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PROCESS BOOK

CHINA- TOWN CONNECTS

A community newspaper created BY and FOR
Chinese seniors to highlight their common interests
and build lasting interaction opportunities among them.

social isolation

SPRING
2017

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01

Introduction



“They just stay home and watch TV, homebound, the most useful skill is the conversation, talk with them, most of them suffer depression, just spend time with them.”

Ruby Ng
Hamilton Madison House

Problem

In New York City, Asians have the fastest-growing senior population, Growth in the Asian senior population in New York City is driven by Asian seniors late life and by Asian immigrants aging into senior status.. The high rates of limited English ability among Asian seniors increase social isolation.

Even though many Asian seniors do not live alone, Asian seniors can still be isolated by language. More than 1 in 3 Asian seniors live in a limited English-speaking household, where no one in the household ages 14 years or older speaks English very well. These households often rely on younger children to translate when interacting with the mainstream.

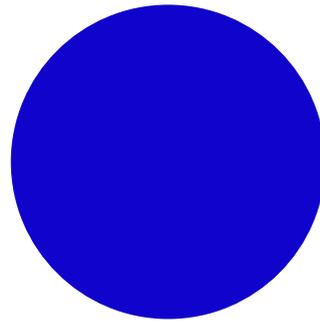
The majority (**76%**) had a
small circle of friends (**1-5**
close friends)

Among those living alone or in
senior housing, only **3** in **5**
had family living close by.

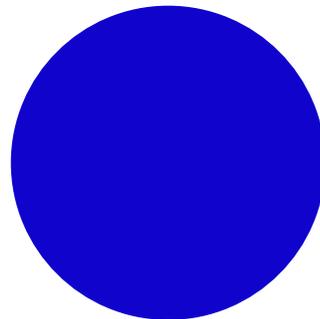
55 percent expressed some
symptoms of loneliness or
depression.

WHY it matters?

Seniors who are most at risk during emergencies are those who are socially isolated and have nowhere to turn for help. Without this help, many of this elderly and disabled individuals face going hungry, falling, or experiencing other problems that will increase the risk of institutionalization and death.



It is important for seniors to remain “living independently” and “able to determine their own fate.” If seniors are to avoid institutionalization and premature hospitalization, they require the social, physical, and emotional support of others. From an economy perspective, more money will be spent on the healthcare system. Less money on the economy, funding.



System map

To figure out what is happening in senior isolation system, i conduct interviews with differnt stakeholders, doing desk research to fully understand the similar case in difernt and contact other organizations who is doing the same projects for Chinese seniors.



#1 Problem

From talking with experienced social workers in Hamilton Medicine house, I know that in New York, there are many Chinese seniors living in public buildings, they are very tiny but still livable. And this kind of apartment is the most suitable one currently based on their tiny social security. they just want to stay at home, even they are qualified to apply benefits they still don't want that.

They just stay home and watch TV. Home bounded , if we realize they need doctor we will help them to connect doctors, our social work does not train as doctors. The most useful skill is conversation , talk with them, most of them suffer depression , just spend time with them.

Poor relationship with family members

“She has families but then do not live together , the apartment in new york is very different with china and sine their children has already have families and they do not want to bother them. The young generation do not care about their old grandparents, they even get annoyed with them, so impatient. ”

— Ruby Ng
Hamilton Madison House

#2

Problem

From medical perspective, I understood that Chinese fallen morality is the highest among all the races and a hypothesis comes from the researcher in medical school as they assumed that Chinese seniors don't go outside for activities because they know that once they fall down, they will stay on bed for the rest of his life.

Another interesting thing from a research report in NYU is the data shows that one of the overlapping factors of depression, loneliness, negative social support is worsened health over past years. So in that report, they suggested to explore the acceptability and feasibility of a physical activity intervention to improve mental health outcomes.

Physical and psychological impairment limits Chinese seniors morbidity.

#3

Problem

During my interview, many interviewees complain that English is so difficult to understand, if there is no place like Chinatown and they don't know how to live in New York, and seniors tend to have less learning ability comparing with young people. Because of this, seniors only live in Chinatown and some of them never go out of Chinatown.

