



**DD Input Session: Transitioning Back to Services
Friday June 5th
10:00 AM to 12:00PM**

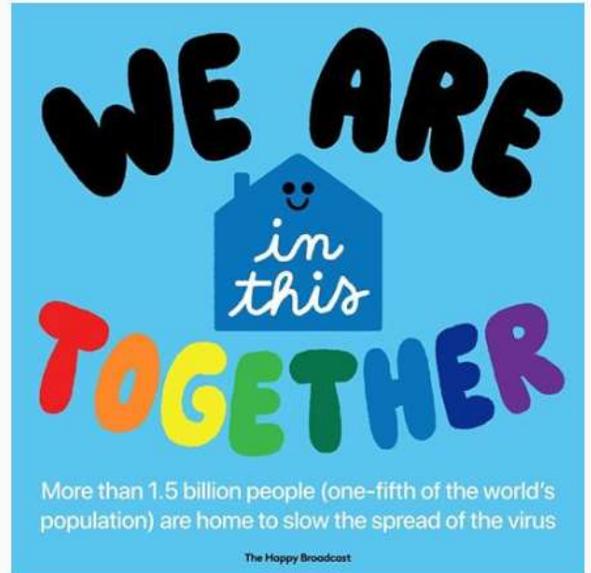
**Join us for a discussion about
re-opening the DD system.**

The Division and RI Parent Information Network are co-sponsoring an online session to get your input into how the DD system should re-open. Please bring your ideas, concerns, and questions. You can also send in your questions to us before or after the session at BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov.

The input session will be held on Zoom. There will be breakout sessions for smaller group discussions, followed by a discussion of next steps.

You can choose your breakout session when pre-registering. **Please use this link to register:**

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=87gazgoab&oeidk=a07eh4dadt1acabb424> [events.r20.constantcontact.com]



Hospital Visitation Policy Changes

The Department of Health has revised their visitation policy to accommodate people with disabilities who need supports. The additional language states that:

When a support person is essential to the care of a patient with a disability, including...patients with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD), dementia, and/or behavioral health needs... accommodations for the patient should be made so that the patient can be accompanied by the support person. These accommodations can facilitate communication with hospital staff, accessibility, equal access to treatment and/or the provision of informed consent in accordance with the civil rights of patients with disabilities.

A support person may include a family member, guardian, community support provider, peer support specialist, or personal care attendant. In some instances, there may be a need to permit the designation of two support people to ease the burden on any one individual support person, while still permitting only one support person to be present at a time.

Patients with a disability shall similarly be allowed to use assistive technology (e.g., smart phones, tablets, and other communication devices, such as assistive technology and communication boards, to facilitate communication and ensure equal access.

REOPENING RI: NAVIGATING OUR WAY

Phase 2 of Re-Opening RI begins June 1

Excerpted from the Governor's communication on 5/22/20. If you or someone you know wants to receive Info from the Governor's Office on Rhode Island's COVID-19 Response, use this link to sign up: [\[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)



Phase II: Navigating our way

We'll try new models for doing business and for living while social distancing.

In Phase Two, we're going to be navigating our way forward. Our focus is on getting more Rhode Islanders back to work while continuing to prioritize public health and safety. Everything is still going to feel different, but we're going to start to get back to doing some of the things we've missed.

In Phase Two, the social gathering limit will be 15 people. While that's a big change, the rules around it are still the same: you still need to practice social distancing, you still need to wear your face covering, and you shouldn't be seeing a different 15 people every day. I know that we're all anxious to reunite with friends and family, but we need to take it slowly as we start to get together with the people we've missed.

More people can go into stores and restaurants, but there will still be restrictions on how many people can go in at the same time.

Movie theaters and concerts will still be closed, but we know it's a lot easier to keep people spaced out when we're outside and that the virus also doesn't spread the same way outside. In phase 2 we can start to allow outdoor activities to come back. This includes things like going to the zoo and outdoor activities such as mini golf and visits to parks.

Gyms will start to re-open with restrictions. Gyms have been asked to use a reservation system so they can prevent overcrowding and keep people socially distant. If you take a class, you should stay with the same group consistently.

