

HOME

in the Time of Coronavirus



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**ÁNGELA
DE MIGUEL**

Project and Media Manager HRF

The home at the heart of recovery

I had heard that in 1918, when my grandfather was born, there was a deadly flu virus that spread across the world. Spain was one of the most badly affected countries, in fact even though its origin was the United States it ended up being called Spanish flu.

In this age of globalisation, the world appeared to be our oyster and we felt invincible, the masters of our destiny until so very recently, when we realised just how wrong we were! When hedonism, individualism, selfishness and all the -isms that one cares to add, reign on our planet, the coronavirus arrives and reminds us coldly and brutally that we are vulnerable, that no-one, no matter who we are, can cope in a pandemic alone.

Covid-19 shows us that by being supportive, giving ourselves to others, staying in our homes and remaining positive, we can face the virus and win the battle. In the meantime, this virus prevails, warning us that we are not over it yet, with the total number of deaths continuing to rise each day. It is especially affecting the elderly, but people of all ages have also been cruelly struck down.

And then, suddenly, the home, that institution that we took for granted, has become the most important place in the battle to

contain the pandemic. We have been instructed to stay at home for weeks on end in order to “flatten the curve” and stop the spread of infection and prevent more deaths.

Our day-to-day routine has been completely turned on its head and we’re faced with a sudden reworking of everyday life, with the home at its heart - providing the means for the schooling of our children, the hub of the workplace and the focus of our leisure time. The place that we tended to forget about unless we really needed to step back from the world, has become the centre of our world and regained its value and meaning, underpinning HRF’s work to put the home at the heart of society.

Home Renaissance Foundation asked for testimonies from people throughout the world about how they are coping during this time of quarantine and social distancing. We would like to create a true record of how this global health emergency is affecting people, their triumphs and tribulations, and what home means to everyone during this extraordinary time of lockdown. No-one has been left unaffected by this crisis - we have all returned to the safety of the home, which has regained its rightful place as the source of well-being for the whole of society.

**When
home
reaffirms
itself**



**BRYAN K.
SANDERSON**

*HRF Chairman, former Managing
Director of BP*

The coronavirus crisis has touched every person, of every age and from every walk of life. Never in living memory – in centuries of memories – has society seen such a lockdown of normal day-to-day activities and expectations. Going to a restaurant, a film, the theatre, a sporting event, or even a place of worship is now impossible for most of us. When you cannot – or must not – go out you have to stay at home.

It feels very right therefore, for Home Renaissance Foundation to offer its vision of the value of home at such a time. A value that is for all time, but one that becomes more obvious and immediate in the extraordinary days we find ourselves facing.

From a personal perspective I can share that the worst thing for my wife and for me is not having our grandchildren around. There are at least two positives to give thanks for; the first is spring, and having been a passionate gardener all my life it is a constant joy for me to see, smell

and hear the plants and birds at this time of year. Second is that the new technology helps a lot. We have regular video contact with our five little grandchildren, something which would not have been possible a few years ago. I keep reminding myself as I watch the news how privileged we are compared with the difficulties many are going through. I am sure that this thought is echoed by many of us too.

Gathered together here are the voices of a range of people sharing their experiences of home during the coronavirus crisis. They are voices that reflect different perspectives, some from people in public life, some from key workers, others from amongst the most vulnerable in our society. As you read you will find that one theme unites them: we need each other, and together, now more than ever, we need that place called home.



JAUME DUCH

*Spokesperson and General Director
of Communication
of the European Parliament*

Edward Coke said in 1628 what has been repeated so many times since: “For a man’s house is his castle and each man’s home is his safest refuge.”

Never before the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic had I seen the truth of that phrase so clearly. Our house is our best refuge from the invisible enemy. In our house, at home, we feel protected and when we occasionally leave it to buy some basic essential product, we feel exposed, helpless, hidden behind a simple cloth mask.

At the same time, this crisis helps us understand the double meaning of the word “home”, which is not only the material space we inhabit but also and above all the nest, the family, the household. It is not just a place. It is also a vital reference: our family, our values, pillars and points of reference.