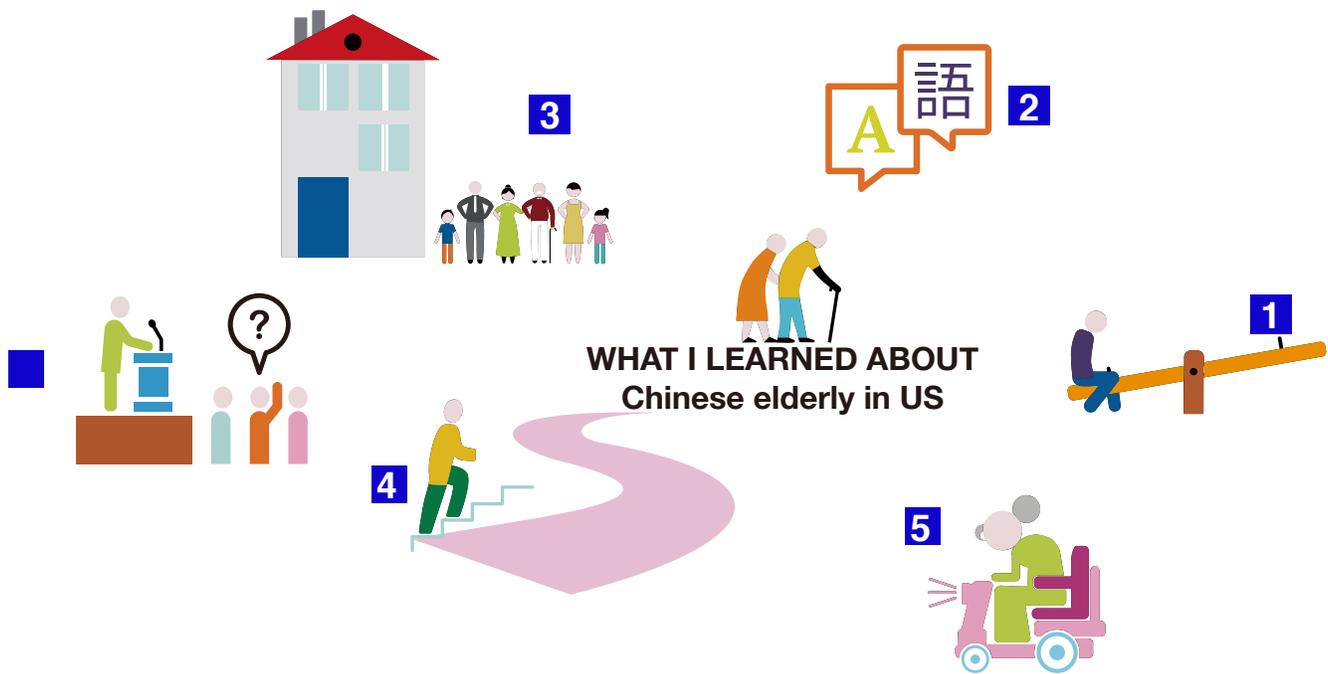
The language barrier makes it difficult for Chinese seniors to emerge into the new culture.

Pick one target audience “Elderly Immigrants”

I decided to focus on the Chinese seniors who came here these two years and are responsible for taking care of their grandchildren as a job in New York. Because they are in the state of struggling to be adapted in new environment and just at the beginning of isolation, my intervention would be effective to stop their isolations before it developed into a serious degree.

The problems Chinese seniors are facing in the whole system in US.

I choose to dig deeper into the first one because I realized this is not only the phenomena in Chinese seniors in US, it also happens in China and the social media labeled this group of seniors as “Elderly Immigrants”. The life and isolation issue of them are widely discussed by mainstream media. I see the potential scalability of this problem and would like to figure out solution which can be scaled up in China in the near future.



1 Disconnection with their families, let them get closer not only physicaly but also emotionally by having common activities or topics in the daily life.

2 Make inforamtion accessible for them, or increase their understanding of their deserved benefits.

3 Need large investment funding for senior housing and service.

4 Using community-based services to prevent elderly fall down to reduce their mobality.

5 Health status andmobility, Physical and physiological impairments limits mobility.

6 Building the trust between government and elderly let them know the important of attending political activities.

Process

Look for answering why this happen and the mental models of different stakeholders.

02

Interview

To get the answer of why there is a disconnection and social isolation among Chinese seniors, I interviewed 8 seniors and tried to know what specific problems are caused by disconnection? What is the value of seniors?

I also interviewed 6 young generations whose parents live in New York, looking for the patterns of their perspectives and how they feel the disconnection with their parents.

Seniors

To understand what specific problems are being caused by disconnection? What is the value of seniors?

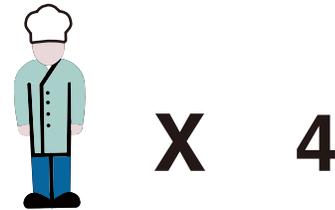


Insight

- They don't want to make friends in US.
- They give their children a lot of money for buying house and living.
- The grandchildren speak English, but seniors speak Mandarin.
- Most of them do not use social media, they only use cell phone to make phone calls. They follow Chinese news everyday, and like political and economic sections.
- Traditional Chinese family value is rooted in their heart.
- They have a sense of uselessness.
- They miss China, especially the friends there.
- Bad emotion could cause physical condition decreased.

Seniors

To understand the perspectives of young generation and the Do they feel a disconnect with their parents?



Insight

- They need time for both parents and their children.
- They feel their parents don't understand what they are talking about.
- Their definition of family is people who ever support, love and understand them.
- They are aware their parents do not enjoy living here.
- Different opinions on parenting ways.

In general

They don't enjoy the life here since they feel boring and don't want to make new friends, the loneliness may result in depression. They hold this feeling in the heart rather than cry or break out in front their children. Lacking of connection and experience in the US society limits the conversation they can have with their children.

