



COUNTY OF ORANGE

P R E S S R E L E A S E

WWW.OCGOV.COM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mechelle Haines
Public Information Officer
OC Community Resources
OCCRComm@occr.ocgov.com

County of Orange Releases Second Annual *Happy Holidays Neighbor!* Campaign Toolkit

SANTA ANA, Calif. (December 2, 2021) – To raise awareness of the dangers related to senior isolation, the County of Orange is launching its second annual [Happy Holidays Neighbor! Toolkit](#). This public awareness micro-campaign educates residents on how to safely connect with elderly family members and neighbors as the holiday season approaches.

“Many families will be gathering together for the holidays for the first time in months,” said Chairman Andrew Do, First District Supervisor. “This campaign intends to encourage residents to reconnect with older adults and provide them with information about where to turn to for help with groceries, transportation, and other available resources for seniors.”

During the holiday period, seniors face further challenges related to gift buying, mailing packages, and decorating their home exteriors. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#), a significant number of people in the United States are affected by serious public health risks linked to social isolation and loneliness. Social isolation was associated with about a 50% increased risk of dementia and other serious medical conditions, and loneliness was associated with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

“One in four seniors lives alone. Social isolation is a significant concern, especially during the holidays,” said Vice Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District Supervisor. “Contacting or offering a simple gesture with seniors in your family or neighborhood can have a big impact on their mental well-being.”

As part of the *Happy Holidays Neighbor!* Toolkit, residents can fill out a [printable postcard](#) to send to local seniors, asking what assistance they need and providing the neighbor’s contact information. Additionally, the micro-campaign provides information about valuable County and local senior resources that are important during the holiday season.

“Senior centers are starting to offer activities to help promote socialization and reduce isolation with high vaccination rates among older adults. With Orange County seniors fully vaccinated at more than 87% and the availability of boosters in Orange County, we love offering more in person events at our senior centers,” said Supervisor Katrina Foley, Second District. “We hope this campaign will encourage others to invite an older adult living in their community to participate in holiday activities.”

The County continues to see a 40% increase in senior nutrition services compared to pre-pandemic serving levels. Nearly 10,000 older adults receive home-delivered meals daily.

“The holiday season is a time to connect with the people around us,” said Supervisor Don Wagner, Third District. “Receiving home-delivery services is sometimes the only interaction a senior has with another person. We hope this year, our community is inspired to reach out to a senior in their neighborhood or family, and make a difference in their day.”



COUNTY OF ORANGE

P R E S S R E L E A S E

WWW.OCGOV.COM

In addition to impacting seniors, the pandemic also presented special challenges to caregivers. According to the [NORC at the University of Chicago's Needs Assessment and Environmental Scan Report](#), major concerns among caregivers include their own emotional and physical stress; the care recipient's physical and mental health; financial concerns; and the need for respite care.

"The pandemic increased caregiver responsibilities, which impacts the mental and physical health of adult children caring for their aging parents along with supporting their households," said Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District. "The *Happy Holidays Neighbor!* Toolkit provides neighbors and friends suggestions on how they can offer support and give caregivers the respite they need to keep going."

To access the [Happy Holidays Neighbor! Toolkit](#) including translated materials and for more information on how residents can support neighbors in their community, please visit the County's Office on Aging website at officeonaging.ocgov.com.

###

Orange County's Office on Aging serves as the lead advocate for approximately 600,000 seniors 60 years and older residing in the county, with a specific focus on low-income ethnic minorities. As an advocate, the OC Office on Aging is responsible for understanding the needs of Orange County's older adults and utilizing the federal funding and programs available to meet those requirements. In addition, the OC Office on Aging is charged with directing or participating in coalitions to drive new ideas, services, and legislation in support of Older Adults. Finally, the department is to take a proactive view and help those in the senior services industry, public and private, plan for the future needs of this populace.