



September 1, 2020

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## Slow the spread through social media and creative arts challenges

Riverside County partnered with Inland Empire nonprofit, Reach Out, to launch two new programs to help slow the spread of coronavirus through art.

“We know our communities want to help stop coronavirus and get through this pandemic stronger. Through creating and sharing art, these programs will help residents do just that by playing a meaningful role to slow the spread,” said Diana Fox, CEO of Reach Out.

The first program is a social media challenge in which budding influencers submit a 30-second video focused on one or more of the three simple steps to slow the spread: wear a mask, keep six feet of distance and wash hands frequently.

The other program, known as the health ambassador program, is a creative arts entry contest, in which would-be artists are asked to submit some form of artwork (e.g., photograph, music, poetry, sculpture, painting or drawing). Potential artwork themes include “Reasons I wear a mask” and “What I miss most during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Entries for both programs will be reviewed by a panel of community judges.

“There are so many artists and young people who can use their imagination to express themselves creatively and get the right message out there,” said Kim Saruwatari, director of RUHS-Public Health. “The social media challenge and health ambassador program will target younger audiences, which is critical to help slow then stop the spread of coronavirus.”

Winning entries will be highlighted on social media and recognized by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, along with placement in a public location for display. The top winner each week will receive a \$50 gift card, sponsored by donors to Reach Out and not paid for by CARES Act funding. Twelve grand prize winners will each receive a \$100 gift card, donated by Reach Out and local businesses.

“The social media challenge and health ambassador program promote good health and community spirit,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “These programs can help peers stay motivated to follow public health messages to protect themselves and their families. I am inspired that, in challenging times, our residents always come through and serve our communities.”

Submissions must fit with the three simple steps and encourage slowing the spread of coronavirus. In addition:

- Multiple entries by the same person may be submitted in either category.
- All entries must be the entrant’s own work.
- All entries must include a consent and release form. Youth under the age of 18 must have parent/guardian permission to participate.
- The entry deadline for both programs is October 9.

Visit [www.MasksAreMedicine.org](http://www.MasksAreMedicine.org) for more information or to enter the programs.

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