

# "You die alone and afraid in a hospital"

## GET THE HUG Continued from page 1

hand as doctors turned off the ventilator keeping her alive.

Just 21 days prior to Parker's death, her daughter Emily Lundy died due to complications from coronavirus after she went into cardiac arrest. She was just 44 years old.

"You do not realize what COVID can do. You do not think that it will attack your family. But it will. And it did," Rivera said.

Parker became ill on Aug. 9, 2020, with what Rivera says was first believed to be a sinus infection.

"At the time, doctors did not want to see her because they did not think it was COVID. So they put her on oxygen and sent her home," Rivera said.

Over the next 10 days, Parker's symptoms worsened as she developed a high fever and increased difficulty breathing.

"She quickly got so bad that my aunt (Lundy) had to go in and take care of her. My aunt was being as cautious as possible, but you can only be so careful," Rivera said.

On Aug. 20, Parker's oxygen levels dropped into the 60s -- approximately 30% below the average oxygen rate of a healthy person. She was hospitalized at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital (TMH), where she tested positive for coronavirus.

Just three days later, Lundy was transported to the TMH emergency room for similar symptoms. She also tested positive for coronavirus upon intake.

Due to being COVID positive, Parker and Lundy were unable to have

visitors, so Rivera says her family focused on making sure they knew that they were not fighting alone.

"We would all take turns calling and FaceTiming them both. We would give pictures to the nurses, and they would put them up in their rooms. Anything we could do to show them we were there for them, we did," Rivera said.

According to Rivera, the family never expected to lose Lundy.

"She was doing fine. Her oxygen levels were doing fine -- they were actually trying to wean her off of the oxygen. But she was terrified of being there alone. It was causing her such terrible anxiety that they were having to keep her on anxiety medications," Rivera said.

Rivera believes Lundy's anxiety was the result of being brought back from the brink of death after she flatlined in her sleep.

"She had to wear a breathing machine -- a bipap machine. She knocked her mask off one night while she was asleep and she flatlined. The doctors were able to resuscitate her, but she was so afraid to sleep after that," Rivera said.

"We FaceTimed all the time. Five of us would rotate non-stop, hour after hour, being on FaceTime with her because she was so scared to sleep.

Following her near-death experience, Lundy would routinely text Rivera, "Call and pray with me."

"I would FaceTime her and we would just pray together. She could not really talk because of the face mask, but I prayed for the doctors, the nurses, her anxiety. I prayed that she



JoAnn Parker (left) and her daughter Emily Lundy (right) died just three weeks apart from COVID-related complications.



would come out okay, and to let God's will be done," Rivera said.

Lundy died on Sept. 8, 2020 -- 16 days after she was hospitalized. Her mother was unaware that she was even in the hospital battling COVID-19.

"We never told her because we did not want to stress my MeMe out more. We thought we were going to lose MeMe multiple times. We did not think she needed to hear that her daughter had just died," Rivera explained.

Parker continued to fight for her life for three more weeks, which Rivera described as a "rollercoaster."

On Parker's 20th day in the hospital, she tested negative for COVID-19 and was finally allowed one in-person visitor per day.

"They began to wean her off the oxygen. My grandpa, her husband of 54 years, was able to go see her. She was doing better," Rivera said.

Parker was able to be weaned off the bipap, and after nearly four weeks of constantly wearing the machine, she briefly graduated to using only a cannula for oxygen assistance.

"She had worn it so long that her nose had broken because of it," Rivera said.

However, Parker's recovery was short-lived, after she developed a hole in her lung and quickly deteriorated.

"The virus had attacked her lungs. The doctors described it like concrete weighing on the chest," Rivera said, continuing, "We ended up intubating her because the bipap was just not humane at that point. She did not have water for weeks. At the end, she said all she wanted was a sip of water."

In accordance with Parker's wishes, Rivera said the family made the difficult decision to take her off the ventilator on Sept. 29, 2020 -- exactly three weeks after Lundy died.

"My MeMe was fighting, and we kept begging her to keep fighting, but we knew she was tired. The family was able to come in to see her to say goodbye. She died within minutes of being taken off the ventilator," Rivera said.

Rivera said the hardest part of her grandmother and aunt's deaths was the circumstances.

"Everybody dies -- that is

a given. But when you have COVID, you die alone and afraid in a hospital," Rivera said.

In reflecting on the last time she saw her grandmother, Rivera has found a new outlook on life -- opting to live in the moment each day and not to allow fear to rule her life.