Hair Salons, barbershops, and other personal services like nailcare and massage can open, but both the worker and customer must wear a mask. Customers will have to make appointments and be spaced apart, and cleaning will be very important.

There's a lot of change in Phase Two, and that's exciting. We have a lot to look forward to. But please be mindful that this virus is still very much with us. We don't want to jeopardize our progress. Rhode Island needs everyone to do the right thing and hold on a little longer.

For more information see <https://www.reopeningri.com/>

Free Tax Preparation Assistance for People with Disabilities for Filing Returns by July 15, 2020

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides free assistance through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) to people with disabilities, seniors, and others who may need help in preparing their taxes. Information about eligibility, VITA locations, and documentation to bring to a help session is available on the IRS website. For people with disabilities, the IRS also provides a page with accessibility information, including large print tax forms and instructional videos in American Sign Language.



To learn more, click [Free Tax Preparation Assistance \[nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com).

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline

Spearheaded by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#), this 24-hour, confidential hotline has been offering free crisis counseling to anyone experiencing emotional distress since 2012.

Available across the United States in multiple languages, the Disaster Distress Helpline offers information on how to recognize distress and its effects (<https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-distress-helpline/warning-signs-risk-factors>), tips for healthy coping during times of crisis, and referrals to local call centers for follow-up support.

Anyone who is feeling high levels of stress, anxiety, or depression during COVID-19 can call or text the numbers at right to get on the line with a trained volunteer crisis counselor.

Anyone who is feeling high levels of stress, anxiety, or depression during COVID-19 can call or text the numbers below.

English

- Text **TalkWithUs** to **66746**
- Call **1-800-985-5990**

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

- Text **TalkWithUs** to **66746**
- Call **1-800-985-5990** using your preferred **relay service**
- **TTY 1-800-846-8517**

Spanish Speakers

- Call **1-800-985-5990** and press "2"
- Text **Hablanos** to **66746**

HSPH COVID-19 Mental Health Forum

A series of online seminars hosted by the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), the [COVID-19 Mental Health Forum](#) introduces evidence-based skills to managing stress specifically related to the novel coronavirus outbreak. Hosted by Professor of Psychiatric Epidemiology Dr. Karestan Koenan and colleagues, each forum features experts discussing emotional, psychological, and physical health issues related to the pandemic.

The seminars are free and open to the public, featuring a list of online resources along with a Q&A session at the end. Forums cover different topics every week, and are also available for viewing online afterward. Just scroll down on [the forum's homepage](#) to find previous discussions. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/coronavirus/covid-19-news-and-resources/covid-19-mental-health-forum-series/>

How the Inclusive Art Project Transformed Old Silos into Towering Masterpieces



A team of artists has transformed a series of drab cement silos into the world’s largest “open-air museum”—and they did it with inclusivity at the forefront of their mission.

What were once abandoned silos are now covered in colorful murals. The towering masterpieces dot the landscape of the Spanish province of Ciudad Real. Artist Okuda San Miguel is behind the project that’s about a lot more than beautifying the region. It’s also promoting the value of inclusion in art and society. Which is why San Miguel tapped into the creative prowess of locals with intellectual disabilities.

Since collaborating with the group, San Miguel has helped to paint 10 different silos across the region with breathtaking works of art. His team is now working on transforming the interiors of the silos.

WATCH the video:

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/worlds-largest-open-air-gallery-painted-by-people-with-learning-disabilities/>

Silver Linings

This is a section we’re adding to highlight some of the good things going on in the midst of all the difficulties right now. If you have anything you’d like to share, please send it to BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov with the subject: Silver Linings.

Reunited Through BHDDH Job Seekers Club

On Wednesday May 20th the BHDDH/DD Employment team of Tracey and Jay hosted their biweekly Job Seekers Club Zoom Meeting. During the challenging distancing of Covid-19 we offer the opportunity to stay virtually socially connected. It was great to see more faces than the previous meeting. Our featured guest was Keri who joined us to talk about owning her own flower delivery business and additionally having two part time jobs.

