



Making a Difference

Finding Purpose by Helping Others during COVID-19

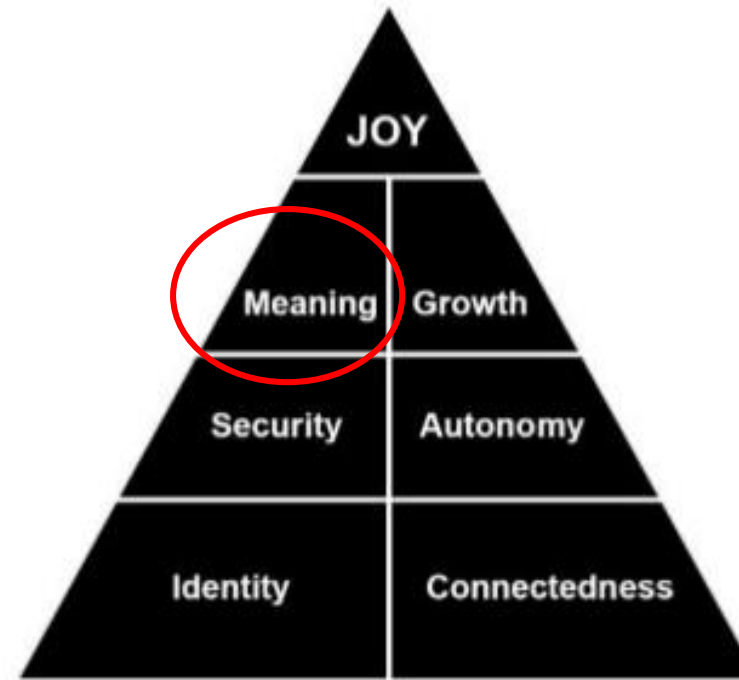
Marigrace Becker, MSW

April 24, 2020

Making a difference feels good, takes our mind off our struggles, and connects us to the larger world.



Having
meaning and
purpose is key
to living well
with dementia
(or caregiving!)



7 Domains of Well-being

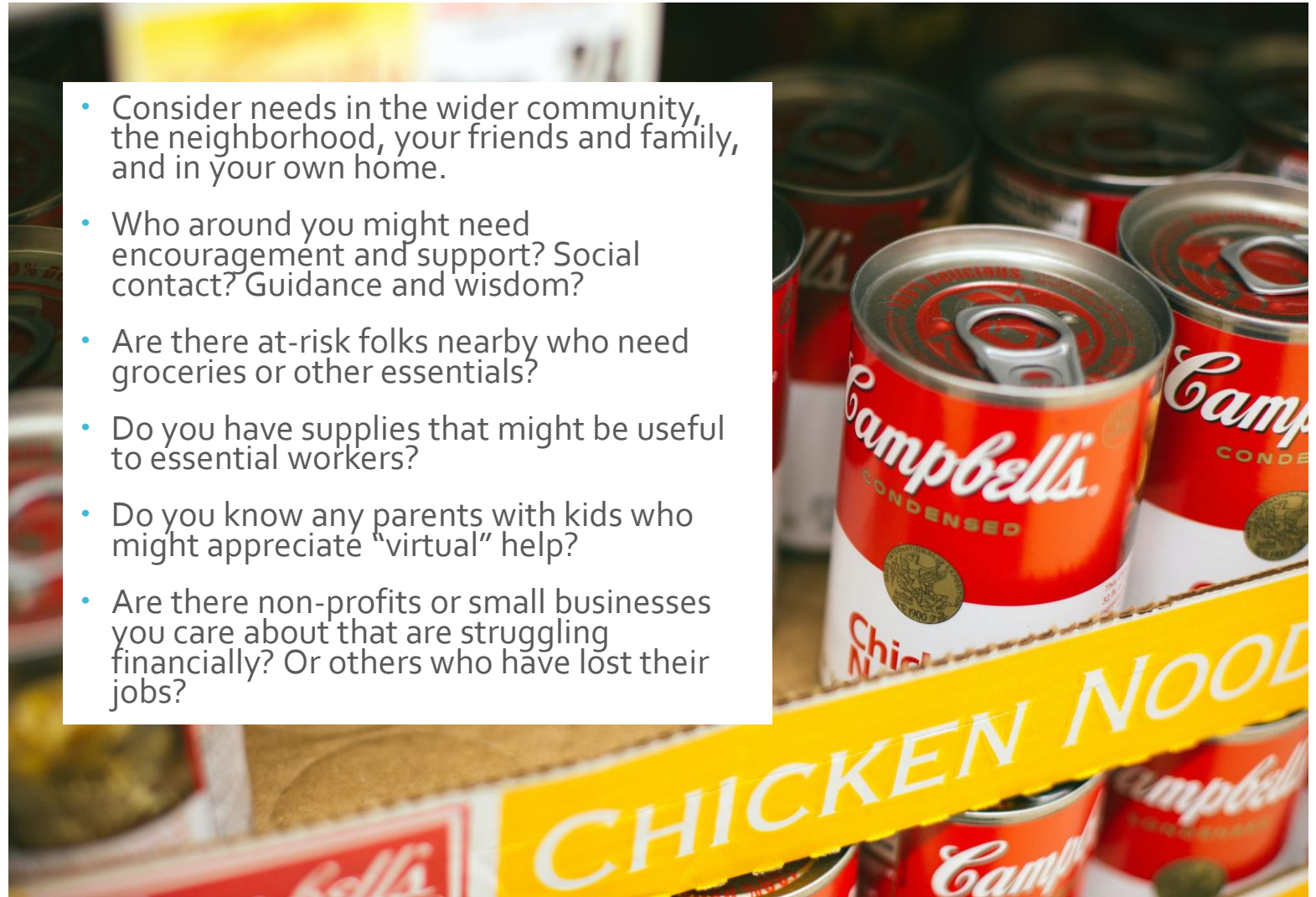
Dementia Beyond Disease: Enhancing Well-being. Al Power, MD.