"I regret not hugging my MeMe the last time I saw her healthy. I was so afraid of getting her sick, so I didn't. If I could go back, that is the one thing I would change because it is already written. I tell myself that 20 times a day," Rivera said.

"COVID is definitely real, but we cannot live

our lives in fear because of it. God tells us not to live in fear. We should be cautious and be mentally prepared for the worst, but still live our lives," Rivera said.

As local coronavirus cases continue to spike, Rivera encourages those with sick loved ones to: "Live every day in the moment and give it all to God."

"Tell your family that you love them. And pray for peace no matter the outcome," Rivera said, adding, "and get the hug. That is the one thing I regret -- is allowing fear to stop me from hugging my MeMe."



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## Butler's flock adapts to river life

### HATCH HENS Continued from page 6

compost recipe, but runoff into soils and waterways of the gases released from chicken poop can be detrimental to wildlife.

The biggest environmental concerns are focused mostly around larger poultry processing plants.

An escalation over the years in the number of people giving up red meat and switching to chicken has been the catalyst for the increase in poultry processing plants.

The runoff of nitrous oxide, as well as the fuels used in the processing at these larger poultry farms can surprisingly be worse for the environment than that of the methane produced by the cattle industry.

Included in my research into the world of raising chickens has been reading anything I can get my hands on.

Everyone has an opinion on raising chickens, so I

am learning as I go and will continue to learn what works best for my flock.

The biggest task at hand was setting up a brooder environment in a room of our home before the chicks arrived.

They needed access to water right away, warmth from a radiant heat source similar to what their mother hen would provide, food and close monitoring.

Once the chicks reached six weeks of age, and because their down had already been replaced by feathers, and the outside climate was just right, they were safely moved from the brooder to their coop and run outdoors.

The worst part of being a new chicken owner was the anticipation of the arrival of the first set of chicks.

Taking care of them hasn't really been that hard.

My nine assorted and colorful females arrived in late May.

For the handful of chickens that I have, I do not see this flock as being a hazard to the environment.

If any of our girls turn out to be roosters, for the sake of our neighbors I have a plan B for their relocation.

Our family and friends are already volunteering to take extra eggs off of our hands.

What I hope to gain from this new endeavor is the enjoyment of fresh, rich-tasting eggs, the experience of raising my own flock, spending more time outdoors and sharing this entertaining journey with fellow chicken enthusiasts.

By the way, in case you are wondering, it is cheaper to buy your own eggs from the grocery store!



Debra Butler and one of her nine hens.

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## LEGALS

(continued from page 10)

- Mental Health Awareness Training Plan, Part II: Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan
- 4.10 Approve for advertising: Revisions/New school board policies:

Policy #	Status	Policy Title
2.03	revision	Special Committees of the School Board
2.04	revision	School Advisory Councils
2.091	revision	Family and School Partnership for Student Achievement
3.06	revision	Safe and Secure Schools
3.09	revision	A Moment of Silence
5.19	revision	Student Records
5.29	revision	Notification of Involuntary Examination
6.39	revision	Report of Misconduct
6.80	revision	Personnel Files
8.01	revision	Safety
8.04	new	Emergency Evacuation Drills
4.11	Approve	budget amendments

- 5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
- 5.01 Principal's Monthly Financial

- Report on Internal Funds
- 5.02 July Invoices 2021
- 5.03 Financial Statement
- 5.04 Supplemental Positions
- 6. CITIZEN INPUT
- The Lafayette County School Board will hear any citizen who wishes to address the Board, on a one time basis, pertaining to a relevant topic. If the Board wishes to hear more about the topic, that topic will be scheduled for a future Board meeting. Each speaker is limited to three minutes and the time dedicated to this topic will not exceed twenty minutes.
- ADJOURNMENT ANY PERSON WHO DECIDES TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE BOARD WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT SUCH MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND THAT, FOR SUCH PURPOSE, HE OR SHE MAY NEED TO INSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE

- BASED.
- PUBLIC MEETING  
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**
- Please take notice that the Three Rivers Regional Library Board will hold a budget workshop on Thursday, August 19th, 2021, at 3:00 p.m., at the Lafayette County Public Library, in Mayo, Florida.
- All interested persons are invited to attend and be heard. Please be advised, that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at such hearing, that person will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he/she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.
- "Person with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact (386) 294-1600 (Voice & TDD) or via Florida Relay Service at (800) 955-8771."



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