

COVID_{IN THE} HOUSE OF OLD



I can easily recall the last time I had hugged my Baba.

My Grandpa's funeral in December of 2019. I was abroad when the pandemic began and by the time I returned to Canada, restrictions and lockdowns were well underway. I think of the long months she endured with limited human touch, kindness, and interaction. I often visited through the window in her room, on the phone, aching to be able to touch and hug her. To rub her sore back, paint her nails, or simply hold her hand and listen to her anecdotes.

My Baba did not die from Covid but C. diff (a common and very often deadly infection in LTC homes) but it is more than possible that her death was expedited by the conditions the pandemic produced. Without the additional strain on the health care system, her symptoms may have been noticed sooner. At the very least, without the restrictive protocols in place, her last months on earth might have been more joyful and more meaningful. She died in October of 2020.

A lot of regrets. A lot of grief. Sadly, adding insult to injury was the limited funeral service we were able to provide. An active and well-loved church and community member, my Baba was a socialite inside and out. Without the chance to fully celebrate her life, our grief lacked a proper outlet. Healing was more difficult. More complex. Grief comes in waves, in stages, and in varying forms; however, the pandemic created a dissociation from her death. I am still actively struggling to bridge this disconnect. It still does not seem real. I miss her every day.

FAMILY MEMBER, SASKATOON, 10 June – Story 1

STORIES FROM A NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN CRISIS