As we were checking in and introducing ourselves, Keri recognized one of the new faces that showed up in the grid of Zoom screens. Keri suddenly said hold on, walked away for a minute and came back holding up an awesome photograph of the two of them. It turns out Yaicha and she were classmates from the same high school! The two young ladies giggled and decided to re-engage with one another through Zoom for now and hopefully in person in the future. It’s wonderful to be able to share a story of a positive effect of these strange virtual times. We are in this together, so stay connected and together we will make it through.



Good News Resources

Here are a few places to bookmark when you need to find inspiration for good deeds or just need a hit of positivity.

- A group of 7th grade boys from Connecticut have used their quarantine time to create a **kindness website** (<https://www.brighterdaysforall.com/>) where people can upload pictures and descriptions of acts of **#CoronaKindness**. They have a **daily challenge** and a **blog**.
- **Upworthy** has a great Instagram feed (<https://www.instagram.com/upworthy/>), and a website too, (<https://www.upworthy.com/>)
- **The Good News Network** (<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org>) has an archive of more than 20k good news stories, and is updated regularly. They even have **an app**. Check out the video of Don't Worry, Be Happy done with only kitchen utensils and microwave beeps!
- If you haven't seen it yet, check out John Krasinski's YouTube channel, **Some Good News** (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOe_y6KKvS3PdIfb9q9pGug)
- The following sites all curate good news stories when you need a quick boost
 - **The TODAY Show:** <https://www.today.com/news/good-news>
 - **MSN:** <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/good-news>
 - **Canoe:** <https://canoe.com/category/news/good-news>
 - **Tank's Good News:** <https://tanksgoodnews.com/>

Ideas for Helping Others During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Science tells us that helping other people makes us feel good. It makes us healthier, and more successful. Asking for help has all the same benefits. Never have generosity, gratitude, and connection been more important.

1. Surprise a friend or neighbor by leaving flowers or a treat on their doorstep.
2. Anyone, anywhere could leave **sidewalk chalk messages of support** for their community.
3. Send greeting cards to neighbors, friends, and essential workers.
 - Writing a note to a neighbor is a safe, fun, and easy way to stay connected. You can even turn it into an art project by crafting your own cards.
 - Spread the love beyond your neighborhood by dropping a note for your mail carrier or delivery person the next time they come around.
 - Mail cards to your local medical center to show your appreciation for our healthcare professionals.
 - Order stamps online to show your support for the postal service, which has been struggling during the pandemic.



The First Degree: Woman Is First Person With Down Syndrome To Graduate From Rowan University

Excerpted from [Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com)

AnnaRose Rubright has always worked to be a positive role model for her younger sisters. As the oldest of six girls, it was important to the 24-year-old from Medford, New Jersey, to show them the importance of hard work and how even with a disability, she could accomplish her dreams.

In early May, one of those dreams turned into a reality when she achieved her lifelong goal of graduating from a four-year university. In the process, she became the first person with down syndrome to receive a diploma from Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey.

Rubright graduated with a bachelor's degree in radio, television and film on May 8. The ceremony was held over Zoom due to COVID-19. "It was very emotional for me and a bit overwhelming," Rubright said. "Most of my family members cried."

Rubright graduated from Shawnee high school in 2014. She earned an associate's degree from Rowan College at Burlington County, a community college that partners with Rowan University, in 2017. Shortly thereafter, she officially transferred to Rowan University.

Rubright was one of 2,400 students with disabilities at Rowan during the last academic year, according to John Woodruff, the director for the academic success center and disability resources. He says students like AnnaRose are held to the same standard as every other student. Rowan does offer students with disabilities accommodations to help them through college. Some of those include tutoring and even pairing those students with graduate students to help with organizational skills and time management, something Rubright took advantage of while at Rowan.

College students with disabilities are more likely to drop out of school, and only 34 percent complete a four-year program – far less than their able-bodied peers, according to the [National Center for Special Education Research](https://www.ncsd.org/).

