

# **Technology, Access and Support for Seniors (TASS)**

Communication : C 1  
Older Adult Task Force  
November 29, 2021  
Agenda Item # 4

## **Developing Age Friendly Communities and Role of Technology**

**Presented to Older Adult Task Force, City of Vaughan**

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With support from Seniors Cluster Table (York Region and United Way Greater Toronto),  
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# TASS – Technology, Access and Support for Seniors

- TASS offers **senior-friendly** and **customized technology, access** and **support** to seniors and senior-serving organizations across Ontario
- Initially designed as an antidote to COVID to keep seniors connected, informed, active and healthy at Human Endeavour
- TASS quickly became a collaborative project with the help of Seniors Cluster Table, led by York Region and United Way Greater Toronto and supported by many non-profits
- Human Endeavour is the backbone technology and support organization

# Technology Challenges for Seniors and Senior-serving Sector

- Lack of digital literacy
- Affordability by seniors
- Migration of seniors to online environment
- Developing scalable and replicable model
- Cost effective
- Tight time frame

# TASS – Senior-Friendly Customized Solution

## Integrated & Simplified Technology

- Tablets (simplified, automated, pre-programmed)
- Internet (built in data, 12 Giga Byte/month)
- Safety & data control (blocked unsafe sites)
- Remote access and support

