

www.cyberseniorsdocumentary.com

Connecting Generations

Cyber-Seniors™

A feature documentary by Saffron Cassaday

RT: 75 mins



THE BEST PART Inc.



SYNOPSIS



SHORT SYNOPSIS

A humorous and heartwarming documentary feature, which chronicles the extraordinary journey of a group of colorful senior citizens, as they discover the world of the Internet, through the guidance of teenage mentors.

MEDIUM SYNOPSIS

A humorous and heartwarming documentary feature, which chronicles the extraordinary journey of a group of colorful senior citizens, as they discover the world of the Internet, through the guidance of teenage mentors. Their exploration of cyber-space is catapulted to another level when 89 year-old Shura decides to create a YouTube cooking video. A spirited video competition for the most "views" evolves as the cyber-seniors' hidden talents and competitive spirits are revealed. CYBER-SENIORS provides insight into the wonderful things that can happen when generation gaps are bridged, proving you are never too old to get 'connected'.

LONG SYNOPSIS

A humorous and heartwarming documentary feature, which chronicles the extraordinary journey of a group of colorful senior citizens, as they discover the world of the Internet, through the guidance of teenage mentors. Their exploration of cyber-space is catapulted to another level when 89 year-old Shura decides to create a YouTube cooking video. A spirited video competition for the most "views" evolves as the cyber-seniors' hidden talents and

competitive spirits are revealed. CYBER-SENIORS provides insight into the wonderful things that can happen when generation gaps are bridged, proving you are never too old to get 'connected'.

The Cyber-Seniors program was started by two teenage sisters. They came up with the idea after witnessing how cyber-communication had transformed their grandparents' lives and brought them closer to their grandchildren. When one of the sisters is diagnosed with cancer at the same time as her grandfather, we witness how the Internet becomes a lifeline for the family to stay connected and support one another.

The film offers a heartwarming, candid, and at times humorous look at the victories and challenges seniors face as they dive into the digital world. Cyber-Seniors is an inspiring example of the wonderful things that can happen when generation gaps are bridged, and new ways of connecting are explored.

Inspired by
Dan and Verna Rusnak
Kascha and Macaulee Cassaday



Production Notes



The idea for the Cyber-Seniors documentary came from a high school project that was launched by two sisters, Macaulee (16) and Kascha Cassaday (18) in 2009. The sisters had witnessed first hand how learning to use the Internet had transformed their grandparents' lives. After learning some basic skills, their grandparents were in touch several times a week by email, Facebook and Skype. The Internet was instrumental in keeping their family connected despite busy schedules and living in different cities. Inspired by this realization, the sisters started the Cyber-Seniors program to help other seniors get online.

her business. After a successful first year, Brenda helped continue the Cyber-Seniors program, expanding it to a second retirement home and helping to engage more youth mentors. Over the next ten months, Saffron and her film crew captured over 120 hours of footage and many memorable moments.

To everyone's disbelief, Macaulee and her grandfather were both diagnosed with cancer during production. During this challenging time, the Internet became an ever-important lifeline for the family. Macaulee and her grandfather grew even closer while undergoing cancer treatment, sometimes even Skyping during chemotherapy sessions.

The Cyber-Seniors documentary is not only a labour of love – but an inspiring example of the wonderful things that can happen when generation gaps are bridged, and new ways of connecting are explored.

Saffron hopes that her film will inspire more seniors to get online, and that the Cyber-Seniors program will expand across North America.



Macaulee (top), Kascha

They developed a training manual and recruited their friends to visit a local retirement home twice a week to teach interested seniors how to use the Internet. The seniors all had different interests. Some were eager to get onto Facebook to see photos of their grandkids, while others wanted to play online games, and everyone wanted to use email.

The program had many unexpected and exciting offshoots, including the creation of Cyber-Seniors Corner, a YouTube Channel where student-senior teams were encouraged to upload a short video featuring a senior sharing their wisdom or humour.

Director Saffron Cassaday, Macaulee and Kascha's older sister, began filming some of the early Cyber-Senior sessions and started to see a story emerge.