In general

They want to be able to spend time together as a family and understand the value of that, but they don't know how. They recognize the time, language and technology barriers that make it difficult.

Two problems:

**Family isolation (between seniors and child)
How to bring family together?**

**Social isolation (between seniors)
How to bring seniors together?**

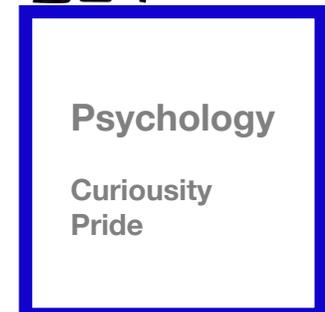
Mental models of stakeholders



Young generations



Elderly Immigrants

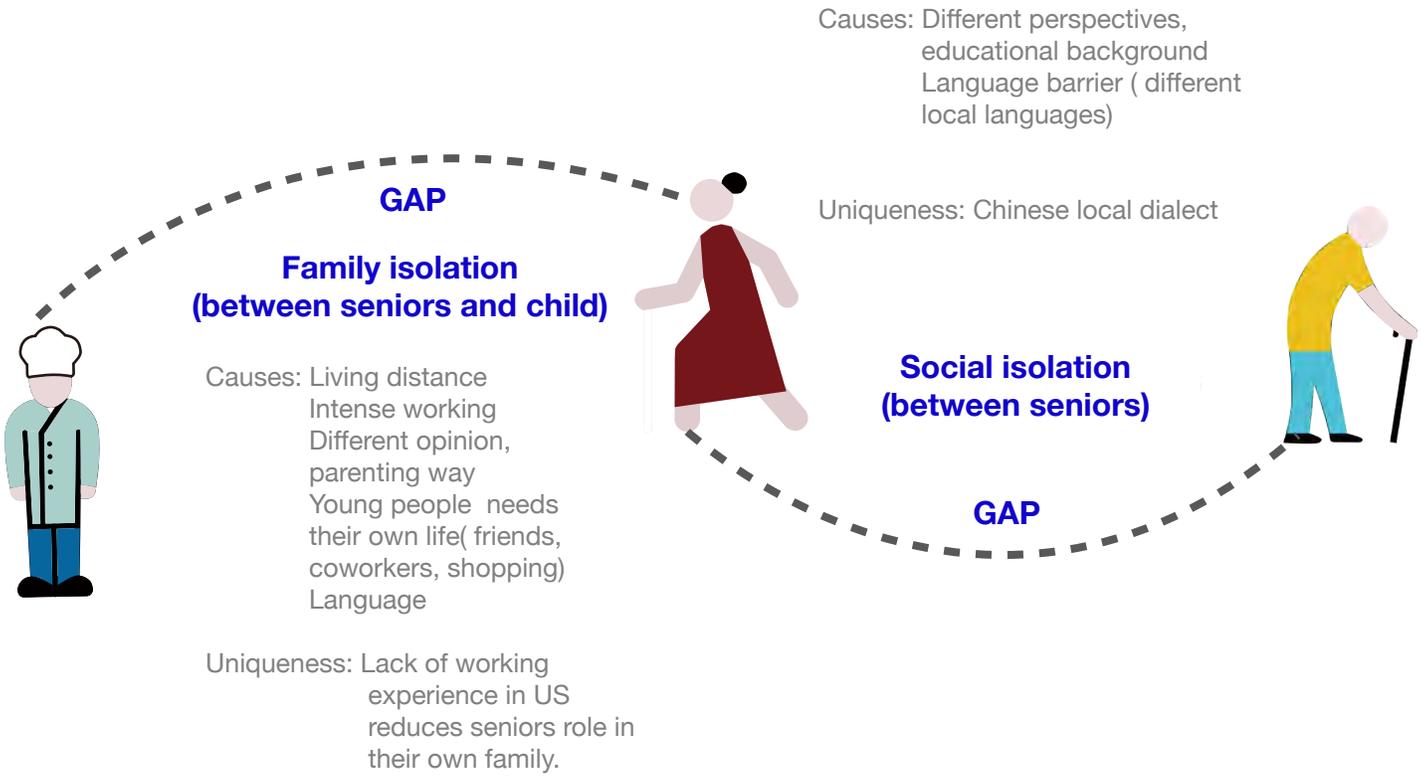


Stakeholders Map

This problem involves 3 stakeholders and each of them has very different mental models. For first generational immigrant they are very curious about what are happening in China because they are informed by newspaper that China developed very well these years and meanwhile they are very pride of themselves. In the early years they are regarded as the most visionary people in China.

For seniors who came here to raise kids these two years they have very low self-estimate, the life in US makes they feel they know nothing. And as people who are used to live in Chia for past 65 years they still keep the tradition of being family-orientated people. Like most Chinese parents, they are willing to give everything to their kids and keep the unhappiness in their own heart rather than telling to their kids.

For senior's kids who work here they are under high pressure for surviving and making money. They feel guilty for giving limited time to their parents and their own babies but they always need money. Most of the time, friends are their families; they share burdens with each other.



