

# Klamath County Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **International Friendship Day provides opportunity for connection**

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. – Klamath County Public Health (KCPH) officials are encouraging people to reach out to others Thursday, July 30, for International Friendship Day.

“We’ve been in the habit of focusing on social distancing with COVID-19, but Thursday we would like to hear about people connecting with friends, neighbors and family in safe ways,” said KCPH Director Jennifer Little. “Pick up the phone and call someone. Leave a message on social media.”

Here are four ways to stay connected while social distancing.

### **Connect digitally**

Although technology has taken its share of hits for causing isolation, during social distancing it can actually help build community and prevent feelings of loneliness.

Millions of people already depend on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to connect with people throughout the world. The platforms can be positive ways to communicate with people, learn and share ideas and skills. Make the most of being in touch by interacting with people and groups that use the platforms in a positive way.

Combining smartphones, computers and tablets with videoconferencing software and apps allow you to interact with people face-to-face, even if it's a screen-to-screen version. Most platforms are free or have a free version and accommodate as few as two people and up to a good-sized crowd at a time.

Going digital unleashes unlimited possibilities for staying in touch. Here are just a few:

- Start the day with friends and coffee or host an end-of-the-day happy hour.
- Join a virtual watch party of a movie or show.
- Host a digital dinner party and include a virtual cooking lesson of the main dish.
- Read grandkids a bedtime story.

### **Attend a class or event virtually**

Schools, gyms, yoga studios and local attractions such as zoos and museums are getting creative, offering opportunities to enjoy what they offer digitally. Even better, most are making these services, classes and attractions available for free. For example:

- Oregon Shakespeare Festival has increased its digital offerings at <https://osfashland.uscreen.io/catalog>.
- The Smithsonian Learning Lab puts national resources at your fingertips: <https://learninglab.si.edu/>.
- Museums are offering virtual tours, such as Philadelphia’s Museum of the American Revolution: <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/education-museum/students-and-teachers/virtual-field-trip>.
- Google Arts & Culture allows you to browse works digitally at <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en&tab=pop>.

### **Reconnect with family**

Enjoy time at home with your family: specifically, those who live in the same house. All those things you've put off because there was never time can move from your wish list to a to-do list:

- Cook and eat dinner together.
- Blow the dust off games and puzzles.
- Hook up long-forgotten video games (remember the Wii and Dance Dance Revolution?) and get moving together.
- Teach and practice life skills such as cooking, doing laundry, sewing on a button, or cleaning the bathroom.
- Plant a garden.

### **Make a phone call**

All the digital options available today make a simple phone call seem old school. But sometimes old school does the trick.

Just hearing someone's voice can be enough to lift both your spirits. Asking someone how they're doing can also be all it takes to be honest about feeling isolated and lonely. Even if a call ends up being a voicemail, you've let someone know you were thinking about them, which is always good medicine.