The sisters had the support of their mom, Brenda Rusnak, who had worked her entire career with seniors, and had recently sold

About the Film Makers



Saffron Cassaday
Director / Editor

Born and raised in Toronto, Saffron Cassaday has always been drawn to the creative arts and studied dance and music from an early age. She attended the prestigious Lee Strasberg

Theatre and Film Institute in New York

City whose alumni include Robert De Niro, Scarlet Johansson, and Angelina Jolie.

Upon returning to Toronto, Saffron signed with an agent and soon after landed her first acting gig, a guest role on the W Network sitcom, *The Smart Woman's Survival Guide*. Since then, she has been studying Psychology at York University while developing her craft both in front of and behind the camera. Most recently, Saffron had a starring role in the award-winning web series *Pete Winning and the Pirates*. She is also a core member of Nocturnal Emissions Comedy, a Toronto-based sketch comedy troupe. Saffron was the editor and had the leading female role in the Global TV series, *In the Key of Z*, which she co-produced with Nocturnal Emissions.

When her younger sisters started the Cyber-Seniors program, Saffron started to film some of the sessions and immediately began to see a fascinating story emerge.

With post-production of Cyber-Seniors now complete, she is currently researching her next project, a coming-of-age documentary about Generation Y.



Brenda Rusnak
Producer

Brenda Rusnak is an entrepreneur with 30 years of business experience. She is the founder and president of Best Part Productions Inc.

A physiotherapist by profession, Brenda has worked most of her professional career as an entrepreneur providing rehabilitation solutions for senior citizens. In 2000, Brenda was awarded the Canadian Healthcare Manager's Who's Who in Healthcare Technology Award. The award is presented to winners in the areas of government, group insurance, healthcare provider, hospital management, medical research, pharmaceutical, plan sponsor and technology, and is designed to recognize individuals who demonstrate an exceptional level of leadership and vision, and whose unique approach has made a positive impact in their field.

In 2009 she sold her healthcare company, which she had grown to 30 ml in revenues, to pursue her interest in film production. She has since partnered with several experienced and talented financiers, researchers, filmmakers, and field experts to create and produce compelling films.



Gail Singer
Story Consultant

Best known for her 1991 feature documentary on female comics, *Wisecracks*, Singer has written and directed in film for over 20 years. She has done everything from co-directing a giant

screen IMAX, *Destiny in Space*, *Blue*

Planet, with the Smithsonian Institute to making her own fiction movie, *True Confections* (1991) as well as writing and directing dozens of documentaries.

Singer's films have taken her to several continents and have been seen in festivals and on television throughout the world. She has been honoured at home and abroad including in the U.S., Great Britain, France, Switzerland and Japan, where a book on the impact of her film *Abortion, Stories from North and South* (1985) was published.

Her subject matter ranges from comedy to challenging social and political documentaries such as *Loved, Honoured and Bruised* (1980), which explores one woman's story of leaving a marriage of physical and mental abuse. Her body of work traces turbulent social movements of the twentieth century, displaying the events with compassion, irony and wit.



Meet the Cyber-Seniors

Annette, 77



Shura, 88



Ebert, 87



Ellard, 89



Marion, 93



Barbara, 90

Meet the Mentors

Henri, 17



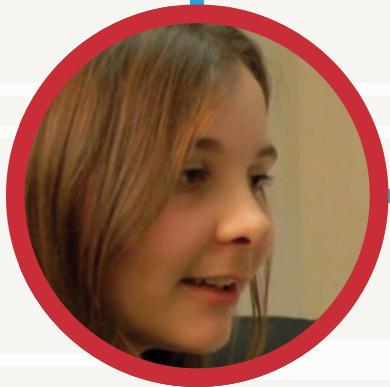
Julia, 16



Shayna, 19



Max, 20



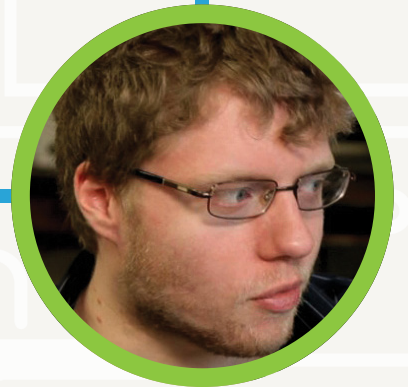
Anastasia, 16



Mark, 16



Hannia, 15



Roger, 19

Credits

Directed by
SAFFRON CASSADAY

Produced by
BRENDA RUSNAK

Inspired by
DAN AND VERA RUSNAK
KASCHA AND MACAULEE CASSADAY

Starring Cyber-Seniors

SHURA EADIE
ELLARD YEO
ANNETTE RAPOPORT
EBERT HOBBS
MARION KIDDELL
LYDIA MULLER
JOAN NIX
BARBARA FERGUSON
EVELYN COTTON
RUTH AND KEN EVANS
MILLIE BLACKBURN
JOHN MCCULLOCH
PETRA ARENTZ
FRANCES JERRY
MARY BARRETT
BETTY COLETTI
GRACE HILDRETH