Two disconnections happen in the Chinese seniors social ties.

First one is the disconnection with their children who are in middle age and are busy with their work. The causes are living distance, intense working, different opinion and parenting way

Young people need their own life (friends, coworkers, shopping) and language.

It is a very unique issue of Chinese seniors here due to the reason of lacking working experience in US, which results in losing their dominant role in family.

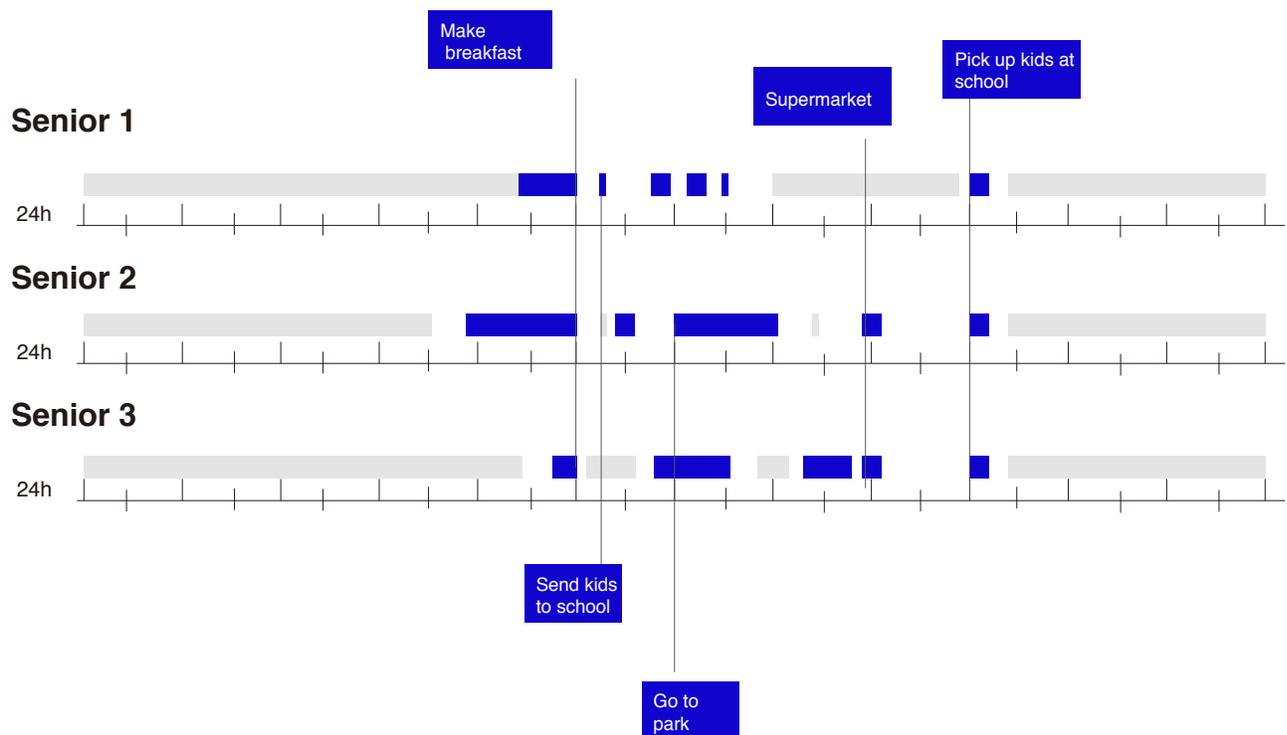
The second disconnection happens with the first immigrants of Chinese in US. Both of these two groups think they have very different perspectives, educational backgrounds and different dialects, which make they think about things from different perspectives. It is unique because south Chinese seniors may find his neighbors came from the north of china, so it is difficult for them to communicate with each other.

Which problem is most needed to be solved?

Comparing with these two disconnections, the disconnection between seniors is much more feasible to solve the disconnection between family members. (medical report) From the senior's life pattern, they have some opportunities to build the relationship with each other. Hopefully, in the future, the family issues can be solved by the solution of reducing isolation between seniors.

Life Pattern

I did daily journey of 8 Chinese seniors in New York and their life patterns are very similar but they don't realize that themselves. From the overlapping space and timing and interests they share, my hypothesis is that social isolation of Chinese seniors can be reduced by connecting them together by using the same interests they have.



HYPOTHESIS

The social isolation of Chinese seniors can be reduced by connecting them together with their same interests.

70 IDEAS

Now i have a direction for my solution, the next step is brainstorming and ideating. It was the time think about some creazy ideas. I will select 3 potential ideas from these 70 sketches. Below are some interesting ideas i selected.

Old kids Stage

A theater helps seniors achieve their dreams they had when they are young.

Find your old neighbourhood

A platform helps seniors find their old neighbours.

Magic Mirror

A magic mirror when seniors look at it, it will show what did they look like when they are young. And talk with the people in the mirror.

Intern

A job hunting service for seniors. Each seniors can work with young people as intern exchange their experience with young people.

