

COMPASSIONATELY FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC

by Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks, June 2021

On June 15, 2021 our State ended the tier system and associated restrictions that were set up to stem the spread of COVID-19. We have come a long, hard way since the disease took its hold fifteen months ago. As we consider the road ahead it is a good time to take a moment to recognize how far we have come in fighting this pandemic.

Our county has gone from having hundreds of people at any one time in our hospitals and ICUs-- and tragically losing more than 1,000 residents to the disease, to now having days with no COVID-19 patients checking into our hospitals. This progress is due to advancements in science that expedited vaccines that are keeping people well and out of the hospital. As a result we have stemmed the death toll of COVID-19. In fact, by and large, those who do end up in the hospital are those who are not vaccinated.

While we rejoice in being able to see people once again in person, hug loved ones, and have our schools and businesses reopen, let us not forget those who have been most impacted. There are those who are suffering long-term health impacts from the disease. Some people lost their living and savings. There are many who are grieving the loss of loved ones. Our hearts go out to those who have been devastated by this disease.

It is a truism that in the worst of times one sees the best in people. In the battle to contain COVID-19 there were many who shined. Indeed, there is a universe of shining stars who led us out of the hardest days of the pandemic. They did so steadily and with strength amid supply challenges and social disruptors. We witnessed our heroic medical community respond when the vaccine was not yet available, risking their own lives to care for their highly contagious COVID-19 patients. We saw a nation come together, neighbors, communities and businesses who struggled and sacrificed to protect others and stop the disease's spread. We learned how truly essential our essential workers are, more than even they knew. Volunteers and donors rose to the challenge, delivering millions of meals to homebound seniors, bringing vaccines to farmworkers, sheltering hundreds of people who were homeless, all right here in our county. There are so many stories of quiet kindness and generosity that they overshadow the shrill voices of those who protested our battle to contain the disease. They say one knows a person's character by how they act in difficult times. We have faced many very difficult times in the last few years and what shines is the kindness of the human spirit.