Featuring Young Mentors

MAX SCHELLENBERG
HENRI PELLETIER
SHAYNA DWOR
ANASTASYA IONAS
JULIA MARROCCO
MARK UMANEC
HANNA CHENG
COURNTEY HOGAN

KATE BABKOVA
ROGER VESTERGAARD
DAVID HOSTETTER
RAYMOND MENDELOVITS
BECK CONLIN
HERSHEL BLATT
JAMES WU
CHRIS ZENTI
LIAM FEINMAN
ROLANDOS GEORGIOULIS

Opening Piano Performance by
RORY RUSNAK

Narrated by
SAFFRON CASSADAY

Cyber-Seniors Competition Hosted by
LIBBY ZNAIMER

Editor
SAFFRON CASSADAY

Additional Editors
PETRA VALIER
STEVE LAHEY

Assistant Editor
PETER KOPCHEK

Story Consultant
GAIL SINGER

Production Assistant
PETER KOPCHEK

Director of Photography
KIERAN HEILBRON

Additional Videographers
SAFFRON CASSADAY
LUKE MCCUTCHEON
ADRIAN SMITH

Composer
MIHO HUNGO

Musicians
ALI RANEY
JOEL SCHWARTZ
ROLEY PLATT

Location Sound
TORONTO SOUND
ADAM CLARK
MATT DAILEY
PEDRO PERES
MATTHEW SHOALTS
JAMES YOUNG
MAX VLASSENKO

Post-Production Supervisor
CAMERON TINGLEY

Online Editor
STEVE LAHEY

Colourist
WARREN CHINN

Sound Editor
KEVIN FERRIER

Sound Mixer
KEVIN FERRIER

Post-Production Facility
TRIANGLE POST

Recruiters
NANCY FINLAY
MOLLY MARRACK
JULIA TAIT

Administrative Assistants
JENNIFER CHEN
COURTNEY HOGAN
LINDSAY ANGUS

Clearance Consultant
LAURA BLANEY

Photographer
DEAN TOMLINSON

Graphic Designers
DEREK MA
MAX SCHELLENBERG

Accountants
SCARROW AND COMPANY
KAY AND WARBURTON
ROBIN BIGGLESTONE

Legal Counsel
RAJWANS LAW, TORONTO
GERDES LAW, LOS ANGELES

Web Designer
EVOLUTION IN DESIGNZ

Credits

"Messiah - Hallelujah Chorus"

Composed by George Frideric Handel
Published by Public Domain Recording
licensed from the UniqueTracks Production
Music Library Inc.

Guy Gibson Royal Air Force March Past Band of HM Royal Air Force

Recorded in 1941

"String Dance"

Composed by Dewey Dellay

"Basic Rap Beat"

by Asced
youtube.com/LeetSheep

CityNews Story

Footage provided courtesy of City,
Division of Rogers Broadcasting Ltd., 2013

"Blue Danube Waltz"

Arranged by Vincent J. Constantino

Spun Sugar Video

www.theamateurchef.co.uk

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Management and Staff of The Grenadier Retirement Home

Dwight Mountney, Julie Lang,
Dawn McMahon, Linda Warsh

Management and Staff of Christie Gardens Retirement Home

Taylor Smart, Barb Rebelo, Heather Janes

Other Participating Seniors

William Ambrose; G. Armour;
Joan Armstrong; Fred Atkinson;
Dorothy Balloch; Pam Bradshaw;
Louise Brown; Joan Brownell; Mary Burgess;
Elisabeth Busby; Betty Campbell;
Vera Carlyle; Margo Carscadden;
Poh Cheung; Louise Dickin;
Mabel Dowswell; Edna Duff; Fay Elliot;
Helen Elo; Patricia Elwell; Edna Gibson;
Dorothy Hepburn; Angel Heraz;
Magdolna Hercz; Frances Hersant;
Robert and Shirley Laking; Alberta Lee;
Gloria Marlatt; Mary McCullam;
Diane Morton; Betty Murphy;
Martha Onodera; Jean Richardson;
Zoltan Sarozy; Linda Sparks; Daphne and
O.C. Stapleton; Betty Tomlinson; Sergio Ursi;
Bernice Walker; Ann Woolcombe;
Geraldine Young

