



# Dialogue

Volume 34 No.2  
Spring 2020



## In the Spotlight

### Our Community Tackles Coronavirus

The coronavirus crisis that overtook California and the world reminded us all about the importance of emergency readiness planning, and the fact that no matter how well-prepared we are, every emergency instructs us in ways that help make us better prepared to cope with the next one.

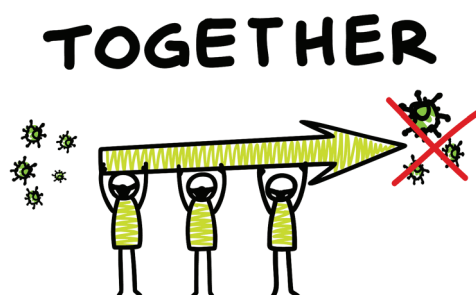
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*Amidst the uncertainty and worry, emergencies can also bring out the best in people.*

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Amidst the uncertainty and worry, emergencies can also bring out the best in people. We decided to use this issue of *Dialogue* to shine a spotlight on just a few examples in our Orange County community of people pulling

together, in ways large and small, to help one another deal with the unexpected and cope with the stay-at-home orders aimed at helping to contain the spread of the virus.



### Early Start and Telehealth

Our Early Start service providers are among the most advanced at using telehealth technologies to ensure that young children going through critical developmental periods continue to receive therapies to help close the developmental gap.

RCOC Early Start Service Coordinator Amanda Cornett shared the story of one of the little girls she serves who

has hypotonia (decreased muscle tone, often associated with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy), mostly affecting her legs. She uses special braces on both legs and a compression body suit to support her trunk and provide extra support while walking. While insurance pays for direct physical therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy consultations are provided through Early Start.

Because of coronavirus concerns, the first physical therapy consultation with this family took place via Zoom – a web-based video conferencing platform. By all accounts, it was a great success. The mom liked being more hands-on than she is during a typical session, and the therapist saw a lot of value in seeing the child's body positioning from a different point of view.

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*Because of coronavirus concerns, the first physical therapy consultation with this family took place via Zoom.*

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### Day Programs and Social Distancing

How do you support adults with developmental disabilities who normally participate in highly-social,

See **Our Community Tackles Coronavirus** on page 6.

## Spotlight Award Honorees for 2020

Soon after health experts began warning against large group gatherings that could worsen the spread of the new coronavirus, RCOC made the difficult decision to cancel our 2020 Spotlight Awards Dinner-Dance. Though the event was canceled, the 13 very deserving individuals and organizations will still receive their awards. Check the website ([www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com)) for the list of honorees.

## Dialogue

*Dialogue* is published four times per year by the Regional Center of Orange County for people with developmental disabilities, their families and service providers. *Dialogue* can also be read online at RCOC's website: **[www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com)**.

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## Board of Directors

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## Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Board Meetings

As of this printing, decisions had not yet been made about the May 7 and June 4 fiscal 2019-20 meetings. Please check the Monthly Calendar on RCOC's website for the most up-to-date information.

## RCOC Administration

Larry Landauer, *Executive Director*  
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## Engage with RCOC on Social Media

**D**id you know that you can engage with RCOC on social media? We have official pages on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, as well as Instagram. When you follow us, you'll have access to timely information and news, as well as events and activities of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

*During emergencies and fast-changing situations, our social media pages and website*

*(www.rcocdd.com)  
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information.*

Perhaps most importantly, during emergencies and fast-changing situations, our social media pages and website ([www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com)) can provide you with the most up-to-date information about RCOE services.

Soon after the coronavirus situation emerged as a possible concern, we posted a banner on our home page that links to a special page we created to provide families, individuals and service providers with authoritative health resources about coronavirus/ COVID-19. Updated continuously, the page also features important notices and administrative details



for service providers to ensure continuity of services and supports.