These days we rediscovered things that we took for granted and others that we perceived only implicitly. Somehow, now we know better than ever before that only one house among all the others is our home.



CARLOS HERRERA

Journalist at Cadena Cope

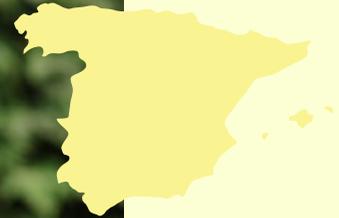
There is an old Spanish saying, “There is no place like home” to which some jokers add, “Thank goodness!”

The truth is that this time is helping some of us to discover the home, to make ourselves more at home, to share the house with our family and

to reaffirm that the home, no matter how small, tiny or uncomfortable it may be, it does not stop being our home.

And Spaniards who are so home and family-minded, have made the most of this crisis.

**When
the home
becomes a
workplace**



BARCELONA

**ANTONIO
ARGANDOÑA**

HRF Director

The home is a provider of numerous services: it is a hotel, restaurant, hospital, school. Some of these services are entrusted to specific people: most often mum and dad, sometimes people beyond the family; but, with the passage of time, everyone has to collaborate in these tasks. It is, above all, the place where you learn to live, to coexist, to give and to receive without keeping an account of "what I do for others and what others do for me." It is the place where you learn to work, in the form of small services such as preparing breakfast, removing dishes from the table or bringing dirty clothes to the washing machine. Then, there will come school, university and, finally, the world of work: very different from home, but where the learning we have received about what it means to work and serve other people and society is reborn.

These days of quarantine and teleworking seem to me like an accelerated course of learning to work with mum and dad at home, with siblings studying and playing. These lessons about how to have a work schedule, how to make a plan, how to know how to jump from one topic to another without losing track, how to kindly attend to a client on the phone, how to thank the colleague who just gave us online advice. I think it is a wonderful opportunity for parents to teach their children to work for a whole day, so that all can find the deeper meanings of work. This does not depend on what we are paid, nor on the status of our tasks, but on service -because home is the school of selfless service.



BARCELONA

NURIA CHINCHILLA

IESE Business School

We are inadvertently confined, but the truth is that before we were 'work-centric', we came home with less energy and less ability to face family life, and these days we are at home, teleworking with tension. The situation is now quite different. If we have schedules, rules of the game with those at home, if we work separately from the rest and distribute the

work from home, this can be an infinite field of possibilities.

It does require, however, developing personal leadership skills, self-control and interpersonal planning capacity. The home is the place where the most important professional skills are developed because it requires thinking about others and giving oneself.



MIA MIKIC

United Nations Asia Pacific

Last December, while finalizing my contribution for the book to be issued by Home Renaissance Foundation, I was exploring how digital connectivity and other frontier technologies would change the future of work and the economic and social impacts of this new option of transforming our homes into our workspace. Little did I know that only few months later I would not only be mandated to work from home but that I would also not

leave it apart from brief walks and food runs. So “home” first became a safe haven, a fortress defended by an overuse of disinfectants and air purifiers. Slowly, virtual windows opened into a world which used to be mostly ignored - laughs from long lost friends, caring messages from distant relatives and images from around the word of people determined to stay inside so that we all can go out, stronger and sooner. Home became hope.

**When the
workplace
supersedes
the home – for
key workers**

LONDON



**COLIN
BRAZIER**

Journalist Sky News

Although Colin is busy broadcasting for Sky, here he shares his experience at home in Coronavirus Time:

“There was a moment at the start of this crisis when a heretical thought struck me. It was a Saturday morning. Normally, I’d be driving my son to a rugby match. But not this day. Nor would I be doing the other journeys that punctuate the schedule of parents who - like me - have a large family. No playdates. No theatre group. No choir practice. No Pony Club. No hockey matches after school. No school at all indeed!