Other Participating Mentors

Ellen Aiello; Sumi Akhter; Somar Al-Darraj;
Akhila Ananth; Julija Burcar;
Sui Chee Cheung; Rachel Dinoff;
Kathryn Fotinos; Orville Greenidge;
Aleksa Hartog; Samantha Jorden;
Michelle Joubert; Sara Kiani;
Dylan McBurney; Leila McCluskey;
Denise Medina; Adaku Oti;
Geraldine Oviedo; Erlinda Rubia;
Daniel Sykora; Mardan Thourson;
Andrea Twarowski; Mary Wu; Niki Zarikos

Judges of the Cyber-Seniors Corner Contest

Kathy Barthel, *Comfort Life Magazine*
Erin Davis, *CHFI 98.1FM*

J.M. LaFlamme, *National Initiative for the Care
for the Elderly*
Gail Singer, *Documentary Filmmaker*
Libby Znaimer, *Zoomer Radio AM740*

Friends and Family of the Cyber-Seniors

Alex Arnott; Estelle Budish; Aileen Crowne;
Louise Crowne; Sandra Eadie; Tom Eadie;
Erika Engel; Kim Fairchild; Megan Fairchild;
Nathan Fairchild; Gabor Hercz; Chris Hobbs;
Lesley Hornik; Antonisha Jacobs;
Rosette Kilajian; Fagel Mitgang;
Ute Muller Hogan; Jenna Rapoport;
Frankie Rose; Stella and Wren Shute;
Tony Tillman; Donna Yeo

Other Participants of the Cyber-Seniors Corner

Ryan Bien and Gertrude Lisa; Matt Fiedler
and Angelo Alimonti; Chris Gallant;
Kyley and John; David Niziolek and
Pat Zakerski; Manpreet Singh Gujral and
Don Brown; Ms. Heather Delle-Monache,
Hayley S. and Nora Jones, Ashley L. and
Fred&Priscilla; E.L. Crossley Secondary
School; Lauren-Heydon Park Secondary
School; Danyelle Gatsos and Lola-
Kensington Place Retirement Residence;
Seniors at St. Catharines Centric Health
Senior Centre; Seniors at Downsview
Services for Seniors

Media Reporters

Kathy Barthel, *Comfort Life Magazine*
Audra Brown, *City News*
Jeff Bolichowski, *St. Catharines Standard*
Peter Gross, *AM 680News*

Jane Hawtin, *CBC 99.1FM Metro Morning*
Sean Leathong, *CHCH News*
Lisa Rainford, *Bloor-West Villager*
Libby Znaimer, *AM740 Zoomer Radio*

Arisu Restaurant, Toronto

Future Shop, Toronto

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Catherine Lathwell, Oyeyinka Oyelowo

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Help a senior citizen become a
Cyber-Senior :)

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Connecting Generations

Cyber-Seniors™

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Website

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YouTube

www.youtube.com/cyberseniors

Twitter

@cyberseniors

CANADIAN PUBLICIST

Colette Gunson / Hello Cool World

Phone: 416-500-1992

Email: colette@hellocoolworld.com

NYC PUBLICIST

John Murphy / MURPHY PR

Office: 212-414-0408

Cell: 646-369-0317

Email: jmurphy@murphypr.com

www.murphypr.com

LA PUBLICIST

Sylvia Desrochers / Big Time PR

Phone: 424 208-3496

Email: sylvia@bigtime-pr.com

Producer

Brenda Rusnak / Best Part Productions

Phone: 416-388-0310

Email: brenda@thebestpart.ca

Distributor

Kirt Eftekhari / Area 23a

Phone: 310-399-7937

Email: kirt@area23a.com

*High res stills and broadcast quality clips
available on request.*

