

The Defender: Coronavirus Edition

A mini
newsletter



Corona week 5
April 17, 2020

Good times will come back - in person



Chief Ben Baur

Hello LOPD Community! ... and a special shout-out to our newest LOPD members.

I want those of you who are newer to the Department to know that, well, it's not usually like this. New Mexico Public Defenders are a lot of fun, and a lot more collegial than this coronavirus is allowing us to be. We like greeting people and visiting. We like hanging out to solve work problems and to just

socialize and relieve the stress from what is a rewarding but obviously difficult job. I'm really missing that aspect of the work, and I'll bet many of you are as well.

And I'm thinking especially of all of you who just joined us, those of you who haven't gotten to really enjoy the LOPD camaraderie, those who have moved here from out of state and don't have family here to be with, those of you just in the middle of creating your new community here when we were sentenced to this new challenge. For now, we're relying on Zoom, FaceTime, phone calls, Facebook, and other methods to keep in touch. That doesn't come anywhere near the connections and professional and social cohesiveness that we were used to.

But know this: this isn't permanent; it isn't forever. In the very near future, we will be able to transition back into a work environment where we'll spend more time with the great people who work here. We'll travel between floors, between cities. In the meantime, keep working together, keep talking, keep asking how people how they are doing. And reach out. Seriously, reach out. Because there will be people there for you.

I look forward to seeing each one of you sometime soon, in whatever way we can say hello, wave or shake hands, sit down for coffee or a pint, and get as close as we can to the real, personal, public defender spirit. Keep the faith – we'll be back, and we'll be live and in person.

-Ben

'It's really not the same'



Abq Metro Managing Attorney
Tonie Abeyta

We in Albuquerque Metro have a lot of people from out of town or state who have moved here and don't have a lot of family. And even our attorneys who do, they can't go see them because we're essential employees and working with the public. So every week, supervisors have a meeting just to check in. It's not all about work. It's a check in to make sure everyone is OK, ask about concerns. But it's limited with the social distancing. When Kelly (Villanueva) and I are in the office and other attorneys are there, we stop in six feet away and check in. Before, that would be us going in and sitting in their office to chat about the day and cases they had. We have an attorney who just had a baby. We usually celebrate in person with cake, but we couldn't have a baby shower or celebration. One of our attorneys was supposed to get married in May. We would have celebrated that, but it's been postponed. Alicia just passed the bar, and we usually have a big celebration when people have accomplishments. We wished her congratulations on Zoom, but it's really not the same. It's those things, building the community and the friendships that are lacking right now. Those things are the things we're really missing out on.

Other new employees

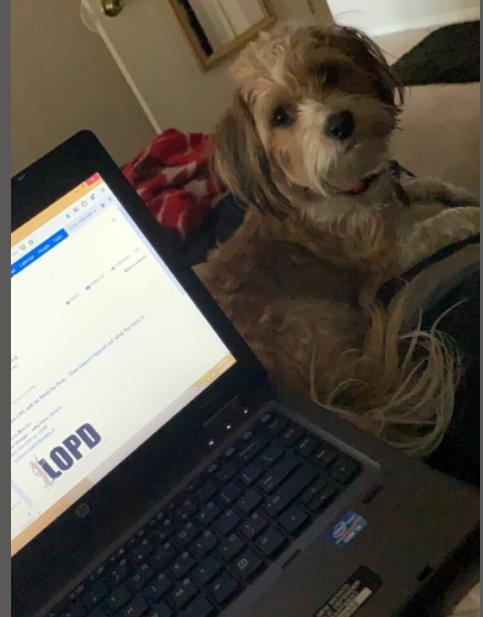
While these aren't the new employees Ben and Tonie are talking about, we're happy they are here, too!



MCDU's Michael Rosenfield had to hire an office manager for home. Yinzer, pictured here resting after the first week, got the job.



Rainey the new Office Chicken checks on Communication Specialist Maggie Shepard's daughter, Signe.



Rah'Coh hangs out with Abq Metro secretary Aubreigh Ford as she teleworks.

In the office, court these days ...