It was a sort of epiphany. Clearly, nobody would wish to find themselves in this situation. It involves misery and loss for thousands of people. I worry about my septuagenarian mother. I’m anxious on behalf of my son, who has asthma. I have friends, as does almost everyone reading this, who knows someone who has lost a loved one. But given where we are, it is vital that we make the most of this enforced end to mobility and the mania that sometimes accompanies our busy timetables.

So, how to cope in this strange, sedentary time? I am a widower. And a

‘key worker’. My job takes me from a village some sixty miles from London, to the capital four days a week. I need to be sure that my six children - aged from 20 to ten - can be relied upon to spend their days wisely. And when I’m around, I need to ensure that I play my full role as a father.

How to achieve that? Actually, I don’t think anything should radically change. This is not the time to introduce lessons in Sanskrit. We just need to do what we normally do - but more so. We normally share a meal together. Now we must share more of them together. And my children must spend more time cooking when I’m not around. We are normally quite a collegiate family. We discuss problems together. I like to say that ours is a quasi-democracy! We are not equals. I am the pater familias, but everybody gets a say. And it beholds me to listen. Now there are new decisions. How to carve up our daily schedule? Who does which chores? Who gets to use the treadmill, or the iMac? What constitutes too much television viewing? When should children be going to bed?

Most importantly of all perhaps, how do we stop tensions bubbling over?

It's not natural - at least by the standards of modern history - for a family to be penned together like this. A lot has been written about how the internet changes everything. And, obviously, my children may be isolated, but they are not cut off from life. They talk to friends online and share memes with extended family members - and me.

If there's one thing that has struck me about how my family is coping with coronavirus it is the extent to which there have not been domestic pyrotechnics. Obviously, I am not at home all the time. Perhaps there are knife-fights about which I know nothing!

But I get the sense they are all getting on amicably. Perhaps this is a function of the absence of academic pressure. I'd like to think it's because they realise this is the most serious external event of their young lives. They see the news. They know people are dying. It puts a row about who drank the orange juice into perspective. Having lost their mother to cancer, they also have a grasp of the tragic sense of life. Ours is a house - like many homes with lots of children - which resounds to the noise of levity. But for all the joy, there is also an appreciation that life can turn dark, and quickly."



LUCAS ÁLVAREZ

Doctor at NHS Hospital

Lucas is a 26-year-old who survived the Tsunami that hit South East Asia in 2004. His family story can be seen in the film "The Impossible." Surviving such a traumatic experience led him to become a doctor and work to help others. The emergency department of a hospital is his home these days as he fights Coronavirus on the front lines of battle.

"At first, we had enough protective gear, but there came a time when we had to improvise. We got painter's overalls or thin plastic aprons

because the good ones are sold out. Little by little it is noticed that the health workers are disproportionately infected. There are difficult and very complicated days. The stories are very hard because the virus also affects young people, without previous health issues. We have anchored ourselves in fellowship. It is a privilege to continue working and knowing that we are doing important work. The physiological and psychological consequences are going to be very hard. There is a much work ahead."



CLAUDIA TORRICO

Nurse at Little Sisters of the Poor

The Nursing Home of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Brussels has become my home during confinement because it is also my workplace. To avoid further contagion, being able to bring the virus from outside, as a nurse I decided to move to a room and live with the elderly. The staff is greatly reduced, some by Covid19

and others out of fear, some cannot come to work, so those of us who are here have to perform day and night. But I try to get up every day with a smile, because our elders deserve everything. I am not afraid of catching it, my only objective is to serve and care for these elderly people with the affection and dignity they deserve.



