

Living Status:

67% live alone

Require medical/mobility device, such as oxygen, wheelchair, or walker:

56%

Responses from participants:

"I think everyone has some ideas that would be useful to other people. I like to share information I have with others when it's relevant. Connectedly's facilitator is good at suggesting other ways to deal with a problem. Sometimes I get focused and feel like there is only one solution. It's helpful to hear other ideas." *Jane, aged 78

"There are open discussions regarding stress as experienced by members of the group, how the stress was managed and the outcomes. The discussions are confidential, advice is given freely, stressors are discussed openly due to the group's confidentiality statement. So far it's been true." *Loretta, aged 75

"I have been in the group for a while, and I have come a long way. At one time I wasn't handling my stress well and I was having a lot of negative thoughts. I felt better being able to talk to the group about what I was going through. Talking and listening helped me think more positively. I look forward to talking to the ladies--it helps me." *Rebecca, aged 78

"I usually don't share my personal business with many people. In my Connectedly group I feel confident. I share things I encounter in my life. I feel good about it. Everyone is very understanding. I appreciate that." *Dionne, aged 76

"Everyone is very helpful. They listen and give you feedback. People suggest things you COULD do...not just "Do this". If you sound down, people notice and ask about it and give support for whatever you are dealing with. It's a diverse group so people have different experiences and feelings which is helpful. We remind each other that you have to take care of yourself before you can take care of others." *Devita, aged 80

*Names changed to ensure anonymity

5. Is there anything else you would like FFA to know about this project?

Our clinical social worker would like to share her thoughts on the Telehealth project with FFA: "I feel honored to have the opportunity to work with the women, who are inspiring. I hear them say, 'Oh, this is my Thursday family call, I have to get on the phone.' Frequently, they will say that participating in the Connectedly group is the highlight of their week. They talk about learning new resources and communication ideas and feel heard in the group. Encouragement without condescension is always offered. Once, a participant told everyone who knew her not to bother her during her hour on the phone. Appreciating each other and oneself throughout the group meetings provides powerful social connections. It is so appealing, there are no barriers to joining the groups as women only need a phone line to participate."

6. Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful.

FFA is quick to respond to any questions regarding reporting made by Connectedly.

7. Include a simple program budget/actual with income and expenses (eg. staff, program supplies, travel, etc)

See attached program budget/actual with income and expenses. The final numbers tie out on this report because we allocated unrestricted dollars to close the gap. We received \$112,102 in funding designated for this project and expenses exceeded it by \$20,229. The Woman's Way grant was for \$50,000 in unrestricted funds and we allocated 20,000 to this project. From the total individual contributions received, we had budgeted \$7500 to go to this project and increased the allocation to \$7729 to close the gap.

CONNECTEDLY Telehealth Groups

		Jul 2024-Jun 2025	
		Budget	Actuals
1	REVENUE		
2	Contracts		
3	PA Long Term Care Options	7,000	2,520
4	PCA Subsidized Housing	18,000	19,430
5	Penn Community Collaboratory for Co-Creation	-	4,250
6		25,000	21,950
7	Grants		
8	Erichson Charitable Trust	12,500	8,000
9	Friends Foundation for Aging (this grant)	25,000	15,000
10	Penn Nursing Collaborative	17,000	
11	Scattergood Foundation		10,000
12	The Sarah Ralston Foundation	57,000	57,152
13	Women's Way		20,000
14		111,500	110,152
15	Other Revenue		
16	Investment Income	-	-
17	Individual & Board Contributions	7,500	7,729
18	Revenue Other	-	-
19		7,500	7,729
20	TOTAL REVENUE	144,000	139,831
21	EXPENSE		
22	Salaries and Benefits/Taxes		
23	Salaries	102,275	102,122
24	Benefits/Taxes	18,334	18,306
25		120,609	120,428
26	Contract Services		
27	Accounting and Audit	2,138	2,138
28	Benefits & Payroll Admin	551	573
29	IT Systems/Computer Mangmnt	3,610	3,240
30	Prof. Svcs (Consultants, Data Analyst)	4,050	300
31		10,349	6,251
32	Other Expense		
33	Program Expenses	-	-
34	Program Incentives	800	865
35	Client Assistance	-	-
36	Meeting Expenses	-	-
37	Transportation	600	266
38	Conferences	300	-
39	Dues, Fees, Subscriptions	361	284
40	Marketing / Communications	-	293
41	Photocopy/Postage/Printing	-	-
42	Office Supplies	437	437
43	Equipment	-	-
44	Telephone / Internet	950	962
45	Rent	8,265	8,522
46	Insurance	1,330	1,524
47	Bank / Finance Fees	-	-
48	Depreciation	-	-
49		13,043	13,152
50	TOTAL EXPENSE	144,000	139,831
51	NET	-	-