

STAY HEALTHY-SAY HELLO TO VIRTUAL HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES

The community is invited to virtual community gatherings from 'The Hello Project' to stay connected and engaged through the holidays

RENO, Nev. (December 1, 2020) – The holidays are sure to look and feel a little different this year amid the COVID-19 pandemic as health officials continue urging community members to stay home as much as possible. While the stay at home guidelines undoubtedly impact people of all ages, they can be particularly difficult for aging adults who may live alone.

To help address loneliness and isolation this holiday season, [The HELLO Project](#) is making spirits brighter for older adults through a series of festive, virtual gatherings called [It Starts with Hello](#), hosted every Tuesday and Thursday at noon.

“The holidays are a special time to gather and experience the many joys of the season with those we love,” said Kindle Craig, Director of Renown Health’s Healthy Aging Institute. “Leading up to this time of year, our HELLO community members shared their concerns in not being able to physically be with their children, grandchildren, siblings, friends and other loved ones this holiday season. Hearing this, a series of virtual events have been created to give all community members festive and fun learning opportunities to participate in, all season long. We invite others to join us.”

Events include a holiday cooking demonstration, holiday wreath and bow making; festive dessert preparation; composing and hearing seasonal poetry; competing in an ugly sweater contest; virtual home tours and more. *It Starts with Hello* is open to all adults and is free of charge. Access the complete event schedule [here](#) (Note that event dates are subject to change).

The Hello Project is a partnership between Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities, Renown Health, and the Washoe County Health District.

“This is an innovative approach to reach our local seniors, and to help combat loneliness and isolation,” said Sharon Zadra, executive director of Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities. “Since launching the first programs of *It Starts with Hello* back in May, we were overwhelmed by the positive response we’ve received from participants. Now, we’re thrilled to connect with all those in our community looking for some extra holiday cheer.”

“Participating in *The HELLO Project* is a chance to be part of an amazing community of people who enjoy learning, laughing, and celebrating life,” said member Ann Kent. “I look forward to creating special memories with the group as we make new holiday traditions, make new friends and support each other during these times.”

It Starts with Hello takes place Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon, and people can attend by calling in or joining on their computers via Zoom. Each show features a timely topic, factual information, a chance to chat with others in the community, and ends with some good news – The Daily Dandelion.



Contact: Renown Public Relations
M: 775-691-7308 **E:** news@renown.org

Participation is free. For more information, visit HelloStartsNow.org. Click on [Blogs & Updates](#) to learn on how to access the Zoom virtual gatherings. Individuals can also participate by calling 1-669-900-6833 (toll charges may apply).

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About Renown Health

Renown Health is a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving northern Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California. Renown is one of the region's largest private employers with a workforce of more than 7,000. It comprises three acute care hospitals, a rehabilitation hospital, the area's most comprehensive medical group and urgent care network, and the region's largest and only locally owned not-for-profit insurance company, Hometown Health. Renown has a long tradition and commitment to continually improve the care and the health of our community. For more information, visit renown.org.

About Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities

Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities is a collaborative of thought leaders and influencers who seek to make an impact on the health of their community. The collaborative seeks to build a model where all community members strive toward a culture of health in the Truckee Meadows. This model will include the intersection of the health, education and community development sectors in our region. Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities seeks to create a healthier community through a collective impact project. [More info can be found here.](#)

About the Washoe County Health District

The Washoe County Health District has jurisdiction over all public health matters in Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County through the policy-making Washoe County District Board of Health. The District consists of five divisions: Administrative Health Services, Air Quality Management, Community and Clinical Health Services, Environmental Health Services and Epidemiology & Public Health Preparedness. [More info can be found here.](#)