But how do we
find ways to
give back
when we can't
leave our
homes?



Consider: What are the needs?

- Consider needs in the wider community, the neighborhood, your friends and family, and in your own home.
- Who around you might need encouragement and support? Social contact? Guidance and wisdom?
- Are there at-risk folks nearby who need groceries or other essentials?
- Do you have supplies that might be useful to essential workers?
- Do you know any parents with kids who might appreciate “virtual” help?
- Are there non-profits or small businesses you care about that are struggling financially? Or others who have lost their jobs?



What do you
love to do?

What skills do
you have to
offer?



If you live with memory loss or care for someone with memory loss, what special skills have you acquired that could be shared?

- Coping strategies:
 - For living with the unknown
 - For managing anxiety and depression
 - For dealing with social isolation
 - For overcoming challenge
- Compassion and understanding
- Learning to give and receive care
- Wisdom about priorities, values, what really matters
- Coming to terms with limits

Choosing a “Dementia- Friendly” volunteer task for yourself or a loved one

- Look for opportunities that:
 - Are meaningful and interesting
 - Are challenging enough to be engaging, but not frustrating
 - Use skills built up throughout life
 - Incorporate repeated actions
 - Focus on the present moment or distant past
 - Incorporate social interaction (if desired)
 - Encourage sharing of wisdom or stories
 - Use creative potential
 - Include care for living things – people, pets, plants
 - Show real-time impact/effect
 - Are safe