Whenever possible, we provide social media information in Spanish and Vietnamese, as well as English, to ensure access to the latest information. And, our website features a convenient translation tool – simply scroll down to the bottom of any page and you'll find the translator on the right-hand side.

It's also a good idea to make sure RCOC has your email address, since we often send emails to families we think might be interested in particular events and activities.

If you're not sure we have your current email address on file, please be sure to contact your RCOC Service Coordinator to update it.

## Executive Director's Report

### Our Community's Response to COVID-19

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director

**W**hen the coronavirus/COVID-19 crisis hit, it was unprecedented for all of us. Unlike the natural disasters we've faced previously, this was not confined to a locality or region and it's affected all of us. As I write this column, we are still in the midst of the emergency. Our sincere hope is that when this newsletter reaches you, life will at least be on its way back to normalcy, and the pandemic's severity and duration will be less than some are now predicting.

During these challenging times, much is still uncertain. But from where we stand now, I think we can all be very proud of how our Orange County community has pulled together to continue meeting needs and safeguarding the well-being of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

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I especially applaud Orange County's service providers for their unflagging dedication to the people we serve. Our cover story shares snapshots of how some people and providers have

taken creative new approaches to delivering services and maintaining critical connections and relationships during this crisis. We partner with more than 1,700 service providers in



Orange County – the fact is we have so many more inspiring stories and acts of kindness and compassion than we could possibly share.

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Many of our service providers are not-for-profit organizations that rely heavily on charitable contributions to augment the state funds they receive through RCOC. Already operating on the slimmest of margins, some of these organizations could be bankrupted or near bankruptcy before the crisis is over. Though this cannot be our top priority while we're still coping with COVID-19, I do hope this situation spurs California to help our service providers get on more solid financial footing by expediting the adoption of reasonable and sustainable rates for all community services.

From the start of this crisis, our partners at the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) have been extremely helpful. We're appreciative of the DDS directives allowing regional centers to have

great flexibility to ensure health and safety are protected, critical needs are met, and our staff can be deployed as efficiently as possible during the crisis.

Finally, I could not be more proud of how our RCOC team has responded, continuing their work to ensure essential services are in place and service providers receive payment, while their own families have also been impacted by school and business closures. Our long-standing embrace of technology meant RCOC was better positioned than many to cope with this emergency.

Long before remote work was typical, we'd equipped our service coordinators with laptops and system access to enable them to work from anywhere. This began as a measure to boost efficiency and responsiveness to family and individual needs. But it has also allowed us to be nimble and maintain continuity of service, during the wildfires of recent years and during this COVID-19 pandemic.

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While none of us can know when it will be possible to relax the strict containment and prevention measures now in place, I want everyone we serve to know that you can count on RCOC to continue to carry out our mission of serving people with developmental disabilities and their families.



## Person to Person

### A Changing World

By Sylvia Delgado, PAC Chair and  
Jyusse Corey, Peer Advocate

**B**y now everybody has heard about the coronavirus, and it has changed a lot of fun things we wanted to share with you for summer, but we want to let you know that while things might be different, we will be okay.

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*Change can be scary,  
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When Sylvia first heard about the coronavirus, she read as much as she could from health experts. Change can be scary, but if you have good information you can prepare. Sylvia's also the kind of person who likes to be out in the community enjoying life, so if you're wondering if staying at home was making her bonkers, the answer is yes! But she's kept busy cleaning and organizing her apartment, walking her dog Jewels, and staying connected by phone, text and FaceTime with friends and family. She even

participated in her first ever virtual club for teens and

young adults using Zoom!



Sylvia Delgado



Jyusse Corey

Jyusse has been working from home, with support from RCOC which made sure he could use his home computer to access emails and everything else he needs to be productive.

He's also made sure to keep connected with people and to check in almost daily. That's something he hasn't been used to doing, but he now sees how important it is for people to know how he's doing. His Service Coordinator has kept in touch through email and phone, and he's glad that even though he can't currently see people like his ILS worker who normally provide support in

person, he can still count on them and communicate by phone and video chat.

