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Profile of Late MSA Member Christina Ferreira Porcadilla

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The Porcadilla house in Colorado Springs doesn't always feel like home these days. Not since the loss of Christina Ferreira Porcadilla in February after a long battle with COVID-19.

"Since Mom passed.. I think home kind of left with her. It's kind of just a house with us in it right now," said Briana Porcadilla, Christina's daughter.

"Since she's been gone, there's been more silence than there should be," son Ryan Porcadilla said.

"The household runs off of the energy of a woman... things get done, people move faster, lots happening," Briana said. "Now it's just kind of just lonely."

As the United States passes the grim milestone of 600,000 lives lost to COVID-19, Christina Ferreira Porcadilla's family opened the doors to their house to Rocky Mountain PBS to share her story. The family says they were very cautious when the pandemic began. Christina had multiple sclerosis and was a cancer survivor, so the family knew she would be at high risk if she contracted the virus. But life didn't allow the family to stay isolated as 2020 wore on. Their 16-year-old son Ryan returned to school, and 25-year-old son JayJay graduated college and had to go to work.

In late November, the virus made its way into the Porcadilla home. Both sons, Christina, and father Jaime all got sick. While the rest of the family recovered, 43-year-old Christina just couldn't get better. She came home twice from the





“The simplest pleasures in life brought joy to Christina. She loved mid-autumn days where the breeze was just right. A book in her hand and her mind wandering off to faraway places, kings and queens, sailing the Pacific Ocean, or rereading Fabio the Rogue for a little fun. There was no book safe with Christina,” he wrote.

hospital, only to return again when her condition worsened.

Now, the family is still adjusting to the shock that she won’t come home again.

“She had a lot of ambitions. Her mind wanted to go, go, go, but her body wouldn’t let her,” JayJay said.

JayJay Porcadilla threw himself into planning his mother’s funeral within hours of her death. When he climbs the staircase in the family’s house, he remembers writing her obituary. “I was sitting up here on these stairs and I just remember looking at my dad and my brother.. And I was like, ‘What?’ Nothing had sunk in,” he said. “I had never dealt with anything like this before in my life. I never once thought in my life that I would be writing my mom’s obituary this young in my time. It never settles in, still, that I had to sit down and look at all of my mom’s accomplishments when she was just here. She was just here,” JayJay said.

In the fog of grief, he wrote a loving portrait of a woman he calls “my bestest friend in the whole entire world.”

Now, sitting on that same staircase, he is reminded of memories of her everywhere he looks. A jacket he wore to visit his mother the day before she died still bears the visitor sticker. He looks over the living room and remembers his mom turning it into a cookie assembly line every holiday season to make gifts for family and friends.

“A gift basket of cookies made with my mom’s time and limited amount of energy means way more than an Xbox,” JayJay said. “Time is valuable. And I know that now.”

Briana Porcadilla was just a kid when her mother first learned she had a debilitating disease. “She had talked to the doctors and they had told her that she had a disease called multiple sclerosis,” Briana said. “She didn’t really know how to feel, so she signed her papers and she left. And then she said she got down to the parking lot and she said, ‘Wait a minute, what do I have? I don’t understand this.’”





class with too much work and without the mom who would do anything to help him. “She loved the hell out of us... and I’m missing that part, that parent,” he said. “It would be nice to be able to lean on a mom again.”

Jaime Porcadilla cries when he reads the letter his wife wrote to her extended family when she was hospitalized and

So she went back upstairs and that’s where her journey started.”

The family says episodes of the illness became so severe that Christina would lose her ability to walk, and she had to go through physical therapy to learn to walk again. But through it all, she was always there for her kids.

“She cared about any situation, whether it was a splinter or you cut your hair wrong. She was always there to be the hero in the situation,” Briana said.

“No matter how sick she was, she would always take care of me,” Ryan Porcadilla recalled. “I know she probably would have gone through, like, the deepest of the ocean, just to get something for me.”

After Christina’s death, Ryan found himself worrying about falling behind in school. He says he returned to

couldn’t speak. “I’m fighting. I’m not giving up,” he read. “Knock me down and I always get up. And I will get up from this too.”

Jaime says he and Christina were together for almost 27 years. He says for nearly a decade he worked as her caregiver as she struggled with multiple sclerosis. Now he faces the prospect of having to find a job, even as he often finds himself overcome with grief. “I lost everything,” he said.

Jaime is haunted by Christina’s final days in the hospital. He loses composure when he sees a video he made with his phone showing Christina on a ventilator. He remembers every detail of her final day, wondering if she might still be alive if she had received different treatment.

“It’s going to haunt me forever in my life,” he said. “I don’t think I will get over this.” ✨

To view the PBS profile on Christina and the Porcadilla family, go to <https://www.rmpbs.org/blogs/the-long-haul/home-kind-of-left-with-her-colorado-springs-family-adjusting-to-life-without-mother-lost-to-covid/>