FM s

A broadcasting station for seniors to tell their stories and find friends.

Seasonal Food Nutrition Lecture

A lecture related to food health attract seniors to come and make friends.

Through Their Eyes

A photography exhibition shows how isolated seniors look at this world.

Elder Meditation Training Program

The seniors who survived from isolated help other seniors who are currently isolated, give them mental support.

3 potential directions

1. Lonely Chinatown

A living guide of New York for Chinese seniors

2. Grandmas' handcraft shop

This shop is for seniors to continue their tradition of handcrafting toys and clothes for theirs' and others' grandchildren

3. Shop smarter

A shop for seniors to exchange coupons

Prototype

1st round Interview

To understand whether they have experience of doing this for their grandchildren and coupon ideas

2nd round Interview

To understand what they want to make and the story behind it

Conclusion

Health issues impact their ability to make good hand-made things.
Their grandchildren's stories motivate them to talk more.
They got coupons from pharmacies in China town.
Cheap meals motivate them to go out.
Get living tips from Wechat.

Conclusion

The handmade things seniors make are various regarding their interests, economic status, seasons, festivals, and hometowns.
It is worth letting them do the things based on those common things above they have.
Group working seems don't work, and it is more effective to let two of them work together and know more people gradually.

Name	Age
姓名	年齡
Date	Skill
日期	特長

Are you willing to share your skills with other people?
您願意把妳增長的技能與別人分享嗎?

Have you ever have any experience of sharing skills with others? How
有無教過別人妳增長的技能? 可否描述當下過程?

Have you ever learned something from others? If yes, please describe it.
有無跟別人學過什麼技能? 可否描述當下?

If there is a program about making things for your children, what do you want to make?
如果有有關活動是給妳的孩子或者孫子做東西, 妳希望做什麼給他們?

questionnaor



questionnaor

Workshop 1

Handcraft shop

Date: 1.27.2017

Time: 11:00am – 16:00pm

Goal: To understand whether seniors get closer based on the certain craft theme I give them.

Craft: lucky bag

Tools: colorful paper, scissors, glue, advertisement, instruction, samples.

Place: 80 Rutgers Slip

Stakeholders: Chinese seniors

Questions

What kind of seniors come here?

Do they understand what I mean?

How are they going to make this?

What kind of lucky bag do they make?

What words do they write on the lucky bag?

Do they have communication when they are making this?

How do they love it?



Problem

No trust

Not my target audience

Just want to take samples freely, don't want to make.

They communicate with each other only at one moment, which is when they saw the advertisement and came to discuss it, not during making stuff.

Workshop 2

Date: 1.31.2017 – 2.4.2017

Goal: Test whether they will ask for help if they need to mend or repair something
Test will indicate the story that their grandchildren can connect them.

Task: 1.31.2017(Tuesday), I will ask a senior to spread news in their community about the free mending service from me. If senior need help, they can contact the messenger and tell they what and help what they need. On Saturday I wish I can visit an isolated senior's home to observe and encourage them to tell the story of grandchildren and provide assistance to visualize it. (this time targets my audience rather than other seniors.)

Tools: colorful paper, scissors, glue, needles, sewing kit.

Place: Flushing

Stakeholders: Isolated seniors



Biggest takeaway

Workshop 1

1. Convenience and trust is important
2. Curiosity makes seniors talk.
Most of the seniors don't understand what I was doing and the advertisement didn't work. This idea needed to be spread and explained by a senior they are familiar with. SO they can fully trust this activity. The interaction and conversation mostly happened during the moment they approached my table and discuss about what am I doing not during the time they are making handmade stuff.
Second prototype is to test whether visualized story of their grandchildren can connect seniors.

Workshop 2

1. It would be better the close and deeper interaction happened in isolated home, which makes them feel comfortable in familiar environment. Compare with last time, there were many seniors came to me but they didn't have this warming and deep interaction with each other.
2. The little girl's stuff could be a catalyst for the two seniors.

Design Principles



TRUST

A media they are willing to trust with. SO they want to approach to this media and make them get to gather.



CURIOSITY+TOPIC

Chosen good topics makes seniors stay together and talk with each other, which increase communication with them, therefore reduce the isolation.



FLEXIBLE SOFT

Based on the prototype result, a warm, familiar environment is much more useful to let seniors be open.

03

**Final
Intervention**



Chinatown Connects

A community newspaper created BY and FOR Chinese seniors to highlight their common interests and build lasting interaction opportunities among them. A chatter café guideline is included in the newspaper to help seniors set group discussion and based on their own time and space without the manager and voluntary in senior centers.

