

A TYPICAL COVID-19 DAY AT OUR VILLA

We must admit, though the alarm goes off at 7am, it isn't until after 8am that we get going for the day. A shower and clean clothes, teeth brushed and "prettied up" and we're ready for a new day.

Some days we remember to tell each other what we're thankful for, and agree there are lots to be thankful for, other than just waking up. Having a good nights uninterrupted sleep would be great, but you can still be thankful for just 2 wake-up's in the night – well it could have been more!

Breakfast sorted, and then Pete immediately goes to the table set up under the window in the guest bedroom (there's just the two of us in our bubble), opens up his Word Find book, and proceeds to be challenged by the puzzle, taking a moment every so often to look out the window to see who is walking / driving by. There's not much driving by, as in our Retirement village all non-resident traffic (except for essential services) is halted at the gate and deliveries unloaded so the village staff deliver to the residents. Who would have ever thought we'd get excited if our entire order from Countdown or New World was supplied – especially if flour or baking powder were on the list.

There is great excitement around online shopping and deliveries. Wine arrives by the carton, a new mobile phone to replace the one that died arrives promptly, 6kg of standard flour arrives from Loaf, hygiene pads get delivered, the RSA drop off roasts and now we can order non-essentials to be delivered! We may never go out again – just joking.

Our daily routines revolve around making bread and baking, trying out new recipes, walking, reading, watching the news, knitting, ironing, jigsaw puzzles, Word Find, Spot it. Zoom meetings, Skypes with family overseas, phone calls with friends and family and being regularly entertained with jokes coming frequently on our phone. We're enjoying Netflix at night and stay entertained until late.

You know it's weird – we haven't noticed ambulances coming and going from the village. People out walking are not coughing, are more friendly and always have a smile. We wonder what the people walking from our village (who we've never seen walking before) would previously have spent their time doing. Laughing together, it seems we'll have a more healthy lot in the village moving forward and maybe half the turn-over of residences – who knows? Many have played the game and put Teddy's in their windows, as have we.



We are thankful to be in a villa in a retirement village during this lockdown period. Staff attend for anything urgent, they put treats in our letterbox, or deliver outside our door. They shoot out to the supermarket or 4Square to try to get any grocery order shortages we have from our deliveries. Yesterday we dropped off scones for morning tea to the staff – nice to give back and demonstrate a show of appreciation. Pete enjoys the challenge of baking scones, and managed Chelsea buns recently.

Our ZOOM meet-ups are important highlights of the week. Attending Cognitive Stimulation Therapy for Pete is really looked forward to, and for me, a weekly carer's catch-up is a highlight – sharing information with others, having

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dementia friends listen when we need to share, and understand. Yes, we miss our family very much, but this isn't forever, but honestly - did they really visit that often? We can speak on the phone, meet up on Skype – so for me it's the “touching” I truly miss. I worry about my Mum (92), who is on her own, 600k's South, but fortunately in a retirement village and also well supported by the

village staff. So the phone is getting a thrashing and a lot of sanitising at the moment.

Using hand soap is routine when we come inside, and there's no jewellery being worn due to constant hand sanitising. We greet each day as if we are going out or having visitors – making a point of dressing a little nicer than we would for a “stay at home day”, though Pete seems to think that a shave every day is a bit over the top, and only necessary if he's on a Zoom. Yesterday I gave him a haircut – easy with the trimmers and after all it's a bit of a #1 all-round so not challenging. Men's and Women's hair is growing, curling and frizzing and many women are wearing scarves as their hair colour is draining out – oh goodness, so is mine! You know, a bit of lipstick and blusher makes a lot of difference to how you present, and what you see in the mirror.

We are thankful for each other, and for the support we're receiving from our Village Staff, Dementia Auckland support team and our dementia friends, and the various health support services who keep in contact. It was lovely to receive a call from St John Ambulance recently. There's lots to be thankful for.