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*Be safe and stay strong,  
and we can get through  
anything together!*

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We both know readers may be getting tired of hearing this, but it's important: the number one thing that we've learned from coronavirus is to follow the experts' advice about washing your hands.

Be safe and stay strong, and we can get through anything together!

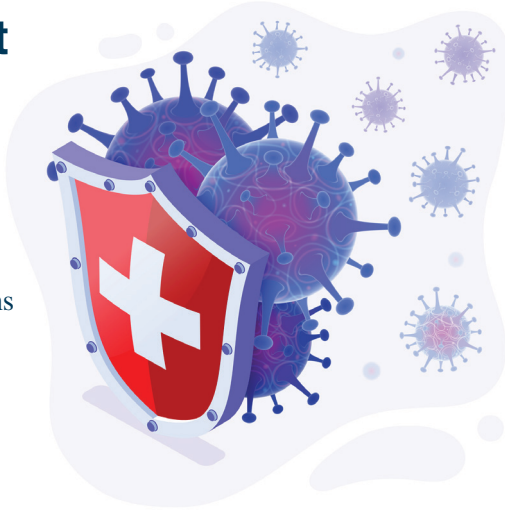
### Behavior Management Workshops

**D**ue to the COVID-19 situation, our free Behavior Management Workshops for parents (May/June in English and August/September in Spanish) will take place via videoconference. To learn more and to register, contact your RCOC Service Coordinator or Tracy Vaughan at (714) 796-5223 or [tvaughan@rcocdd.com](mailto:tvaughan@rcocdd.com).



### Tips to Prevent COVID-19 Can Also Help Prevent Other Illness

One of the key lessons we've learned from the COVID-19 situation is that the best way to protect yourself and your family is to adopt sensible hygiene habits, which can also prevent the spread of other illness, such as colds and flu.



- **Wash your hands.** Keep from getting sick and spreading germs by washing your hands well and often with soap and water. Here's a tip to make sure you're lathering and scrubbing your hands long enough: scrub for as long as it takes you to sing the "Happy Birthday to You" song twice. That will be right about 20 seconds!
- **Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.** When you can't wash your hands, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Apply it to the palm of your hand and be sure to thoroughly cover your entire hand including all sides of your fingers.
- **Don't touch your face.** Most of the viruses and bacteria that can make you sick get into your body through your mouth, nose or eyes, so avoid touching those areas. This is especially important when you're out in public places, where you often touch surfaces – like door handles – that can harbor germs.
- **Stay home when you're sick.** Even if you don't feel really ill, going to school or work or going out shopping when you are sick puts other people at risk. What may be just a common cold for you could turn into a serious respiratory illness for someone else.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.** Use a tissue and dispose of it properly or cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve to avoid spreading germs through coughing or sneezing. Remember, even if no one's nearby when you cough or sneeze, those germs can live on surfaces others might later touch.

### When to Wash Your Hands

Here are some key times when washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water can help you avoid picking up or spreading germs.



**Mealtimes.** Always wash before eating, especially finger foods like sandwiches and snacks.

**Cooking.** Anytime you're preparing food, it's important to wash before you begin. To avoid food poisoning, it's also essential to wash in between steps such as preparing raw chicken and vegetables, and to use thoroughly-cleaned utensils and work surfaces.

**Bathroom.** Every time you use the toilet, wash your hands afterward.

**Changing Diapers.** Wash your hands after changing a diaper or cleaning up after someone else who has used the toilet.

**Animal Care.** If you have pets, be sure to wash after touching them, handling their food, or cleaning up after them.

**Illness.** When you're sick, you should wash after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. When caring for someone else who is sick, you should wash before and after helping them.

