

# HOSPITAL STAFF 'MY LIFELINE', SAYS COVID-19 SURVIVOR

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friends.

"I feel remarkably well," she said. "I came in here on my death bed and they (hospital staff) worked so hard to get me to where I am today. I think they're absolutely wonderful."

Jacobs was living at Mountainview Residence in Georgetown, which declared a COVID-19 outbreak on April 1. Shortly thereafter, daughter Lisa Frank brought her mother to her home in Erin.

"By Sunday (April 5), she had a scratchy throat and was starting to show symptoms," Frank said.

They called for paramedics when Jacobs' symptoms worsened and she was admitted to Georgetown Hospital.

"She was delirious with fever," Frank recalled. "She couldn't even take her temperature."

**"You have to fight, fight, fight; that's all there is to it. You can't give in because it's overwhelming."**

- Jessie Jacobs

The next day, the Georgetown woman was diagnosed with coronavirus. While Jacobs signed a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, Frank said the family didn't realize the order would exclude her mother from being put on a ventilator.

"We asked the doctor to put my mom on speaker phone so we could hear the doctor explain her options and listen to her response," Frank said. "She said, 'I want to fight. I'm doing this for my kids.'"

The doctor agreed to lift the DNR order and she was immediately intubated and transferred to Oakville

Trafalgar for ventilator support — a device that helped sustain her life for a month in the intensive care unit.

On Mother's Day, Frank received the surprise Facetime call of a lifetime from the ICU.

"When I answered my mom was sitting up and said hello to me," she said. "It was an extremely emotional moment and without a doubt the best Mother's Day ever."

Though Jacobs has recovered, COVID-19 and the time spent on the ventilator has taken a toll.

"They thought she



Family and friends celebrate Jessie Jacobs' release from the hospital.

Graham Paine/Torstar

might need kidney dialysis," Frank said. "She'd been on the ventilator so long her organs were starting to fail."

Jacobs also developed

critical illness polyneuropathy, a muscle weakness side effect of long-term ventilator use.

"She won't be as independent as she used to be,"

Frank said, "but she's super lucky to be alive. I think she's a bit of a miracle."

Jacobs said she's looking forward to spending time with her children, grandchildren and other relatives once she settles in at Frank's home.

"Family means everything to me," she noted.

She acknowledged it was bittersweet to say farewell to the hospital staff who'd been at her side for months.

"I cried about leaving the staff. They've been my lifeline," she said. "I don't know what I'd do without them."

She encouraged everyone to wear a mask and wash their hands often during the pandemic.

So what advice does the feisty 76-year-old have for others who are battling COVID-19?

"You have to fight, fight, fight; that's all there is to it," she said. "You can't give in because it's overwhelming."



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