About the Chinatown Connects

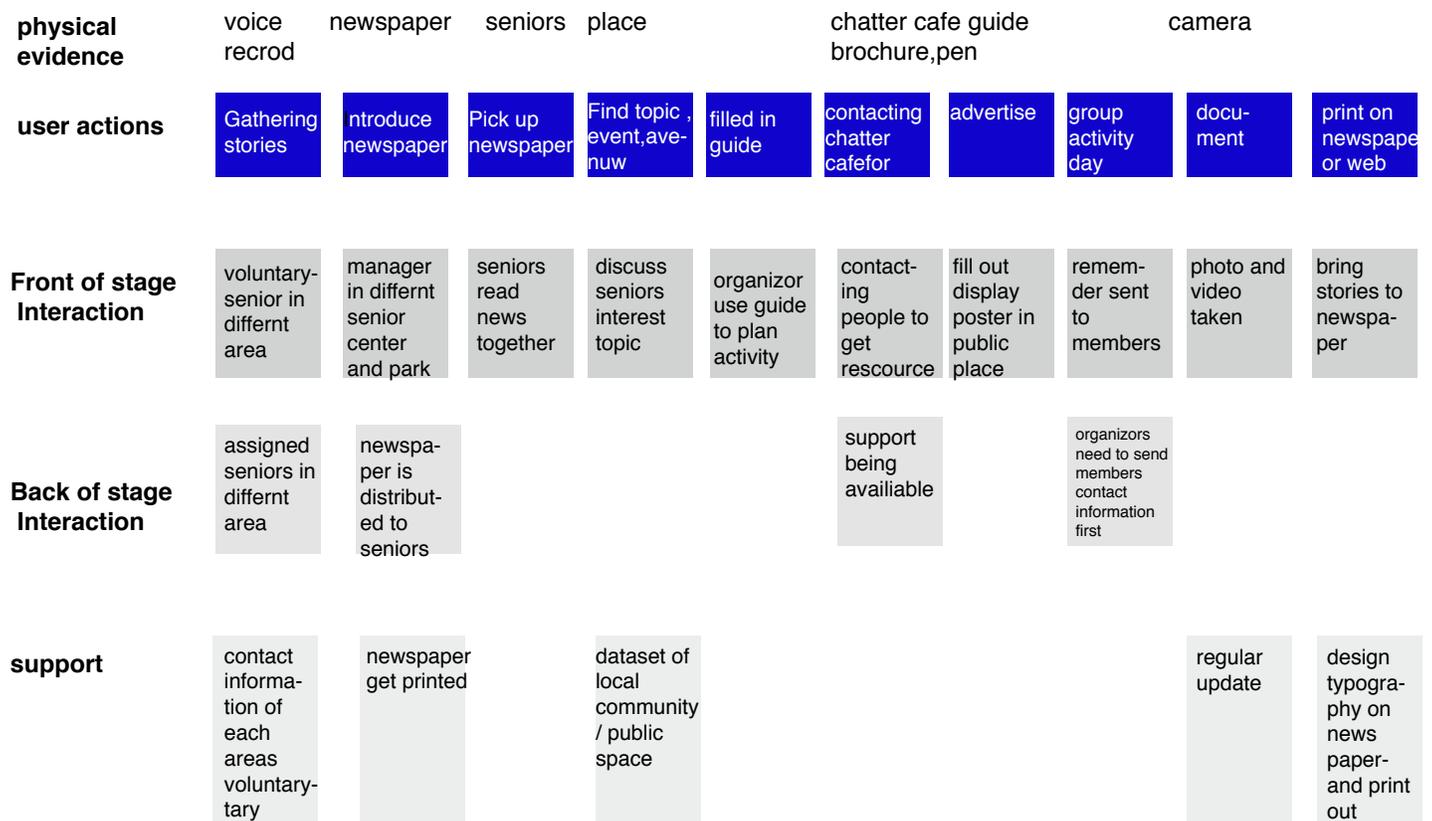
It enables users to get to know more peers

They create newspaper by themselves.