"There were times when I watched her frustration, I watched her struggle, and I said to her 'you have an associates degree, you can be done if you want,'" Lin Rubright said. "But she just wouldn't quit." On the contrary, Rubright sought out even more opportunities. During her tenure at Rowan, she was inducted into Delta Alpha Pi, a national honor society for students with disabilities; she addressed a panel at the United Nations; she lobbied legislators in Washington D.C. and Trenton for disability rights; and she created multiple videos for the National Down Syndrome Society. She was even part of a [PSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GggfYQCcKpY) with actress Olivia Wilde, that was part of a campaign for World Down Syndrome day in 2016. (See it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GggfYQCcKpY>)

Through her experiences, Rubright has realized her love for online media, documentary, podcasts, and storytelling. She hopes to one day work in radio; she is also working with her family to create a production company. With the company, Rubright hopes to tell stories impacting people with disabilities. One topic she hopes to cover is "Law Syndrome," which Rubright describes as laws that unfairly allow companies to profit off the disabled.

As she embarks on the next leg of her journey, Rubright has advice for other students with disabilities, especially those hoping to earn a bachelor's degree of their own.

"Advocate for yourself," she said. "And be heard in the real world."

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, BH Link is here for you

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465)

If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)

Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY TRIAGE CENTER at 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;

Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website cdc.gov/coronavirus

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

Includes a link to ASL videos

BHDDH Information on COVID-19's Impact on DD Services and the DD Community

Website bhddh.ri.gov/COVID

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email callcenter@ripin.org

Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials

Website <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you

Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from the Division, you can sign up on our website. From the main BHDDH page at bhddh.ri.gov, select **What's New**, then go to bottom and click on **DD Community Newsletter**. The link to sign up for the BHDDH Newsletter is directly below the title, as shown in the picture at right.



DD Community Newsletter
SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

Contacting the Division

The department is working on a reduced workforce and therefore calls should not be placed directly to your social caseworker. DDD has put 24-hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers below. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.

401-462-3421

8:30 AM → 4:00 PM

WEEKDAYS DURING BUSINESS HOURS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS
- QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES

During business hours
(Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00),
for questions or support
(401) 462-3421
Para español, llame
(401) 462-3014

401-265-7461

4:00 PM → 10:00 PM

AFTER HOURS ON WEEKDAYS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

For emerging or imminent care
related questions,
Mon - Fri 4pm-10pm and
weekends 8:30am-10pm
(401) 265-7461

401-265-7461

8:30 AM → 10:00 PM

ON WEEKENDS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Send general questions to the
AskDD email address. Please
do not email critical issues.
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

E-MAIL THE DIVISION

BHDDH.AskDD@BHDDH.RI.GOV

HELP US KEEP THE PHONE LINES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLING WITH A VITAL NEED!

WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL FOR:

- NON-CRITICAL CONCERNS about Your Services and Supports
- GENERAL QUESTIONS about Your Services or the RI DD System

911

**FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES
CALL 911
RIGHT AWAY. DON'T WAIT!**

For medical or
healthcare related
emergencies, call
your Primary Care
Physician or 911

CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

CALL FOR:

- ROUTINE Healthcare Questions
- NON-EMERGENCY Medical Care

FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE
DON'T go to their office unless they tell you to!

Quarantine Fun for Everyone!



Read or Listen to Books:

- Relay Reader [Relay Reader™ - Relay Reader](#)
- Listen & Read [ESL English Language Learning - Adult Literacy - Listening & Reading - Audio-books - Stories](#)



- Library Reading App [Download the Libby App: ebooks & audiobooks FREE from your library](#)
- Audible Books: [Audible Stories: Free Audiobooks for Kids](#)

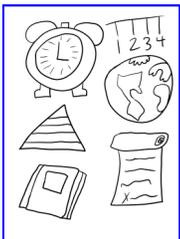
Get Your Exercise:



- Autism-friendly Exercise System [ExerciseBuddy - Apps for Autism](#)
- Workout With Arnold Schwarzenegger [Stay at home, stay fit : u/GovSchwarzenegger](#)

Take a Tour!

