

# COVID IN THE HOUSE OF OLD



## KALEY'S CHAIR AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

KAYLEY: The second last year that I danced, and it was just the best moment. I still have my dance shoes. Part of me still is a ballerina. I'm so thankful that I got the chance to dance before I got injured.

KAYLEY: It was my 16th birthday, so we decided that we were going to go out to a farm party. And we woke up and we got in the truck, and it had rained the night before and it was very muddy. My driver was speeding, going too fast. We hit a rut and then we went towards the ditch. I can remember thinking like are we going roll? And I was ejected out the front passenger seat with the vehicle landing on top of me. The muffler across my stomach. I was airlifted to Saskatoons Royal University Hospital. I had shattered my C-6 vertebrae, a severe break on my left arm, third degree burns across my stomach, and a collapsed lung. When I woke up, didn't know why I couldn't talk because with a trach. But I was really excited to have my dad back. He came back. I will be stuck with that man until he dies. And my sisters too. Krysta and then Kira.

KAYLEY: Then I got into the city hospital rehabilitation unit. Like I would literally love to go back to that time. It's weird, but it was some of the best times of my life. People often think that like the beginning of an injury is really, really hard. For me, it's the longer I have to experience ableism within society.

They needed the beds. "Kay, we're gonna move you to long-term care." It was definitely a culture shock. I was confused by the way the continuing care assistants do essentially all of the care.

KRYSTA: In Saskatoon Parkridge, they only bathed her once a week. Well, she's not going to go to university with greasy gross hair. That's just not fair. I would come over. I'd do a little cute little hairdo. And that would be your hair for the rest of the week.

KAYLEY: I'm the youngest out of the three. And Krysta was kind of like, stereotypical middle

child.

KRYSTA: I just got bantered between the two.

KAYLEY: I was born in 1996. We lived in Tompkins, Saskatchewan. So, it's like a tiny little town. My dad he's a wonderful human being but he has addiction issues. And my mom was an unmedicated person with bipolar. We grew up hunting. We had dogs. We would attach the sleds to the back of the quads. Then when my parents separated, I think my dad kind of slowly just disappeared.

It was an interesting, slightly traumatizing upbringing, but I don't think I would change where I grew up.

KAYLEY: I don't like long-term care. I don't think housing all of these people in these giant buildings that are completely removed from community is the way to do it. They can be quite ableist. And it can be very difficult if you don't fit the specific type of resident. I was a young person: I had different needs.

KRYSTA: In the beginning, you had a bit more of a social life because you were new to the facilities.

KAYLEY: I did really love anytime they would bring animals in. But the activities didn't happen when I could do them because I was in school.

KAYLEY: They don't like any type of tight clothing or even just a cuter bra. I wear Spanx. It helps keep my blood pressure regulated. It's similar to like an anti-embolism stocking. They couldn't get rid of my Spanx, because the little bit of cinch is kind of a bonus, but like (laugh) it's medical.

I had a partner, and we were engaging in sexual intimacy. And I may have gotten slightly too loud, and they just banged on the door.

KRYSTA: They have the AC in the building so high. They took her heater away, so we got her a heated blanket so she can at least stay warm. Cause if not she was in constant pain.

KAYLEY: A lot of staff don't understand that the relationship is interdependent. All care programs should have disability study classes. Understand crip theory.

When I have a good caregiver who knows my routine, is respectful and just treats me like a normal human being, I don't feel disabled.

KRYSTA: So Kayley getting out of long-term care was actually quite the show (laughs).

KAYLEY: And I just kind of asked her I was like Krista like, would you want to be my full-time caregiver? I bought my house in November of 2017. And then it took about a year, even more than that dammit. Because it needed to be outfitted for me. I left long-term care finally in early September of 2019. Very shortly before 2020 hit and COVID came in.

KRYSTA: She came out of long-term care before COVID. Thank the gods. Because if she was in there, I can already imagine life for her and myself.

KAYLEY: I did research with people who lived in long-term care during COVID. How COVID restrictions impacted their quality of life. And my grandma is also in long-term care. And like I

would think about what my life would be like being in there. And I would think about my grandma, and I would just kind of cry.

I know that someday I'm going to be back in long-term care. I hope it's not until I'm old and close to the end, or at least I hope it's once the system gets better. But I know that I'm going to be there.