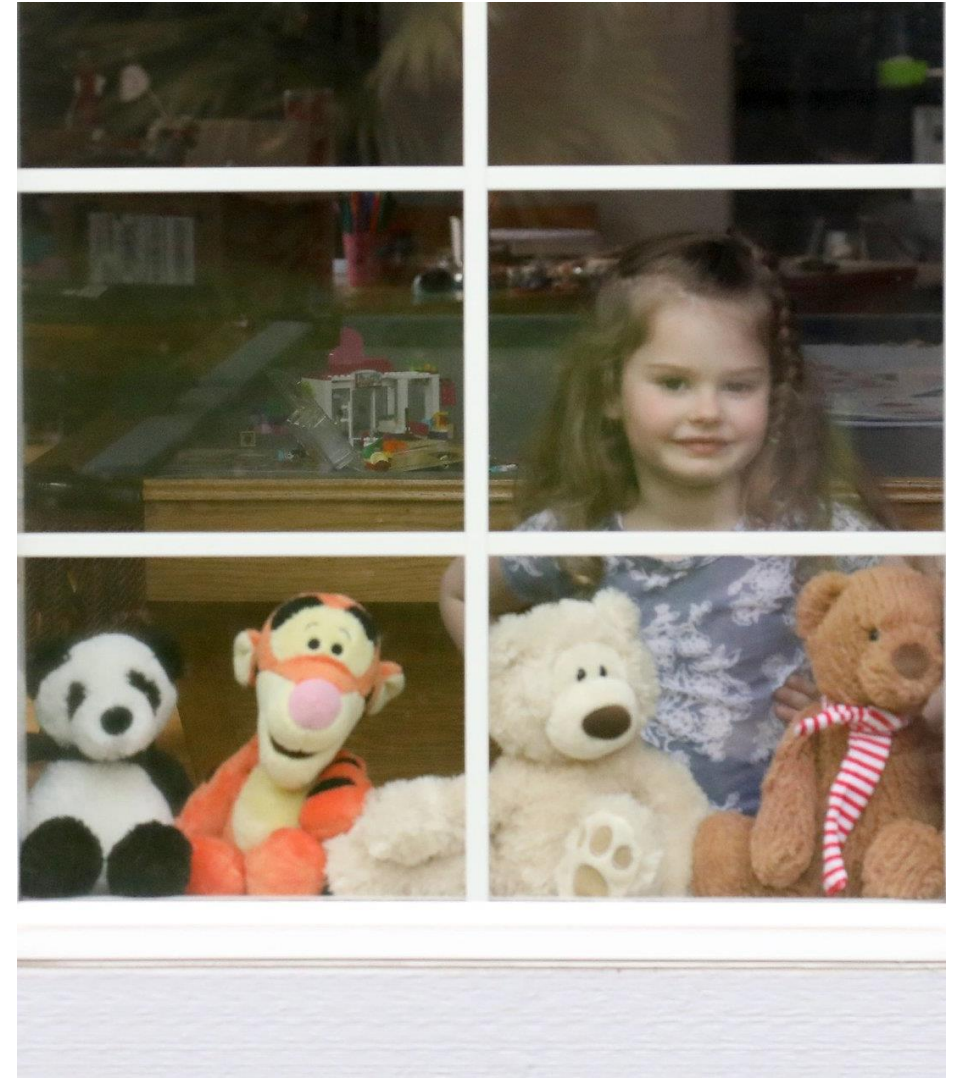
Ideas...

- Working in the garden
- Helping bake for friends or neighbors
- Cutting fabric for sewing masks
- Walking the dog or other household chores
- Playing virtual games with grandkids
- Playing musical instrument for others
- Packaging items for distribution
- Creating encouragement cards

