

# The New Electronic Reality: Two steps forward and one step back

by Elizandro Carrington, Esperanza staff

I equate what is happening to us at the Esperanza to being thrown into the deep end of a pool not knowing how to swim. There is nothing that we are doing that we haven't done before: group texting, video conferencing, FaceBook posting, but instead of us doing it now and then, it has become pivotal to our work. Every day we have to communicate via electronica. We spend all day behind our computers or on the phone. We are creating digital links and bridges between us so that we can continue to do the work that the Esperanza needs to be doing even in these trying times.

I have worked with computers all my working life and some of these technologies I have used for years. So I know and understand them fairly well. Applying my knowledge to help others learn and use them is very satisfying to me. It is like "Yay, now I can actually play with my toys!". It can be a struggle at times because like the real world, some people understand and adapt to new protocols easily and others need guidance and help to move forward. What makes the process easier is that everyone at the Esperanza understands that this is where we need to be. We can't help our community through this pandemic without growth and work on our part.

The strangest part of all of this is that as we move forward and we learn to use cloud-based services and connect to each other via the web, I continually remind myself that there is still a large part of our buena gente at risk of being left behind: those who have only one computer for the whole family or have no computer at all; those who are just now getting comfortable using their phones for more than just phone calls; and others who find that not all phones are equal and that they can barely open up a web browser on their phones much less view a streaming YouTube concert. I, also, constantly put to the forefront that it goes even deeper. That phones and computers are supported by data plans, modems and routers. Do we all have unlimited data? Can we afford internet service? Does the modem or router that we bought five years ago, support the bandwidth we need to view a FaceBook live feed?

These questions force me to remember that technology doesn't solve everything. As much as it opens us up to new frontiers it can close us off from those behind. That as we



"all" move forward we also have to make sure that the "all" that we are talking about is every one in our community and not just us. In the end, I find myself in the same position I have always found myself in. Moving two steps forward and one step back. Any you know what? I'm okay with that. Because, if we lose those who helped support us all these years then what was it all for? So ¡Andale! . . . a bit at a time.