**Wound Care.** For a cut or other type of wound, you should wash your hands before and after treating the wound.

## Our Community Tackles Coronavirus (continued from page 1)

community-based programs when those facilities have to be temporarily closed to respect social distancing requirements? For Kathleen Kolenda and her Adult Day Services team at Easterseals Southern California, the answer was to quickly mobilize their coaches to implement one-on-one outreach via telephone to the people they serve.

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*During the hours people would normally be at their programs, Easterseals' coaches are calling to check-in.*

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During the hours people would normally be at their programs, Easterseals' coaches are calling to check-in and see how they're doing, identifying additional support needs they might have, and simply reassuring their program participants that they care.

## Creative Online Learning

When it became clear that the coronavirus crisis would not be over quickly, Kim Kosaki and Janice Reyes, co-founders the ASPIRE Creative Arts Program, stepped

up to offer a range of new ways for the adults with developmental disabilities they serve to continue their artistic pursuits while ASPIRE's facility is temporarily closed.

ASPIRE instructors are leading a wide variety of virtual classes on Flipgrid (a remote learning platform), including music, art, dance, drama, sign language, money skills, reading, sewing, and more. With Flipgrid, ASPIRE's students can view posted video lessons, and interact with instructors and other students; they're also engaging through a private Facebook group ASPIRE initiated. The team is also doing one-on-one lessons, as well as drama and music therapy sessions over video chat.

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For students without internet access, ASPIRE is reaching out with more frequent phone calls along with personal notes by regular mail and sending fun and engaging activities

students can do at home, such as crossword puzzles and math worksheets.



## Kindly Neighbors

If we didn't see store shelves emptied of toilet paper, we heard about it on the news. When some of the adults with developmental disabilities that service provider Project Independence serves were having difficulty finding toilet paper, PI's President and CEO Debra Marsteller reached out to her neighbors for help. After she posted a message about the situation on Nextdoor (a geographically based local social media platform), her neighbors stepped up with toilet paper donations to help meet the need.

## Generous Customers

Before most restaurants and retail stores began their temporary closures, Richard Mendoza, a person served by RCOC, had his bike stolen. His RCOC Service Coordinator Tim Anderson shared the story of how a group of retirees who got to know Richard during their casual gatherings at a Costa Mesa Starbucks, learned about the theft – then pitched in and together bought him a new bike and a good strong lock to go with it!





## Sheltering at Home

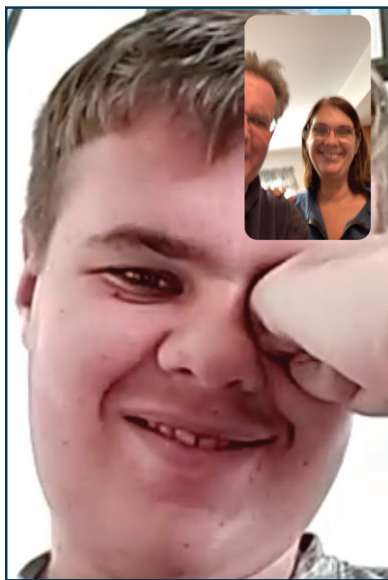
When Governor Newsom issued his order closing schools and asking people to shelter at home, it could have been a huge disruption in the lives of the young men with autism who live at the Serenity group home and normally spend their days at school. Instead, the group home staff took the initiative to round up a supply of books, workbooks and other items that allowed them to set up a school-like atmosphere at the group home.

