

Making the Most of Life in Quarantine: One Member's Experience

When Joan Grawvunder developed what she describes as a “ferocious” cough this winter, the doctors and nurses caring for her at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King were worried she was experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. So, for the safety of everyone at King, she quarantined in an isolated section of Stordock Hall until her test results returned.

Joan's care team was cautious because they know that residents of long-term care facilities, due to age, health conditions, and their group living setting, are particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. But they were also prepared: earlier in the year, with community spread of the virus increasing in Waupaca and surrounding counties, the Veterans Home at King enacted a variety of precautions that included setting up the quarantine area for members suspected to have the COVID-19 virus and those who have tested positive. They also assigned staff with special training to this area and outfitted them with additional personal protective equipment, including N95 masks and face shields.

Nursing home residents and others worldwide who have needed to quarantine sometimes describe their experience as boring or lonely. Joan, however, decided to take her stroke of bad luck in stride, instead enjoying the peace and quiet of her new accommodation and the opportunity for relaxation it brought along with it.

“I now have time to read my books. My oldest daughter thought I would like if she read a good book to me. We decided to try it, and I like it! So, every day she calls when she has time to read to me for a bit,”
Joan said.

She says she knows not everyone has the same positive attitude while being quarantined, but instead of sliding into a rut, Joan, a mother of nine, thrived by focusing on the positive – on her health, the help she's received, and on looking forward to coming through the other side of this historic pandemic.

“My room is clean and comfortable and we each have our own bathroom, our own room, and help if we need it. They feed us, help us, and they provide for us. What more do we need?”

Once Joan received the results of her COVID-19 test – thankfully, she tested negative for the virus – she was able to return to her room in Ainsworth Hall. While not at all as quiet, she was warmly welcomed with greetings from neighbors and friends.

“It's not as peaceful and quiet here, but it's home. That's really what counts, don't you think?”

Thank you to Joan Grawvunder, who originally shared her story in the King Courier newsletter.