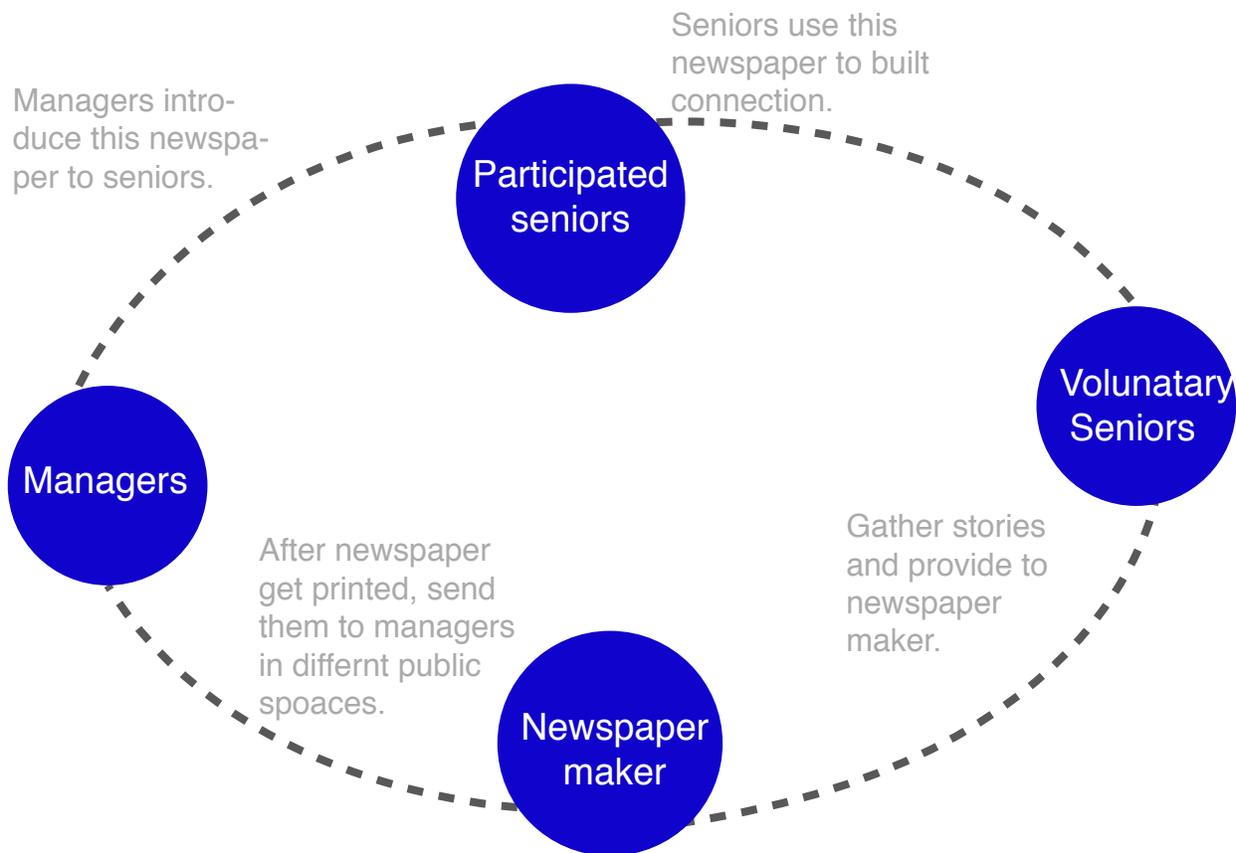
Be aware of other peers who have the same interests with them. Connect them through newspaper.

Set up a group discussion according to their interests, times and environment.

How it works



How it works



Values

Accessibility

Meet the peers who are in the same community and have same interest with seniors.

Ownership

Giving seniors a chance to show their stories, increase the ownership and responsibility of their community by making their own newspaper.

Self-organized group discussion

A flexible discussion group can be set up by seniors own interests, time and preferred environment.

5 sections

Tell your story

CHINATOWN CONNEC

SPRING 2017



TELL YOUR STORY

STYLIST, TACH SAVVY

“Could you send me the photo?”

Mrs. Lee was born in 1942 in the city of Guangzhou, China. She was a nurse in Hong Kong before immigrating to the U.S. Impressively, she made the forrest and scarf herself. The pink wallet was a gift from a friend. She was making her functional trends we often see in Chinatown, the layered (with keys or ID) and the concealed purse.

She's not only stylish, but tech-savvy. In addition to ESL (English as Second Language), she takes technology classes. She how to Use an iPad, at the local senior center and prefers playing Mahjong on the computer.

Before I said goodbye, she asked for me "can you send me the photo?"

Elderlyplan

CHINESE NEW YORK SOCIETY



Note board

Are playing Mahjong on the computer? Before I said goodbye, she asked for me "can you send me the photo?"

Anyone who is interested in fashion and technology, feel free to contact. Come and play!

Who: TACH SAVVY
Address: East Broadway 10

Elderlyplan home first

Elderlyplan home first Eldersplan is an HMO plan with Medicare and Medicaid contracts.

Please provide latest news related to seniors

Recipe Exchange Window

Chinese food night

Secret in food market

Gene Lee

Chinatown Kitchen

FOOD RECIPE

Chinese Sesame Limas



1. Remove limas from package and let drain. Rinse and separate from with your fingers.
2. Heat a skillet over high heat until hot, add the peanut oil, swirl. Heat for 30 seconds.
3. Scatter in the limas. Stir fry briskly for 30 seconds until the color turns to green.
4. Sprinkle in the salt and sugar and stir rapidly for another 30 seconds to season them evenly.
5. Add the stick of water, even out the limas. Turn heat to medium-low to maintain a strong simmer.
6. Cover. Cook heating the cover ajar for the liquid will evaporate and reduce for about 5 minutes.
7. Remove from heat high and stir rapidly until the remaining liquid has evaporated.
8. Add the sesame oil, stir to distribute evenly and pour into serving dish.

CONTACT US

If you are more to share your stories and learn, feel free to contact us through other social or photo platform!

Email: info@cnys.org Phone Number: 347-960-8226

Recipe Exchange Window

Chinese food night

Secret in food market

Gene Lee

Chinese New York Society

CHINESE NEW YORK SOCIETY



Elderlyplan home first

Elderlyplan home first Eldersplan is an HMO plan with Medicare and Medicaid contracts.

