

# SENIOR FRIENDLY VISITOR CALLS

The Washoe County Senior Advisory Board and Age Friendly Reno volunteers are reaching out to all seniors during the Covid-19 crisis. If you are feeling cut off from friends and family right now and would like to hear a friendly voice, our volunteers are ready to give you a call!

Would you like a friendly call from a Washoe County senior volunteer every week? Or would you like to join us as a volunteer and call other seniors?

**Call Washoe County Human Services Agency, Senior Services now at  
775 328 2575 x9**



## **Friendly Visitor Call Project Update, January 2022**

By Donna Clontz

The Washoe County Senior Advisory Board began the Friendly Visitor Calling Project in December 2020. Volunteers call homebound older adults referred by Senior Services social workers on a weekly basis just to chat and check on their wellbeing. If an elder needs help with any social services, their request is forwarded to Washoe Senior Services via an email to [sr\\_info@washoecounty.gov](mailto:sr_info@washoecounty.gov)

The project's purpose is to reduce social isolation, depression and anxiety for these elders during the pandemic. The calls also provide an opportunity to check on the elders' overall wellbeing. The first referrals were Senior Services clients receiving home delivered meals and/or were on Senior Services caseloads. Other isolated, lonely seniors were also referred by staff of Reno Housing Authority and Sierra Manor. As the program grew, more community volunteers were added as callers.

All Friendly Visitor callers apply to the Washoe County Senior Services Volunteer Coordinator (Todd Acker) to become Washoe County volunteers. They must pass a background check before they are approved to join the program. They then attend a Zoom orientation describing their role, tips on getting conversations started, how to refer for services and information about local available community resources for seniors and their caregivers.

Donna Clontz is the volunteer administrator of the program and maintains the list of callers and elders receiving calls. She keeps in touch with callers by email and phone calls and does periodic zoom calls with the callers. When a volunteer is cleared to become a caller, Donna does a zoom orientation with them via PowerPoint presentation.

The project started with 34 elders and 13 callers. Over time elders have dropped out of the project due to death, illness or stating they don't need the calls any longer. As of January 2022, we have 15 elders and 11 callers on our project list. We still get referrals from Senior Services, Reno Housing Authority and Sierra Manor. We do outreach at Senior Coalition meetings and via flyers posted at senior centers, senior living programs, and recreation centers. We will do outreach at the upcoming Hello Project monthly events in 2022 to recruit more elders and more callers.