Abq Metro Office Manager Veronica Rosales



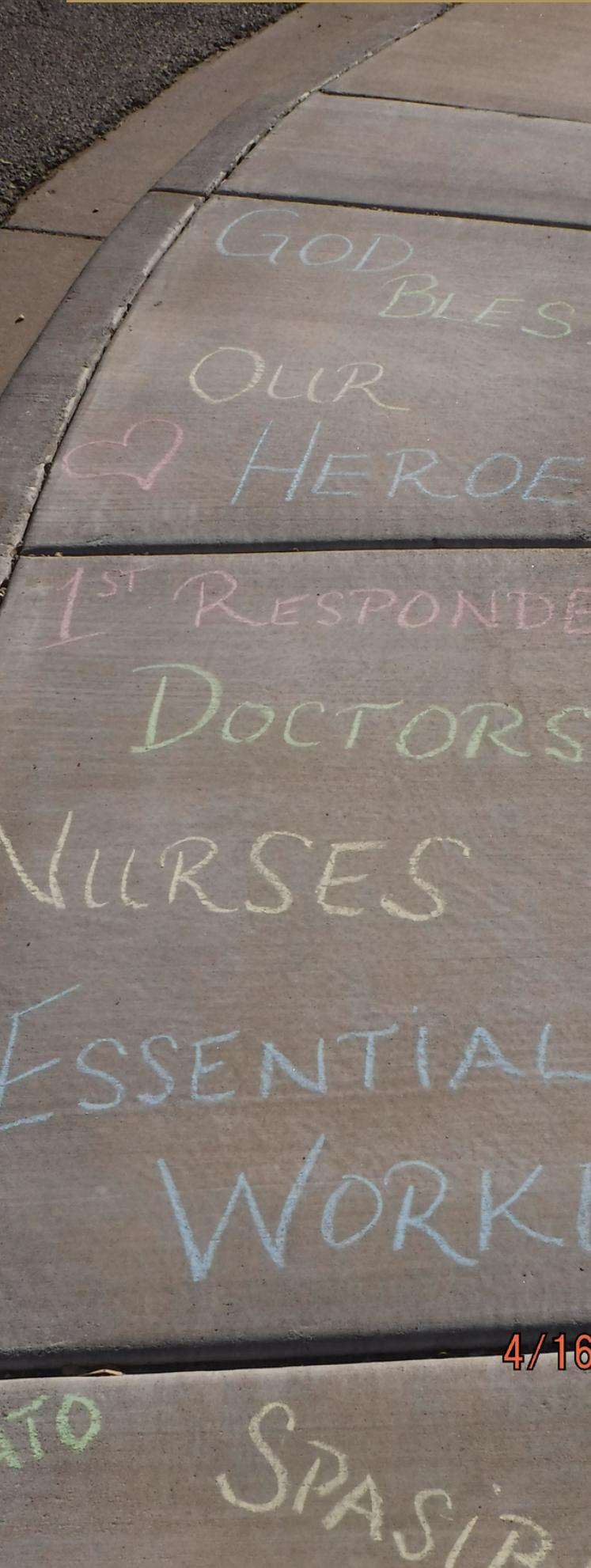
Abq Metro supervising attorney Todd Olmos



Metro secretary Aubreigh Ford



Attorney Jordan Beal from the Roswell office alone in court



Turn on your videos

We all need the connection; brave the camera if you can

Yes, it can certainly be uncomfortable to watch yourself on camera during a virtual meeting like Zoom or Google Meets or even FaceTime. But seeing each other -- and each other's pets -- during this coronavirus time is good for us. It promotes connection. It allows us at least a chance at reading the body language that is so important to communication. And it allows us some sense of the normalcy we got from our work in our offices. So, when you join your next Zoom or virtual meeting, brave the camera if you have one.