- Video Tour 12 Famous Museums From Around the World [12 Museums From Around the World That You Can Visit Virtually | Travel + Leisure](#)
- Video Tour 12 Museums and Historical Sites [12 virtual-reality tours to check out during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- Video Tour 20 Museums, Zoos, Aquariums, and Landmarks [20 Virtual Field Trips to Take with Your Kids](#)

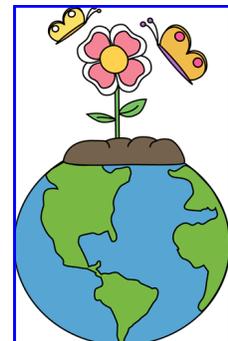


For History Lovers:

- Big History Project (very cool!) [Big History Project](#)

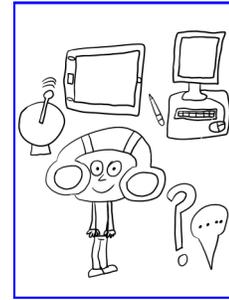
For Nature Lovers:

- Live Webcams of Animals & Ecosystems [Explore.org](#)
- Explore/Share Your Observations from Nature [A Community for Naturalists · iNaturalist](#)



Interesting Hodge Podge:

- Livestreams With The Met Opera [Nightly Met Opera Streams](#)
- Online Jigsaw Puzzles [Free Online Jigsaw Puzzles](#)
- Did You Ever Wonder...? [Wonderopolis: Where the Wonders of Learning Never Cease](#)
- Try a New Recipe [LA Times Cooking - Recipes from the Los Angeles Times](#)
- Explore & Race Through Wikipedia! [The Wiki Game - Wikipedia Game - Explore Wikipedia!](#)
- Learn a New Language [Duolingo - The world's best way to learn a language](#)



Arts, Crafts, and Sewing:



- Free Patterns for Crafts and Sewing [Free Patterns Archives](#)
- Free Drawing Tutorial Videos <https://lzmstudio.com/free-videos/>
- Create Animation With This Free App [Animation Desk | The Best Animation App](#)
- Experiments with Music: [Chrome Music Lab](#)
- Doodling With Mo Willems [THANK YOU THURSDAYS! with Mo Willems](#)

Fun Ideas to Share with Friends:

- Buddy Calls- make a list of 2 or 3 people to call and check in on each week. Encourage your buddies to call 2 or 3 of their buddies, and so on.



- Plant some seeds to grow flowers or vegetables and see what comes up!
- Find a new recipe to try out!



- Team story writing - everyone shares a sentence or 2 to create a story. Some starter ideas:

One day, I woke up and decided to....

My friend wanted to get a dog, so the first thing she did was...

- Make up creative handwashing lyrics, sung to the tune of Happy Birthday, or 20 seconds from another well-known song.



Can't Stop The Feeling!



May 29 & 30, 2020

**ALL THE FUN AND
EXCITEMENT OF STATE
SUMMER GAMES FROM
THE SAFETY OF YOUR
HOME!**

FRIDAY, MAY 29TH 7:00PM

VIRTUAL OPENING CEREMONIES:

- Mike Montecalvo, WPRI 12/Fox Providence Master of Ceremonies
- Guest Speakers
- Virtual Parade of Athletes
- Torch Run
- Live Lighting of Olympic Cauldron
- Music

SATURDAY, MAY 30TH 9:00 AM

VIRTUAL COMPETITION 9:00 AM

Hosted by Yianni Kourakis, WPRI 12/Fox Providence

VIRTUAL OLYMPIC VILLAGE 10:30 AM—12:30

- Health Segments
- Arts & Crafts Videos
- Yoga & Zumba
- More to be announced!

SATURDAY, MAY 30TH 7:00PM CLOSING CEREMONY & ATHLETE DANCE

SPOTS ARE LIMITED AND PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Go to www.specialolympicsri.org to pre-register

CEREMONY BEGINS AT 7:00 PM FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY THE ATHLETE DANCE

JOIN IN THE FUN!

Go to www.specialolympicsri.org to get all the details!

When it's time for an event, go to <https://iframe.dacast.com/b/169448/c/546073>

*(Please note, this link will only be live when an event is going on.
Dates and times are listed above)*

Official Media Partner



Official Audio Visual Partner



Special Olympics
Rhode Island