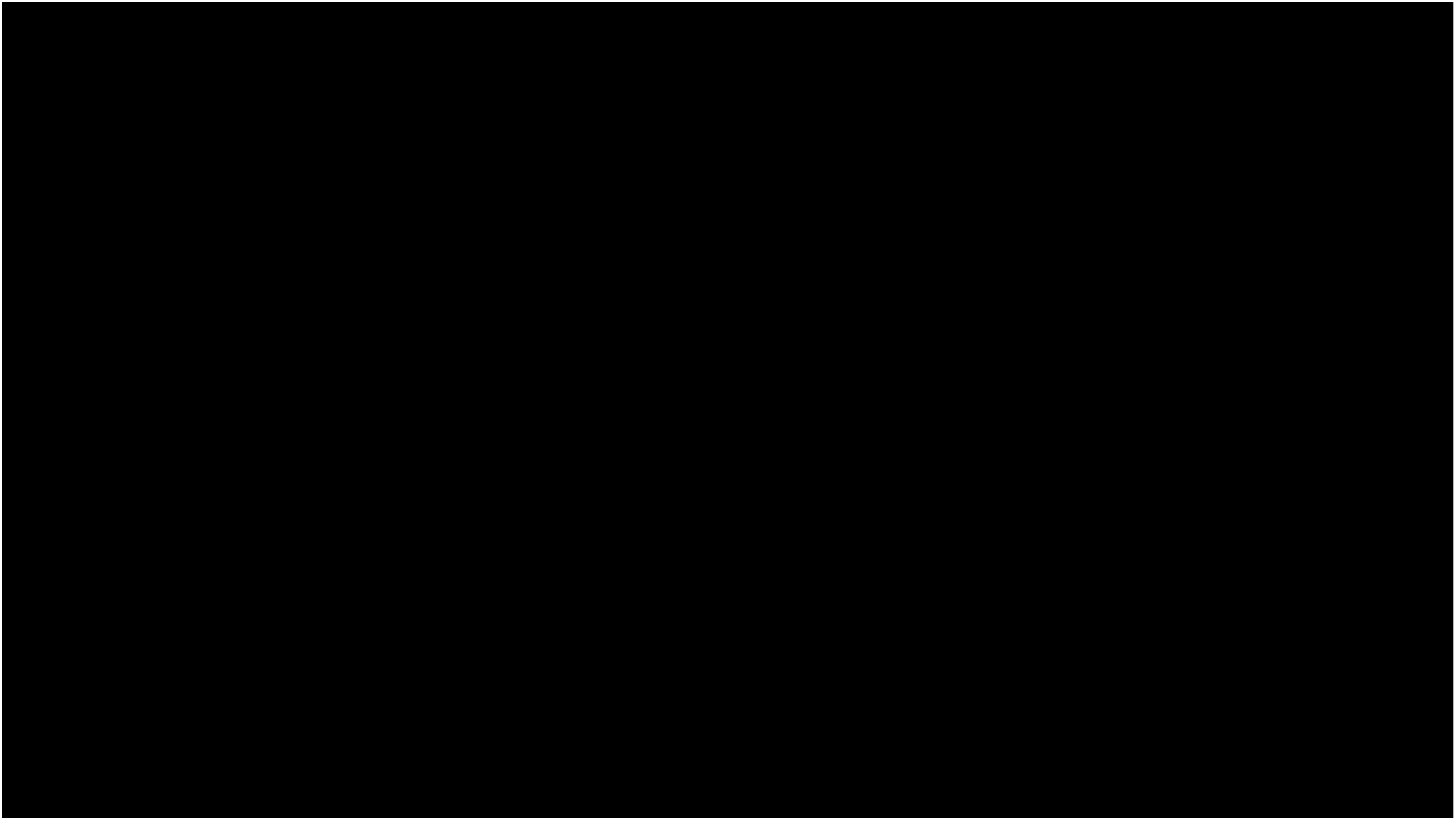


What tools do
you have at
your disposal?

From your
window...