TERI AGINS

Wall Street Journal
Fashion Industry Writer

The reaction was swift and serious when New York's fashion designers and retailers, took a pause from competing with one another. They banded together like brothers and sisters-- like a family bound in lockstep. The deadly COVID 19 crisis set off an alarm-- transforming apparel sewing factories that used to make suits, shirts and party dresses into manufacturers of protective surgical masks and gowns for doctors and nurses on the front lines at hospitals and nursing homes. Such cooperation has happened before. Four decades ago,

I saw the same familial spirit, the camaraderie among New York fashion houses from Calvin Klein to Donna Karan and Ralph Lauren who cleaned out inventory across their showrooms and donated garments to "Seventh on Sale" to sell to the general public, raising millions for AIDS research- a rummage sale that they kept repeating for several years. Passion, creativity and pluck are the DNA of fashion professionals, whether they're putting on a fashion week catwalk show, or working an emergency to help their fellow citizens in a great time of need.

**When
home
depends
on where
you are
born**

LONDON



**CARMEN
GONZÁLEZ**

Wonder Foundation

Carmen works with some of the most under-privileged in our society, here she reflects on their experience during this crisis:

“Let’s not forget those who do not have a home. Always in times of crisis it is those who live in poverty and at the margins of society that will suffer most. Poor people, families of 6, 8 living in small rooms, overcrowded and temporary accommodation. Many of them at the mercy of landlords who ignore their duties whilst demanding their rents.

It is hard to imagine that in 2020 London this is the sad reality for very many people. It is those families that are suffering not just from poor health due to poverty (a high proportion of them have coronary disease, diabetes and poor health outcomes) but also isolation and fear. Many of them are migrants and English is not their first language, they have been too busy working round the clock in poorly paid jobs and making ends meet to learn it.

So, how can they protect their family when fear, poverty and tiny space makes a good recipe for the increased rate in Domestic Abuse and Violence that all European countries have seen as a result of the lockdown?

This week we have been helping wom-

en escape their homes: the space they occupy with their partners and children. One of them cannot have access to a phone as the phone is controlled by her husband and the house is too small for her to talk on his phone. Somehow, she has managed to contact us, and we are meeting daily on her allowed exercise time to plan her exit strategy.

For Nancy the situation is different. She lives in a small house with her 4 children and cousin. The cousin has been in hospital in a ventilator for 3 weeks. She cannot communicate with the doctors in adequate English and she is desperate. Her son goes to work even though he is in at risk group. They need the money he can make.

Suzanna, her husband and son fled their country as refugees 10 years ago. Now financial hardship and COVID-19 has meant for them going back to their country. They do not know whether it is a good choice, but right now it is their only choice.

Solidarity is being talked about a lot during the COVID19 pandemic: donations, claps, social media motivation. This is good. Let this movement take on a new world where a home is not a luxury, but a minimum, where people rich and poor can find peace, rest and joy.”



IVAN FROM ROMANIA

Homeless

The streets are my home. I only look for a roof to sleep, the rest of the time I spend in front of the door of a supermarket and it is also very sad for me to see the empty city. I feel it above all in the middle of the day, when people usually came down from the offices to get lunch and they would give you something, or even look just look at you and smile. Fortunately, the gro-

cery stores are open and when people see me they give me some food. Some already know me because I have been here for 2 years. But I am afraid, because while everyone is safe in their houses, I can catch it at any time. The good thing is that I am not alone, my brother is with me and he asks for help at the door of another supermarket.



OUSMANE

Undocumented migrant

My name is Ousmane, I am 24 years old and I am from Senegal. My home is there, because for me the word home means family, help, affection and care. I came to Spain looking for a better life. I risked my life on the road. And here I have only managed, for now, to find a roof to sleep under. But this is not a home. Those of us who do not have papers to work, subsist thanks to the street vendor and with lockdown we have no income, our

only way of surviving is out there on the streets.

Living through a global pandemic in these circumstances is very hard, it generates anxiety, insomnia, anguish. I feel lonely, bored, weak, lost. It only helps me to talk to my family. I would like to hug my mother and wake up thinking it was a nightmare. I'm not afraid of catching it, I'm afraid of starvation.

**When
the home
is better
understood
in images
than in words**



**BARONESS
HOLLINS**

Chairman of Beyond Words

Having someone with an intellectual disability or an autistic child at home during coronavirus is a real blessing and an invitation to spend our days more mindfully but creating a new shared rhythm may take families like mine a little longer. Beyond Words, the charity I founded and chair, has been busy producing some wordless booklets which may help with ideas!