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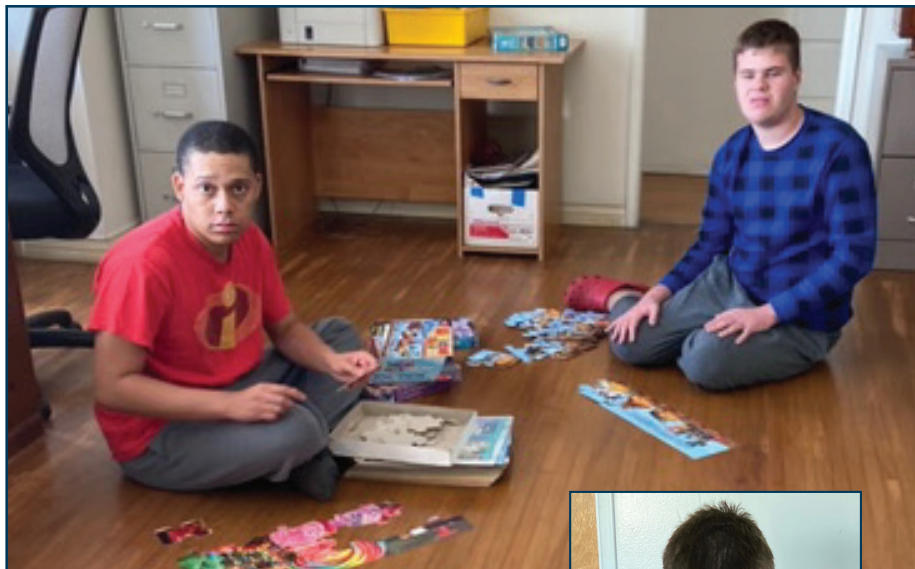
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Bruce Hall, the parent of one of the young men, reached out to RCOC and shared how comforting that was to his son and his housemates.



With everyone asked to stay home, Bruce and Valerie Hall (inset) have kept in close touch with their twin sons James (above) and Jack by using the videocall app on their cell phones.



Krithion Anthony-Herrera (pictured above left), James Hall (pictured above right), Jack Hall (pictured middle right) and their housemates gained a sense of normalcy while staying at home when the staff at the Serenity group home where they live brought in a variety of books, workbooks and other items to provide a school-like atmosphere.



Patrick MacLean (above) and Julian De La Rosa (right) were still able to get some good exercise while staying home when the Good Care Home where they live brought in a stationary bicycle and a treadmill.



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## Regional Center of Orange County Locations

### Santa Ana Office

1525 N. Tustin Avenue  
24-hr Phone: (714) 796-5100

### Cypress Office

10803 Hope Street, Suite A  
24-hr Phone: (714) 796-2900

## Summer Recreation Resource Guide

**P**arents looking to keep their children with developmental disabilities engaged and active during the summer can download the free Summer Recreation Resource Guide prepared by RCOC's Comfort Connection Family Resource Center. Available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, the Guide provides contact information and websites, along with detailed summaries of recreation, social, camp, sports/fitness, playground/park, art, music, dance, science, cooking and woodworking opportunities. It also includes helpful information about beach wheelchairs, discounts, and air travel, including John Wayne Airport's Helping Hands program. To download the Guide from our website ([www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com)), go to the Family Support tab and click on the Community Resources link, then scroll down to Recreation.

**Note: Programs may be subject to change due to COVID-19.**

**Please contact the programs directly for details.**







## Serving Orange County's Vietnamese Community

**R**egional Center of Orange County has prepared this insert especially for the individuals and families we serve who are most comfortable communicating in Vietnamese. As of this printing, Orange County schools, school programs, and most businesses and organizations remained closed and residents were being asked to stay at home to help prevent more widespread exposure to COVID-19 (coronavirus).

RCOC has posted authoritative and up-to-date information on its website and social media pages regarding COVID-19; however, since some of these materials are presented in English only, Vietnamese speakers with questions or concerns are invited to reach out directly to RCOC Cultural Specialist Kaitlynn Yen Truong at (714) 558-5405 or [ktruong@rcocdd.com](mailto:ktruong@rcocdd.com).

### What Does Your Service Coordinator Do?

**T**he services and supports that Regional Center of Orange County provides to people with developmental disabilities and their families are funded by the State of California and provided free of charge. Depending on the person's specific needs, these can range from helping adults find a place to live and a place to work, to respite care and special education advocacy for families of children with developmental disabilities, and much more.

