



Saskatoon: May 31, 2023 – Story 1 Transcript

SUMMARY KEYWORDS: mother, pandemic, siblings, facility, family member, happening, staff member, frustration, part, started, longer, perk, love, lots, anger, visit, mom, outing, Saskatchewan, care

00:05

Interviewer:

Today is May 31st, 2023.

Interviewee:

Okay. Uhm, so, it was March 13th 2020. Go figure, it was a Friday. The last day that our residents, including my mother got to go out on an outing. The last time my sibling got to go out with my mother, on that outing to a restaurant. The next day, even that evening, things were beginning to shut down. At first the talk around the town was: "Give it two weeks, that's all! It'll be over." So, there was hope.

But that all came crashing down. Two weeks came and left. My mother was always so social. Loved to have people around, always had food to serve company and ear to listen, and just loved life, loved to be doing something, or just be with family and friends. But that all changed. Family could no longer come into the care facility that she lived in, in Saskatchewan.

The fortunate part was that I worked in this care facility, so she could see at least one of her children on a daily basis. But this was not the case for so many other residents that lived in this care, care facility. It was hard not only as a family member, but as a staff member, to see and witness what was happening around the facility. There was anger, pain, frustration, so much loneliness, boredom, feelings of helplessness.

Everything that our facility worked so hard against. The fear of the unknown. No one had answers, and there were very, very, many questions.

My mother started not to eat very well, started not wanting to take her medications. I believe she was lonely. And also, part of her heart was broken as the year before she lost her husband, the man and love of her life of 58 years. And now her children, and friends, and family could no longer come to see her. I did my best coming in early to work. [Cry] Before my shift... [Break]

02:03

Okay... I did my best coming in early to work before my shift, staying late to visit with her, and encouraging her to eat. I would get my siblings on the phone with her. And I even did fish, FaceTimes with

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her. But nothing replaces the feel of the human touch. My mother always had one of my siblings there, every day, especially in the evenings when special events were happening at the care facility. And I tell you there was always something happening that she would go to. She was very busy. But again, that all changed and the halls became quiet.

My mother started to fail, and was now deemed palliative. It all happened so fast. It was the beginning of April, she was allowed one family member at a time to come see her. They had to pass the screening at the front door, had to wear all the protective PPE, and of course had to go straight to my mother's room. No interactions with others. So my siblings got to visit mom, one at a time. Through a mask, they got to chat with her, hold her hand. And low and behold if she didn't start to ... to perk up again. [Sniffle] So then you got to ask yourself, what does that say? She perked up for a while. But sh... Then she started to fail again. She left us on April 27th, 2020. She did not die from COV... From the COVID virus directly. She was in her 80s. But lots was taken away from her in a short period of time. Maybe her heart couldn't handle it any longer. Looking back, I am grateful that she went so quickly. So she didn't have to go through the rest of the pandemic, with all the struggles and frustrations, the fear and anger that was present. Present in that care facility where I'm now just a staff member, no longer a family member.

Was this pandemic hard for me as a staff and family member? Yes, it was. Lots of anger, frustration. But part of me hopes that we have also learned from it. Was this pandemic hard for my siblings to go through with our mother's journey? I know it was. But that is their story to share. Hugs and kisses to you both mom and dad up in heaven.