The BW method relies on the power of stories to help people understand and for people who understand pictures better than words, then that narrative has to be in pictures.

Truthful Stories in pictures empower people - Before lockdown, my son was very unwell with what could have been flu or covid-19. He was scared, he didn't understand about covering his cough or self-isolating. He didn't understand the importance of drinking lots of fluids. We didn't have an existing story about a virus, so we asked the artist of an existing book called Belonging to create a new episode involving its two much loved characters - Kali and Stefan.

In *Beating the Virus*, Kali develops symptoms of covid-19. NHS111 advises her to stay home and to drink lots of fluids. She rings Stefan who brings some essential supplies and models how to keep his distance. Kali recovers.

Beating the Virus has already been downloaded 2000 times across Europe- of course being wordless it's not language dependent, although it does include advice for carers at the end. But there is another more widespread challenge. How to explain the stay home, stay safe message.

My son challenged me- you can't tell me to stay at home. I have to go to the bank, the shop, my cafe - I want to see my friends, and so on and of course, we want him to make his own choices, but those choices are not his to make just now. We had a couple of bad days, but soon things settled into a new peaceful pattern of mainly good days.

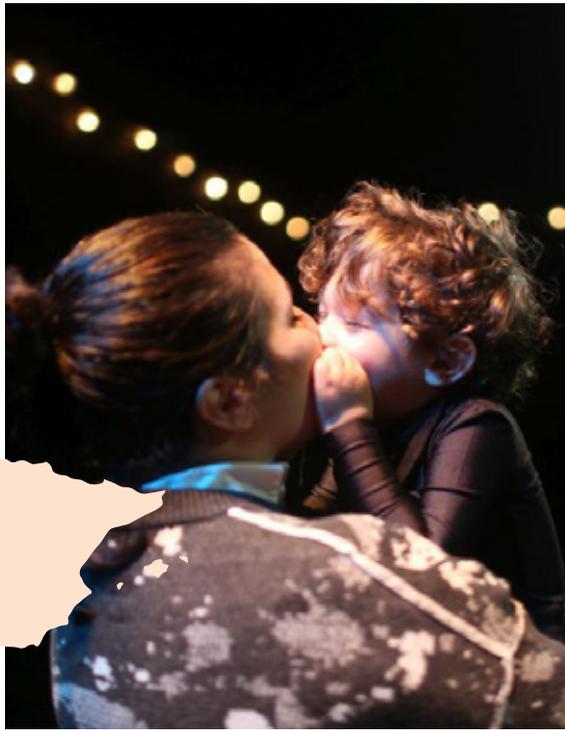
We have pulled together a second wordless booklet called 'Good days

and bad days during Lockdown' by collating short stories from existing books. The aim is to help think about how it feels to be isolated and frustrated and how to manage disappointment and lost opportunities- my camp has been cancelled; my birthday party is now online. And more importantly to have fun thinking about other ways to live at the moment.

For my son this includes a virtual bookclub using zoom with the images being shared online just as we are today; a daily colouring session with a friend using facetime; an online dance class with dance syndrome and lots of WhatsApp calls to friends and family.

Both of the booklets can be downloaded free from www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk

We hope that readers won't need our third booklet which is aimed at family carers facing death of a family member because of coronavirus either at home or in hospital. This is illustrated but aimed at carers, not directly for people who struggle with words. But it does include links to our very truthful wordless stories about death and dying: *When Mum Died*, *When Dad Died*, *When Somebody Dies* and *Am I Going to Die?*



LOLA DEL OLMO

Fer's mother

My name is Lola, mother of five children and one of them with special needs. It is curious that my family was not frightened by quarantine. They did not feel this time as one of confinement, and that is because Fernando's diagnosis of autism confined us two and a half years ago.