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***Each individual or family served by RCOC is assigned a Service Coordinator.***

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To help put needed services and supports in place, each individual or family served by RCOC is assigned a Service Coordinator. The Service Coordinator's job is to help the individual and family identify their hopes and dreams for a full and productive life, and then work together to access services and supports available through RCOC's network of providers to make

their vision a reality. The Service Coordinator also provides valuable guidance and help accessing other government-funded programs and community resources that might benefit a family.

The vast majority of RCOC's 459 employees are Service Coordinators, and each hold either a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree in a field such as child development, counseling, psychology, social work, or sociology and must have at least a year of case management experience before being hired. Every Service Coordinator also goes through extensive training when they join RCOC to ensure they are knowledgeable about the person-centered planning process used to develop each person's Individual Program Plan (IPP) and – for families with children in Early Start – each family's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Since the Service Coordinator is the family's primary point of contact with RCOC and plays a key role in supporting so many aspects of a person's life, good communication is essential. It's important for RCOC

Service Coordinators to be sensitive to each family's cultural preferences and values, and individuals and family members need to be candid when talking about their needs, preferences and experiences.

At RCOC, 73 percent of our Service Coordinators are fluent in at least two languages, which can be extremely helpful for families more comfortable communicating about complex, personal situations in a language other than English.

It's also important for individuals and families to know that they can contact their RCOC Service Coordinator any time they have a question or concern. There's no need to wait until a formal IPP/IFSP meeting, because your RCOC Service Coordinator's always here to help. And if, for any reason, you feel your Service Coordinator is not as responsive as you would like, or you are uncomfortable speaking with that person, you can always contact the Supervisor and ask to be reassigned. We want to ensure you have a positive relationship with your RCOC Service Coordinator.

(continued on back)



# DROWNING IS SILENT

## Signs of Distress

HEAD TILTED BACK

CAN'T CALL FOR HELP

HAIR OVER FOREHEAD

CAN'T WAVE FOR HELP

BODY IS VERTICAL

'CLIMBING LADDER' MOTION



There are **NO WARNING** or splashing **SOUNDS** associated with a drowning accident.



<5

Children under age 5 are at a higher risk of drowning in a pool.



Swim Skills

Teach your child(ren) to swim at an early age, as backyard swimming pools account for over half of drowning deaths for children 0-5 years old each year.



Install Alarms

Install alarms on house doors and around pool area.



Layers of Protection

Layers of protection include adult supervision, fences, gates, latches, safety pool covers, education, throwing aids, and rescue techniques.



Eye

Adults should keep a constant eye on children in or near any water including bathtubs, buckets, toilets, ponds, spas and pools.



Never Leave a Child Alone

Never leave a child alone near water. Check the pool first if a child is missing.



Touch

Designate an adult to be close enough to reach out and touch the child.



## DID YOU KNOW...

Drowning is the leading cause of death for toddlers 1-4 years old.

68%

In general, boys are two times more likely to drown in a pool than girls.



2/3

2/3 of fatal drownings occur between May and August for most age groups.



## + Immediate Treatment +



Yell for Help



Call 911



Perform CPR



Visit: [www.dds.ca.gov/drowning](http://www.dds.ca.gov/drowning) | [www.drowningpreventionfoundation.org](http://www.drowningpreventionfoundation.org) | [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

The Drowning Prevention Foundation | Department of Developmental Services, Department of Public Health | Department of Social Services







## Serving Orange County's Hispanic Community

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RCOC has posted authoritative and up-to-date information on its website and social media pages regarding COVID-19 however, since some of these materials are presented in English only, Spanish speakers with questions or concerns are invited to reach out directly to RCOC Community Outreach Coordinator Reina Hernandez at (714) 558-5406 or rhernandez@rcocdd.com.

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The Drowning Prevention Foundation | Department of Developmental Services, Department of Public Health and Department of Social Services

