



Fellowship Square

400+ Google Nest Devices Donated to Three Local Affordable Housing Communities Help Address Digital Inequity Issues Among Older Adults

Older adults at Fellowship Square's senior affordable housing communities in Reston, Woodbridge and Upper Marlboro are benefitting from a national initiative from LeadingAge and Volara to bring voice activated, content-rich video devices to seniors.

March 24, 2022 – Reston, Va. – Seniors at Hunters Woods Fellowship House (Reston, Va), Lake Ridge Fellowship House (Woodbridge, Va) and Largo Landing Fellowship House (Upper Marlboro, Md) will soon have access to video calling and voice assistant functions to facilitate daily tasks and help residents connect with friends and loved ones. The generous donation of 428 Google Nest Hub Max devices to the senior affordable housing communities is made possible by the aging services advocacy association, LeadingAge, and senior living voice assistant technology company, Volara. The organizations and their partners are working together to provide the Google Next Hub Max devices to 9,000 residents across more than 300 senior living communities in the U.S. and U.K. as part of an initiative to help seniors maintain connection and avoid isolation.

“Technology’s potential to positively impact older adults’ lives and well-being is broad and deep,” LeadingAge President and CEO Katie Smith Sloan said. LeadingAge’s Center for Aging Services Technology partners with vendors, researchers, and providers to expedite the use of emerging technology to improve the aging experience. “We must ensure older adults have access to internet service and devices so they can take advantage of the telehealth revolution and protect themselves from the ravages of social isolation.” LeadingAge was provided a supply of the Google Nest devices by Volara, and selected Fellowship Square as one of its recipients.

“The ability to bring Google Nest technology into our residents’ apartments will go a long way towards enabling connections and facilitating daily life. Our residents live on a limited fixed income that averages \$10,000/year. Most do not use a smartphone, and many are overwhelmed by today’s technology. This voice-assisted, simple to use device can be transformative in the lives of our residents, giving them easier access to their community, but also to music, sports scores, weather, and a broad range of entertainment and content just a voice command away. Importantly, this helps address the digital inequity and affordability issues that many residents of affordable housing communities face,” said Christy Zeitz, CEO of Fellowship Square.

Devices were given out this week at the Lake Ridge (Woodbridge, Va) and Largo Landing (Upper Marlboro, Md) Fellowship Houses and will be distributed at the Hunters Woods Fellowship House (Reston, Va) when the ongoing [renovation](#) there is completed later this year. The donation to Fellowship Square includes the device, set up support from Volara, and a three year subscription for [Google for Senior Living](#). Fellowship Square is providing free building-wide Wi-Fi for all residents for the Google Nest as well as for any other device they may have.

The Google Nest Hub Max device has touchscreen displays, video calling, support for eight languages, and a hearing-impaired mode, among many other features. Volara has provided instructions specifically developed for older users and trained Fellowship House staff on the devices so that they can provide assistance onsite. As part of the sign-up process, Volara has pre-programmed each Google Nest Hub Max with personal contacts as directed by each resident. Residents can immediately use voice commands to make video calls, enabling seniors to communicate with their children, grandchildren, and friends face-to-face via video call just by uttering a simple voice command. Importantly, the device’s ability to respond to voice commands means that someone with limited vision, reduced finger dexterity or mobility issues can easily use it.

"I'm really enjoying it. I'm enjoying the music, I'm able to play all kinds of music from the 1940s & 1950s. I love getting the weather from it. Honestly, I even asked it a joke. It's so fun. I'm enjoying it. Thank you to everyone who provided this to us!"

- Bette Walsh, 80, Lake Ridge Fellowship House

"I love it. I don't have to get off the couch to do so much with it, so it's really handy for me. I appreciate you all for making this happen, truly I do! The Wi-Fi and Google Hub just might be one of the best things we've received, at least for me it is."

- James Williams, 73, Lake Ridge Fellowship House

"Providing this to residents like me has been so helpful. I'm enjoying video chatting with my daughter who lives far away. I can talk and see her at the same time! And, I'm loving the music that I can listen to."

- Shirley Weston, 78, Largo Landing Fellowship House

"I've only just gotten it and I'm already using it for music, weather, YouTube and movies. I was able to learn how to use it quickly, so now I can help others."

- Julia Robinson-Thomas, 80, Lake Ridge Fellowship House

The donation to Fellowship House – and [larger donation initiative across the U.S. and U.K.](#) – was made possible through a collaborative effort across Volara, LeadingAge and aligned organizations including the Lighthouse for Older Adults project and Google.

About Fellowship Square

[Fellowship Square](#), a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is one of the leading local providers of affordable housing and services to low-income seniors, operating 670 units in the metro region and serving over 800 residents. The organization has contracts with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to subsidize housing expenses associated with caring for our aging population, ensuring that the rental cost is never more than 30% of a resident's annual income and making our homes some of the most affordable in the region. Through professionally managed apartment communities, programming, and services, Fellowship Square maintains the respect and dignity of its clients by ensuring that residents have the support they need to live independent and fulfilling lives even in the face of serious obstacles, such as the high costs of housing and health care in the greater Washington, DC area. For more information on Fellowship Square, visit fellowshipsquare.org, call 703.860.2536 or email info@fellowshipsquare.org.

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Residents at Lake Ridge Fellowship House in Woodbridge were introduced to video calling and voice assisted functions, following a donation of Google Nest devices to the nonprofit senior affordable housing community to help seniors maintain connection and avoid isolation. The device's ability to respond to voice commands means that elderly residents with limited vision, reduced finger dexterity or mobility issues can easily use it to communicate with family and friends, access music, weather, and a broad range of content just by uttering a simple voice command.



Residents at the Largo Landing Fellowship House in Upper Malboro were introduced to video calling and voice assisted functions, following a donation of Google Nest devices to the nonprofit senior affordable housing community to help seniors maintain connection and avoid isolation. The device's ability to respond to voice commands means that elderly residents with limited vision, reduced finger dexterity or mobility issues can easily use it to communicate with family and friends, access music, weather, and a broad range of content just by uttering a simple voice command.