

In This Moment Transcript – Peggy 20200414

Jenny, PiAP:

Welcome to a segment of In This Moment Stories from the UNC Partnerships in Aging Program. We connected on April 14th, 2020 with Peggy C who's, 81 years old and lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Thank you so much for joining us today, Peggy.

New Speaker:

Well, I'm happy to be here.

Jenny, PiAP:

We have some questions for you about this current situation we're all living in with the COVID-19 pandemic. And the first one is, tell me about your experience of this current time in our world since we've all been advised to stay at home and keep at a distance from others.

Peggy:

I live in a retirement community and, um, because we have a nursing home on campus. Umm, we've been very, very cautious about, um, exposure to one another and have had no visitation with people who were in higher levels of care. Um, I live in a cottage and umm, until recently until this last week, I have been able to go to the main dining room and.....very cautiously respecting distances, I've been able to pick up my own food and now we're being served meals that I think are terrible. Yeah. Food becomes very important when you're isolated too. Um, I do see friends, I do get out and walk and do work in the garden. And so a lot of the things that I did in my retired life I've continued to be able to do. And, uh, fortunately I do have wonderful friends who visit on the phone and, and even visits back and forth to each other's houses and sit on the porches at six feet apart.

Not too terrible different, not too terribly different.

Jenny, PiAP:

When the change was made to being served food rather than eating in the dining room, was that because of an increase in cases of COVID-19?

Peggy:

Uh, no. It was the, uh, presence of us, a staff member who presented with a positive test. And, um, so, um, they were checking everybody who had any contact with that staff member and I just observing much, much stricter, um, contact rules.

Jenny, PiAP:

Hmm. I see. So what in your past life experience, has been anything similar to this, or what has prepared you for how you're managing this situation?

Peggy:

I don't think anything's really prepared me. I have lived through, um, quarantines as a child, cause I lived in a time when we didn't have measles vaccine. So if you had measles and the house was darkened and there was signs on the door and measles, mumps, and chicken pox, we weren't allowed to go out.

But then we had, you know, I had small siblings. And, we had, well, when we weren't feeling sick, sick, sick in bed, we had, um, we had games to play and things to do and the adults weren't affected. So it

was a different kind of world. And of course, I don't think at the time we thought too much about it because lots of our friends had to stay home sick with quarantine on the door. Um, but so that was, that was a true quarantine. Um, I also live to the polio epidemic and, um, that was one that really did curtail our, um, activities out of doors. Um, I did have friends who, uh, um, contracted polio and loss, motor abilities and their arms or legs. And, um, it was very, very, very frightening. That was the thing, I just remember how frightened my family was and we weren't allowed to go out to public places.

I lived on the coast of Connecticut and swimming was our big summer activity, but oh no, not during, um, those years. So, um, uh, I guess perhaps it prepared me to realize that these things come and these things go. And that, um, those of us who, who survived them, um, have had, you know, had not had their lives destroyed, they've had changes, made loss of an arm. Um, that sort of thing has, has affected trends, but, um, it's, I guess I'm kind of an optimistic person anyway. And, uh, so I think it's probably given me that attitude. It certainly hasn't affected my everyday life because that life is determined by the situation I'm in now, which is very, very, very different being an old lady.

Jenny, PiAP:

Well, I am struck by your phrase, 'these things come and these things go' and it leads into another question, which is what advice would you give to future generations about how to think about situations like this?

Peggy:

I haven't got a clue. I mean, I, I look at my family and realize how differently each one of us has experienced this. I have very, very depressed, uh, granddaughters. I have a really challenged and active daughter-in-law and son-in-law, and I, I, um, I can't advise him at all except to say that this too shall pass. And even though it's happening to youngsters now, I think the high school and college kids are getting the worst deal of all, but so many of their really wonderful and the end of childhood things are being taken away from them and they can't get them back. So I could only say there will be good times ahead. Um, but umm, it's a very, it's very sad.

Jenny, PiAP:

I'm wondering what you most look forward to once the precautions, I guess, about the pandemic are lifted. If we could look to the other side of this and there are better days ahead, what do you most look to resuming in your life?

Peggy:

Getting my hair cut! Because I was due for one when this began a month and a half ago. And so many of my friends are, are all concerned about the color of their hair. Well, my hair has been white and gray for a long time, and I haven't tried to change that, but it's hanging in my eyes and I can't cut it. And so that's very important to me. And, um, and I, I just can't wait to be with my family again. Umm, FaceTime's not the same. I need a hug.

Jenny, PiAP:

That sounds nice. Peggy, we appreciate your time and reflections in this extraordinary time in our world. Thank you so much for taking time out of your day.

Peggy: Thank you for asking