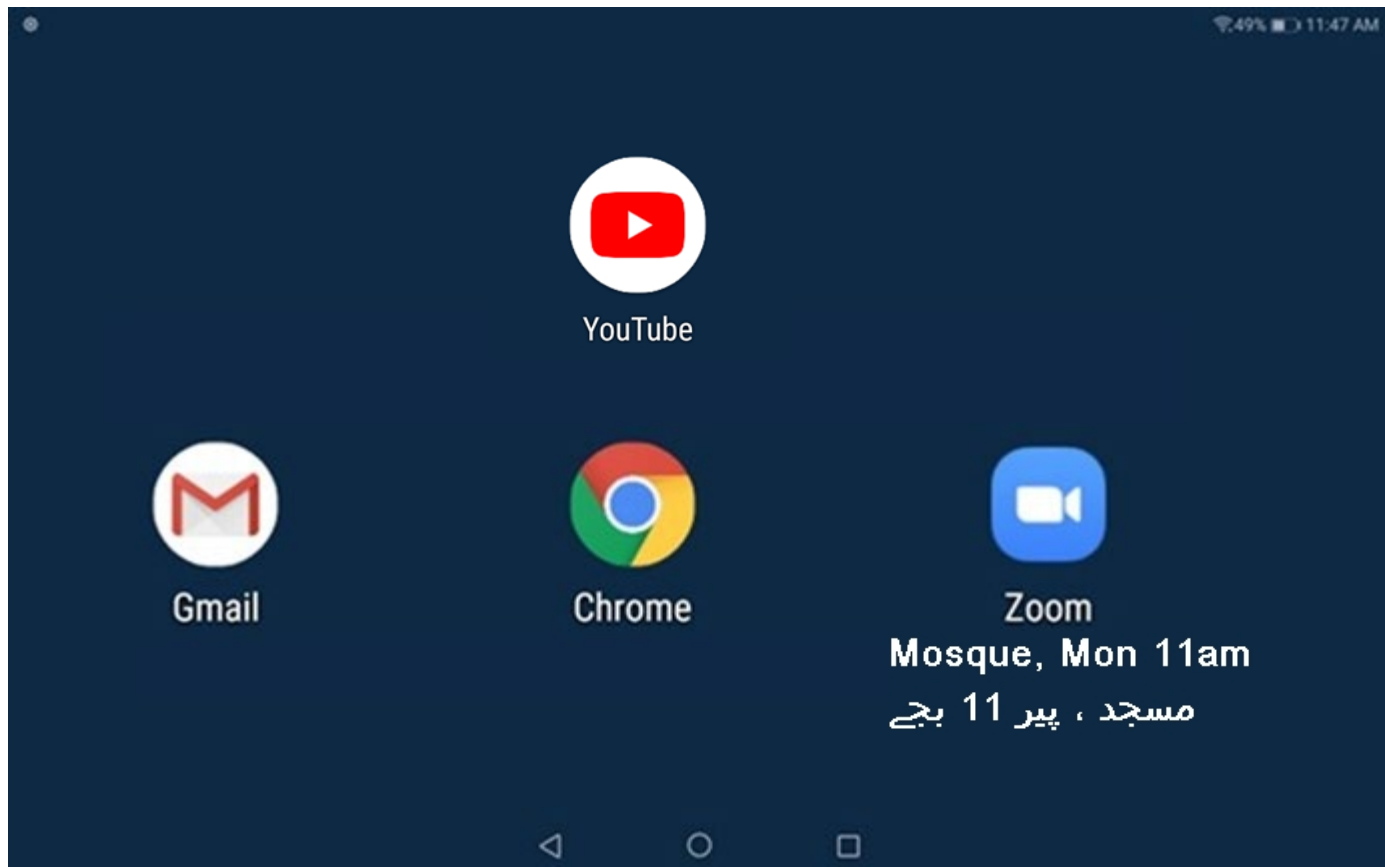
## Access

- Provided **free** tablets, data & technical support services

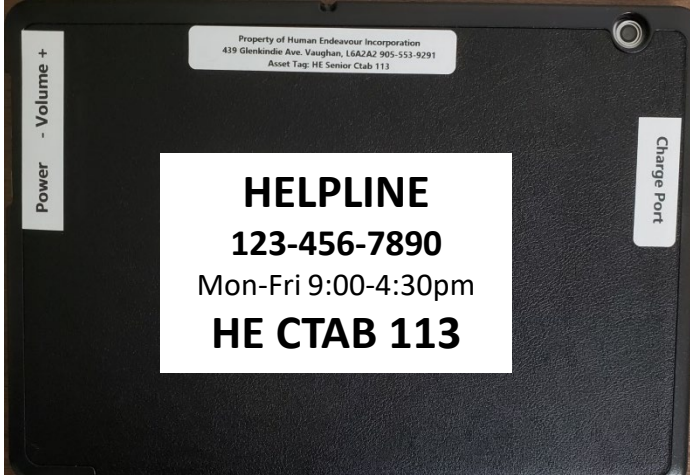
## Technical Support

- Multilingual Helpline for training, technical help, building confidence, and improving technology experience
- Simple graphical documentation

# Example: Main Screen



# Tablet Views



# Making a Broader Impact

- 640+ tablets, 30+ collaborating organizations
- Offering tech support to 850+ TASS seniors
- Offering monthly tech capacity-building workshops (4000+ seniors from 160+ organizations benefited)
- Helpline/Call centre handles 900-1000+ calls/interactions from Ontario

# Making a Broader Impact

- Designed **Accessible Tablets** for seniors who are blind/deaf
  - Ray's testimony: <https://youtu.be/JxmaQrKpnU8> 6:17 (min:sec)
  - Catherine's testimony: <https://youtu.be/ilzDrm3nmIY> 6:38 (min:sec)
- Designing tablets for seniors with early Alzheimer's and Dementia, Parkinson or Multiple Sclerosis
- Proposing a five year technology roadmap for seniors
- Setup Provincial Technology Advisory Committee
- York University is completing research on TASS, next are some findings



# Technology as a Social Determinant of Health

- 86% seniors agreed that TASS helped to maintain physical and emotional health
- 85% seniors agreed that TASS helped to maintain social connections
- 93% required initial training from the TASS helpline
- Without a TASS tablet, 67% seniors would not have joined online programs, 28% would have joined with difficulty, only 6% would have joined without any difficulty
- 75% seniors want in-person & online environment post-COVID
- Digital literacy and technology has significantly reduced several risks and barriers for seniors and organizations. e.g. COVID risk, transport, weather, cost, frailty etc.