Please provide latest news related to seniors

My Excellent grandkids

MY EXCELLENT GRANDKIDS

Hazel's growth diary



Feb 04 2017

First time dancing on big stage. Flushing Town Hall Chinese new year



Feb 11 2017

After snow storm A snowman with long eyelash.



Feb 23 2017

Pink peppa finished at home.



Feb 14 2017

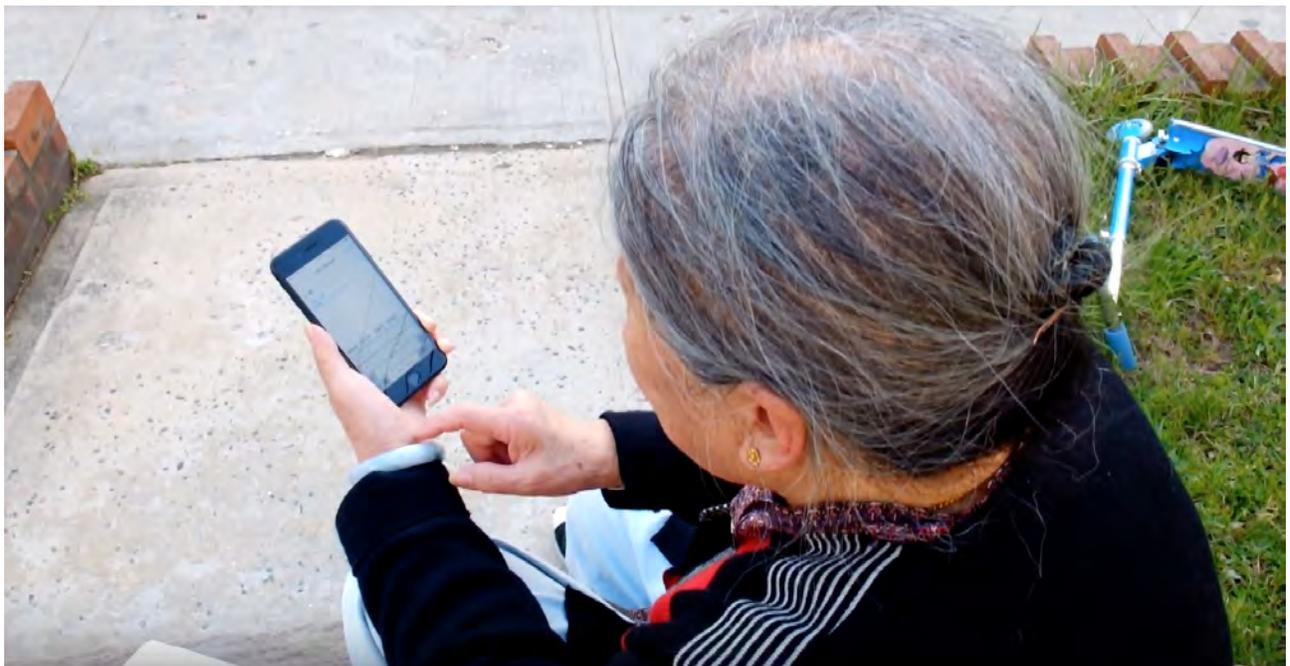
On Valentine's day day, Hazel made a flower gift card for her mother, this was the first time she made it!

Show your children's growth journey and happy moment here! We help you document them!

Get it the stories to get amazing, although it's too early

Pilot

I tested this newspaper in 2 spaces, one is a seniors center in Chinatown, another one is a Chinese community in Flushing. Each place I send them 5 pieces newspaper. The test lasted for a week, in the week, a message was sent to the isolated senior on newspaper, and a phone conversation happened. After that week, appointment for Majiang was set up.





A feedback from a manager in senior center

**“This is such a great idea!
It is good platform for
seniors making friends.”**

Philippe

03

Reflection

Learning

Design is a fast iterating process before I find the right solution. Before get to the good solution, I was doing a lot of prototypes to test different ideas. Even they all failed, what I learned from the failed prototypes leads me to the final solution. I think analysis failed solutions and connect the failed reason is very important.

Looking at the intervention as a journey, I was stuck when my final intervention came out. Than I break down my idea into different stages, from the how to get newspaper content to after people using newspaper, I realized each stage have so many things to design. Eventually, what I design is not a objective, is a system. This system supports the newspaper works more sustainable.

When I found this is a system, and it involves other stakeholders, I began to think about how to make some changes on my design to get some buy in from stakeholders. From stakeholders' perspectives

Future

A greeting message and a phone call are already the good signs of this intervention and they encourage me to think further about how the newspaper should be revised in the near future.

Keeping and managing long-term relationship of seniors who are new friends is going to be the next goal. I believe, Chinatown Connects is a bridge to push seniors to be more closed to each other and eventually make them feel the warm of community as they feel in China.

I do really appreciate this one-year thesis experience. I was improved so much either from profession or from personal growth. From beginning to end, I received many valuable experience from each advisors, which I couldn't get from textbook. Another achievement to me is reaching out skills, if no one pushed me so hard, I wouldn't know I can go such further!

**Thank you
for your time.**