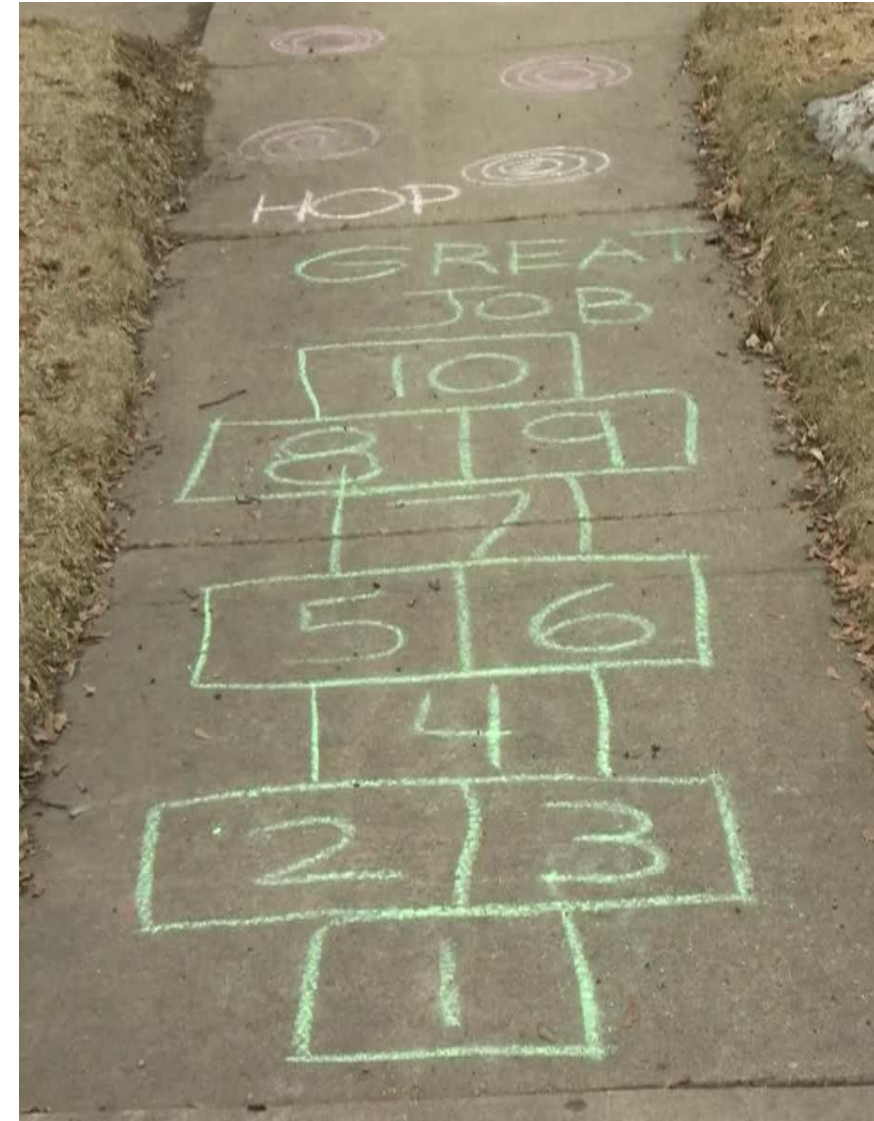


Banners, Bear Scavenger Hunt



“Make a Joyful Noise”

From your
porch or
sidewalk...



Chalk Art or Obstacle Courses



Yard Signs, Thank-You's to Mail Carriers

HELLO! If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is

.....

I live locally at

.....

My phone number is

.....

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

☐ Picking up shopping

☐ Posting mail

☐ A friendly phone call

☐ Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep.

#ViralKindness

Kindness Cards

On the side of
your house, or
in an alley?



<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/04/06/coronavirus-themed-murals-from-around-the-world.html> - Seattle Street Artist Carlos Giovanni

Jason Redmond. Reuters.

Using your phone...

- Check in on neighbors
- Call friends and family – especially those who are isolated, or extroverted!
- Organize a phone tree for keeping in touch or sharing news
- Offer volunteer phone counsel/support



Online...

- Teach family or friends a skill or language
- Share family stories and history
- Distract grandkids while their parents work – sing, play games, use imagination
- Pass along funny stories or uplifting news
- Write encouraging emails or messages



Through the mail...

- Encouraging notes or thank you cards?
- Fun photos or cartoons?
- Family memoirs?
- Care packages?



Volunteering from the comfort of your own home

- Be My Eyes <https://www.bemyeyes.com/>
 - Assist blind and low vision people with daily tasks
- Chemo Angel <https://www.bemyeyes.com/>
 - Send cards or gifts to persons undergoing chemotherapy
- eBird <https://ebird.org/home>
 - Track birds to contribute to bird research and conservation decisions
- Binky Patrol <https://binkypatrol.org/>
 - Sew emotional support blankets
- LibroVox <https://librivox.org/pages/volunteer-for-librivox/>
 - Record portions of audiobooks for public domain

<https://www.operationwarm.org/blog/25-volunteer-jobs-to-do-from-home/>

Finding virtual volunteer opportunities

- Volunteer Match: <https://www.volunteermatch.org/covid19>
 - 250,000+ Virtual / Remote options, for example:
 - Tutoring kids
 - Recording songs for hospice patients
 - Calling homebound seniors
 - Responding to crisis line texts
 - Participating in “no-contact” drives for essentials like diapers
- Idealist: www.idealist.org
 - Mutual Aid Groups (for helping out in a neighborhood)
 - Volunteer opportunities – can search for “remote” or “COVID-19 related”

Finally...give
yourself credit
for what you're
already doing!

