

Seniors turning to social media coaches

By Anita Creamer, Sacramento Bee

Jim Patterson needed help. His granddaughter had tagged him in a photo of the two of them that she posted on his Facebook account, and he didn't know what to do. So the 92-year-old retired carpenter, who lives in a Placerville retirement community, checked in with a social networking coach.

"If you'll just scroll down," said Blair Gregorvich, a Visiting Angels caregiver who has given computer skills classes to older adults in El Dorado County. "Now click on 'Write a comment,' and we'll add one."

"I never put any comments in, because I forget how to work it," said Patterson.

Patterson was seated at the desktop computer in the corner of his living room, with Gregorvich peering over his shoulder while he typed in a few words.

"Now hit 'Enter'," said Gregorvich.

"That's what I forget all the time," said Patterson.

A growing list of the region's seniors centers and church groups offer computer classes so older adults can learn to log on to the Internet, set up email accounts, research genealogy and even sign up for Facebook or use Skype to converse with faraway relatives. But what happens when seniors go home and sit down in front of their own computers, alone?

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