



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
**Aging & Long-Term Services**  
**Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham**  
Katrina Hotrum-Lopez, Cabinet Secretary  
Sam Ojinaga, Deputy Cabinet Secretary  
Buffie Saavedra, Deputy Cabinet Secretary

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2020

# Create & Connect Campaign Kicks Off with Encouraging Messages to Seniors and Adults with Disabilities

*New Mexico's Aging and Long-Term Services Department is partnering with organizations across the state to coordinate uplifting letter writing and engaging social media programing.*

**NEW MEXICO-** Beginning in March, the Aging and Long Term Services Department (ALTSD) distributed 350 tablets across the state to connect residents of long term care facilities with their loved ones. Now ALTSD is launching the Create and Connect Campaign which includes using three different platforms to encourage seniors and adults with disabilities during this season of isolation:

1. Send It!
2. Stream It!
3. Broadcast It!

**Send It!** Participate in a pen pal program that is soliciting letters for seniors and adults with disabilities. Letters can be sent to:

ALTSD- The Create & Connect Campaign  
8500 Menaul Blvd. NE, Suite B-350  
Albuquerque, NM 87112

Letters received at this address will be included in the Food Boxes being distributed across the state to low income seniors and disabled adults, and subsequently to residents of long term care facilities. To showcase the letters and spread their uplifting messages of hope and togetherness, ALTSD is asking participants to share their letters or art by reading them in a video or taking a picture and tagging @NewMexicoAging and using the hashtag #CreateAndConnect . Guidelines for writing the letters can be found on the ALTSD website: [www.nmaging.state.nm.us](http://www.nmaging.state.nm.us).

**Stream It!** In addition to sharing messages with the #CreateAndConnect hashtag, ALTSD will also be coordinating engaging content on their Facebook page. Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. [MST], the department will kick off their first "Senior Social Hour" featuring furry friends from the City of Albuquerque's Animal Welfare Department. Following Thursdays at 1pm will include an array of programming from educational to entertaining segments. To view the live segment on Thursdays follow @NewMexicoAging and tune it at 1:00 p.m.

Many partnering agencies have jumped on board to help coordinate the campaign, write letters, and participate in senior social hour segments. Create & Connect collaborators include: the Children, Youth & Families Department [CYFD], Albuquerque Public Schools, the Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails, the New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, ALTSD volunteers, the Bernalillo County Department of Behavioral Health Services, the Jennifer Riordan Foundation, the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints, and the City of Albuquerque Department of Senior Affairs. Multiple Ambassadors have also joined the campaign to promote and encourage participation, including: Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, U.S. Representative Deb Haaland, Aging & Long Term Services

Cabinet Secretary Katrina Hotrum-Lopez, the Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails CEO Rebecca Latham, and Youth Ambassadors- Dhavina Kholwadwala, Averie and Joshua Riordan, and Alana Latham.

"As difficult as this pandemic has been for all of us, I am amazed every day by the generosity of spirit displayed by New Mexicans," Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham said. "Every single day New Mexicans are stepping up to help keep their neighbors fed, to help keep their neighbors safe, and to help keep in contact with those who need our support, including seniors and those with disabilities."

"For many people this period of isolation feels incredibly lonely and sad. We want to help make a bridge that connects us to our seniors and disabled adults. We hope they'll join us to laugh, learn and engage. It's so important to reach out to those vulnerable and encourage them right now," said ALTSD Cabinet Secretary Katrina Hotrum-Lopez. "This program is mentally beneficial for those writing the letters and participating in the social programming as well as those who are audience members and letter recipients."

As additional partners jump on board and the program expands, additional information, events and resources will be released.

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