While for others the word created anxiety and fear, for us it meant adjusting our lives to different needs again. For example, school and home therapy, taking more account of what

makes those who are close to us happy, or what bothers them to avoid it. Exercising greater patience has been needed, but above all, for us this time has meant loving each other much more than we already did.

There are families that when receiving a diagnosis of autism or one of their children, collapse and are unable to see beyond those words. But after falling, we learned to see that diagnosis as a challenge to overcome, to be better parents and better siblings.

Since that day, that is what we have tried, and Fernando's life just gets better.

I have always felt that we are a lucky family but we have also had to learn to look ahead. We have been accompanied by wonderful people who have taught us to be strong. In the United States, where we lived the beginning of all this, autism is not unknown and they know that the family is the main support for getting better. There they taught me to give Fernando therapy, they encouraged us never to give up, to transform the suffering we felt on seeing him cry into strength to con-

tinue struggling. In Spain we are still very far from seeing ASD in this way, and it causes tremendous loneliness in families with autism.

In these days of confinement we have been left even more alone, without therapy and without support. That has meant a setback in their lives and a return to many previous behaviour issues.

So, I decided to give some meaning to all this, during the quarantine, and I offer my experience, to support all those families.

When
home,
despite
everything,
is a happy
place



ROMA

**LUCIA CHIAPPETTA
CAJOLA**

Vice Rector RomaTre University

Whether there might be a value in staying indoors is the question emerging from the difficult condition of imprisonment and self-isolation at the time of Covid-19 which has overturned habits and delicate balances.

From the healthy world comes a lesson in resilience that transforms and lets us look at the hope being experienced in spite of the trauma. In this context, we can see at work the cognitive and emotional processes which enable us to cope with the loss of our usual habits and the consequent traumas, so that we become able to overcome them.

Thus, being at home can reveal the larger interior worlds and attitudes that are vital for the quality of relationships between people and for the activities taking place in the home.

From this resilience come signs of rebirth as the new possibilities generated by traumas make us able to rediscover the meaning of relationships.

We can be different, we can find courage to really come to know ourselves and each other, and to discover the need for a mutual support, overcoming individual vulnerabilities.

Yet, there can be a fear of giving oneself, which weakens our desire and our courage to open up and get involved.

These days offer opportunities to go below the surface – to overcome selfishness, to practice confident kindness.

Attention and availability allow kindness to flow, that is, giving time and energy to listening and responding to those we live with.

So it is that the domestic context – home – as an extraordinary experience of relationship and sharing offers the opportunity of a re-discovery of time, space, objects and gestures once believed lost. At the same time, we can be vulnerable to forms of unease, concern for oneself, our loved ones and our country, and the emotional and physical effects of social-distancing.

That home we leave and return to in the evening is now the centre of life. Integrated with technology reconnecting with the outside, it becomes an environment increasingly connected with others. Online we feel connected to the houses of friends

and relatives, schools, universities, offices, hospital and services.

In this way home, health, education, training, economics are integral parts of daily life that merge into a single living space, requiring us to re-invent ways of being together and alone, of studying, working, playing and interacting.

In our case, the value of home meets the university mission: connecting

with students gives value to time, commitment and passion. A platform system –a “home-space” - supports vital social ties, allows supportive and structured learning through distance teaching. The opportunity offered by these platforms and online connections is to allow a continuation of the university’s relationship and response and support of students, that must be safeguarded for the thriving of individuals and the institution during this global pandemic.



CALIFORNIA

MIRIAM GONZÁLEZ DURANTEZ

Lawyer and founder of Inspiring Girls

I am in California with Nick, my husband, and our three sons. Despite the tragedy, the fears, the despair at how governments and international organisations are reacting (or, more to the point, how they are not reacting) and the worry at not being able to be with our families in the UK and Spain, our house is still a happy place. Both Nick and I travel often for work, so we had never had the chance to spend so much time with our children in this intense way - just as we had never