# TASS Technology Road Map (2020-2025)

## Developed

1. TASS Project: Technology, Access and Support for Seniors
2. TASS Accessible Project: Technology for blind/deaf seniors
3. TASS Sector's Technical Capacity Building Project

## In development

1. TASS Technology for early Alzheimer's and Dementia, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's disease
2. TASS Technology for Long Term Care / Nursing Home Facilities

## Future development

1. TASS and non-TASS Devices Integration Project
2. TASS Technology for Monitoring/Managing Vital Signs and Chronic Diseases
3. TASS Technology to Build Smart Homes, Buildings, Communities, and Cities for Seniors

# Recommendations

City of Vaughan's Older Adult Strategy should:

- **Recognize** technology as a social determinant of health
- **Collaborate** to provide technology, access and support to vulnerable seniors to keep them safe, informed, active and healthy
- **Mandate** technology in future infrastructures to design age friendly communities
- All of the above will complement OATF's mandate: "to help seniors age actively, age in place, live safely, be engaged and enjoy good health." [https://www.vaughan.ca/council/task\\_forces/Pages/Older-Adult.aspx](https://www.vaughan.ca/council/task_forces/Pages/Older-Adult.aspx)

# Q & A

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# Appendix: A

**TASS Technology Road Map (2020-2025)**  
**Current and past Funders**

# TASS Technology Road Map (2020-2025)

- Based on our 15-year experience of working with diverse seniors, discussion with partner organizations, recent research, and learning from the pandemic, we are proposing the following technology roadmap:
- **TASS Project:** In-home senior-friendly technology, access and technical support
- **Focus:** *Keep seniors safe, connected, active and healthy during the pandemic*
- **Status:** Designed, implemented, and operating since May 2020-ongoing
- **TASS Accessible Project:** In-home accessible technology for blind/deaf seniors.
- **Focus:** *Enable blind/deaf seniors to be productive, engaged, and active in daily life activities*
- **Status:** Designed, implemented, and Active. 2021-ongoing
- **TASS Technical Capacity Building Project:**
- **Focus:** *Build capacity of organizations, management, and front-line staff on the use of technology during the pandemic. Provide one-on-one technical support to organizations.*
- **Status:** Designed, implemented, and operating. 2020-ongoing
- **Integrate TASS and non-TASS Devices Project:**
- **Focus:** *Provide technical support to seniors and organizations not using TASS technology/tablets*
- **Status:** TBD

# TASS Technology Road Map (2020-2025)

- **TASS Technology for early Alzheimer's and Dementia, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's disease**
- **Focus:** *In-home technology, auto-monitoring of Activities of Daily Living (ADL), assisting in ADLs (e.g., reminders), and continuously generating health and wellbeing status for caregivers/service providers*
- **Status:** In development. Design and Implementation in mid-2022
  
- **TASS Technology for Long Term Care / Nursing Home Facilities**
- **Focus:** *Auto-monitoring of various aspects of seniors' daily living and personal conditions to preserve the quality of life of frail seniors and help staff to provide efficient and timely care*
- **Status:** In development. Design and Implementation in late 2022-2023
  
- **TASS Technology for Monitoring of Vital Signs and Chronic Diseases**
- **Focus:** *In-Home (can be scaled for groups) to monitor chronic diseases and generate continuous health status indicators, generate necessary triggers for caregivers and/or paramedics to take immediate action to avoid hospitalization and extreme fluctuations in health*
- **Status:** TBD
  
- **TASS Technology to Build Smart Homes, Buildings, Communities, and Cities for Seniors**
- **Focus:** *The use of the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Machine Learning (ML) will set up an infrastructure in a smart city that can improve accessibility to a wide range of daily services for the seniors and ensure their independence as well as inclusion.*
- **Status:** TBD

# Funding for the Project

## Current:

- United Way Greater Toronto to develop solutions and collaborate with GTA organizations
- York Region to deliver solutions to local residents
- Spirit of Generosity Gala (City of Vaughan/Mayor of Vaughan)

## Past:

- Government of Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program
- Government of Ontario
- United Way Greater Toronto
- York Region