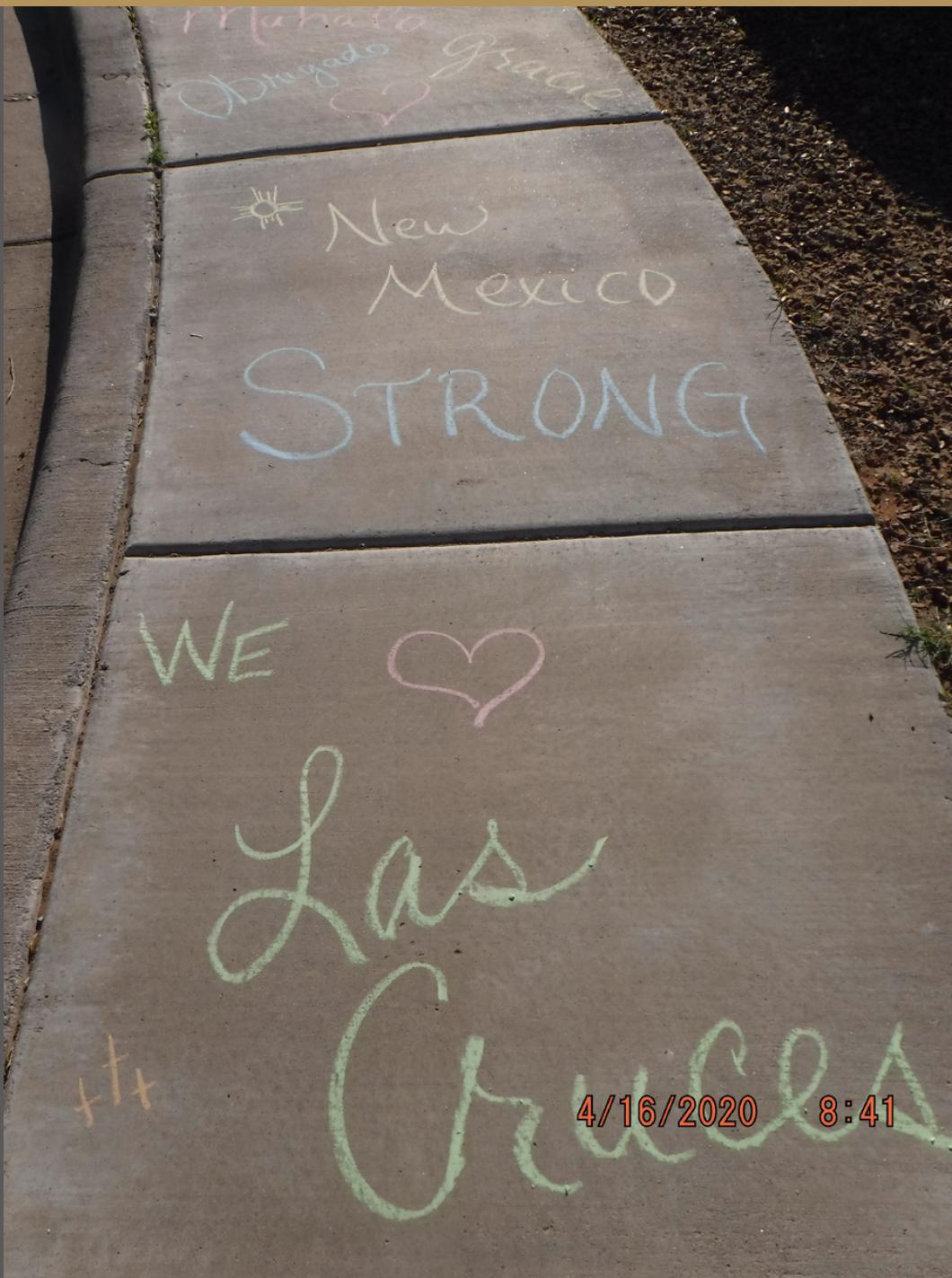


By Gabby Rudnick

Barber brightens clients' day with virtual haircuts to practice social distancing

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Lisa Jenkins, case manager in Las Cruces, decorated the sidewalk in front of her family's home Wednesday morning "to show our appreciation," she said.

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The Major Crimes Defender Unit "gathers" for their meeting. As we push to get people out of jail and prison, the conversation often focuses on people facing nonviolent charges or in prison on nonviolent or low level offenses. That doesn't apply to this group, but they are all still worried about their clients.

Up your screen game

The ways we speak and sit in for a meeting in a conference room doesn't always translate "seamlessly to Brady-Bunch-style quadrants on a computer screen," Joel Schwartzberg reports in the Harvard Business Review.

So how can you level up in Zoom on other online meetings?

DIRECT EYE CONTACT

To "increase the impact of your points when you look deep into the dot" when you are speaking.

LOUD VOICE

"Maintain a strong, clear voice as if you're in a large conference room."

BEST FACE FORWARD

Pick an uncluttered background and fully frame your face with the camera.

YOU ARE BEING WATCHED

Don't consider yourself "at home." Consider yourself "at work." Stay attuned to the meeting.

MUTE

Stay on mute whenever you're not speaking so background noise doesn't distract.