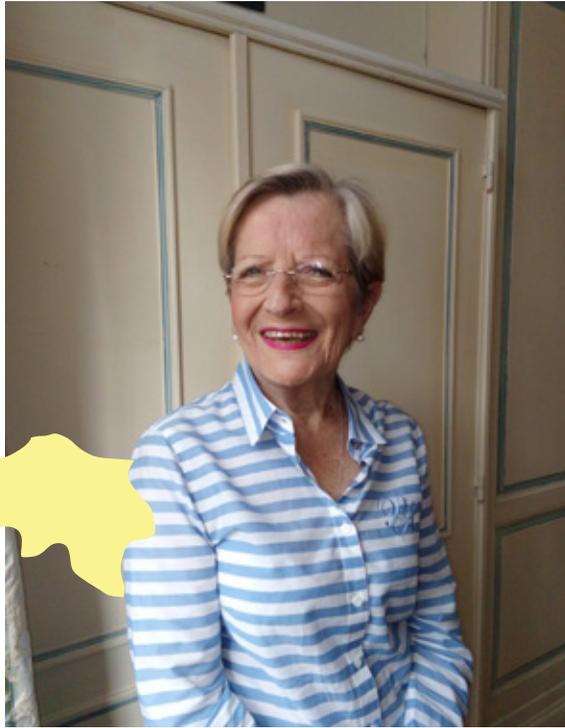
spent so much intense time with each other for many years. We have always been a close-knit family, but even we have been amazed at how much we actually enjoy being with each other, how we like the same food, the same games, the same films, and how we enjoy not just laughing with each other but especially at each other. If the horror of coronavirus was not happening outdoors, this would actually be a blissful time in our home. I almost feel guilty at the contrast be-

tween our family life and what is happening elsewhere.

Each of us have better days and worse days and we have accepted that it is actually OK to have a bad day. We are all chipping in with the house chores, and amazingly (as two of our children are adolescents now) we are not at each other's throats at who does what. We had always eaten together as a family whenever we could, so doing it every day now feels like a really natural thing to do. And there have been plenty of positive things: two of my sons and myself are playing more piano; and my other son and Nick are playing more drums; we are watching old series and films; some of us have started learning German; and have

also subscribed to university courses online as many are now free.

Occasionally the monotony can get us down, the unchanging routine, the frustration at not being able to go out, and the not knowing when things will get better. But when that happens, we remind each other that we are lucky to live in comfort and security unlike many other people around the world. And I also tell the boys that in many countries this lockdown is how women actually live, and not for a few weeks, but during their whole lives, from cradle to grave. That always seems to do the trick of making us realise how incredibly privileged we are- and how very grateful we should always be.



COLIENNE VAN HAVRE

Survivor Covid-19

For me, home has always been and is very important. It is my refuge, the place where I rest, where I am myself. But home has been even more important to me in this global health crisis. I fell ill and thanks to my family I have survived. I had a hard time, but the recommendation was not to go to the hospital and despite the fever

and cough, I remained at home. Care has been key to my recovery. With love, without fear of the virus, they have taken great care of me. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, always on time; helping me to be clean and neat; and with a loving gesture at all times. How can I not be happy in my home even in times of Coronavirus!

Notes

When this Communication Report was published the world had stopped. The message was to “Stay Home.” Concerts, festivals, sports events, weddings and religious services were cancelled. For most children there was no school and for most students, no university. Restaurants and shops closed and only essential movement was allowed. There were queues to get into the supermarket. Depending on your country, documentation was required to drive your car, masks had to be worn and frontiers were closed. The human emotional and physical costs were high, with restricted visits to hospitals, and people died alone. In a dark time, what became a bright and sustaining hope was the recovery of the value of where we had to stay - home.

CORONAVIRUS CASES

4,430,806

DEATHS

298,201

RECOVERED

1,662,329

ACTIVE CASES

2,470,276

(In Mild conditions: 2,424,343 and Critical 45,933)

The uncertainty was hard. But people answered with responsibility and stayed home, trying to flatten the curve. Homes were, once again, indispensable to cope with the virus.

SOURCE

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

Numbers were updated on the publishing date, May 14, 2020

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