

VERMONT

United Way volunteer of the week: Emily Moynihan

DONNA IVERSON

Do you wish you had someone to sit down with you one-on-one to answer your computer questions? If you are a senior you can sign up with Emily Moynihan, a computer tutor at Brownell Library in Essex Junction where she works as a volunteer for the Champlain Valley Agency on Aging. We asked her a few questions about her volunteer work.

How did you get interested in working with seniors? One of the reasons I was interested in working with seniors, and particularly helping them with computers, is that I have seen my grandmother who lives in Oregon struggle with computers. Several years ago, the family got her set up with email but she is frequently confused using it. Unfortunately, she doesn't really have someone who will sit down with her and help her. I thought, 'if only I could do that.' So when the opportunity came for me

to work locally answering seniors' computer questions, I was thrilled.

What is your educational background? I have a bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame. I majored in film, television and theater with a supplementary major in computer applications and a minor in theology. I then went to the Center for Digital Imaging Arts at Boston University to get a certificate in 3D animation.

How easily do seniors adapt to computer use? How easily seniors adapt to computers really varies from one person to the next. I have seniors come to me who have been using computers for years and have very specific, more advanced questions. Then I have seniors who have never used a mouse. I think one of the main factors in how easily they adapt is how often they're using a computer and whether they have someone to get them 'unstuck' when they run into problems. Most seniors I work with pick up on the concepts and the functionality fairly quickly. Additional-

ly, 90 percent of the seniors I work with say that their kids/grandkids/husbands know all about computers but get very frustrated answering their questions.



Emily Moynihan

So they really don't have a good resource at home.

How do computers figure into your life? I own a digital media and 3D studio, so the work I do is completely on computers. I use computers to create visualizations that help my clients better express their ideas.

What are your other interests? I love to sing (I

sing and play flute in the St. Francis Xavier choir in Winooski), watch movies and TV shows, knit and crochet (have been part of groups that crochet lap blankets for seniors, prayer shawls for those in the hospital and currently make shawls for breast cancer patients).

Emily Moynihan grew up in New Hampshire and

lives in Williston with her husband and their pets. She has been volunteering for the Champlain Valley Agency on Aging as a computer tutor at Brownell Library in Essex for three years.

Donna Iverson is a United Way of Chittenden County volunteer columnist