

# Deborah Cunningham - Computer Learning Center Opens Doors

by Karen McKeehan



Highlights from the successful aging journey of someone from the Fairhill campus. Someone adapting to change, enjoying relationships, and living life with purpose and joy! Know someone who fits the bill? Email Lydia at [lbohm@fairhillcenter.org](mailto:lbohm@fairhillcenter.org) with your favorite successful ager.

“Clothes, recipes, shopping, patterns for knitting and sewing, news, medical information – you can find it all on the Internet, and everybody should know how to use it,” said CLC coach Deborah Cunningham.

Deborah worked on United Airlines computers in the 1970s and 1980s, but didn’t know anything about personal computers until the late 1990s. When she got her first computer, she didn’t use it much because she didn’t know about high-speed Internet. She took a Fairhill CLC class a couple of years ago, and she liked it so much she took another class.

“I came to classes, and I could go home and do the same things I did in class, and it was fun,” she said. “The more I learned, the more I wanted to learn.” But Deborah didn’t stop there. When she started Fairhill’s Tech for Successful Aging class last year, she found out that Fairhill was encouraging students to become coaches.

“I can do a basic beginning class to help someone else,” Deborah said, explaining that she knew first-hand how arthritic fingers can have trouble double-clicking with the mouse. She began coaching a beginning class while she was a student in Tech for Successful Aging and said, “Their enthusiasm made me want to do more.” She currently is coaching Introduction to Your Computer, an intermediate class which covers common computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, database and the Internet.

Deborah frequently accesses news sites, comments on the articles she reads, and shares them with others. In addition, she uses medical sites to research information. When her father had physical problems, she used the Internet to find out what his doctors were talking about, and learned how to talk to them. She also noted the Internet is useful for looking up infomercial products to see what people who bought the products think about them, for searching for her hard-to-find shoe size, and for following up on TV stories which end with, “See our web site.”

The computer has opened other avenues for Deborah as well. She now has a part-time job, working 15 hours a week from home. “I never thought I’d be able to work from home using my computer,” she said.

Fairhill Partners has a variety of computer classes designed for older adults: Beginner classes for people who don’t know how to use a mouse, common computer applications such as Word and Excel, digital photography, and specialized classes like buying and selling on eBay. For more information or to register, see the Computer Learning section of this newsletter or contact Tom Cerjak at 216-421-1350, extension 125 or [tcerjak@fairhillcenter.org](mailto:tcerjak@fairhillcenter.org).