

We Will Be Okay

Helen Omeje

BEFORE YOU READ: The pandemic has shut down many services. What services have you been missing? Describe what it is like to get along without them.

In 2004, my daughter had a serious accident. She had such a terrible burn that she lost her beauty, her eyes, nose, ears, and fingers. Almost all her hair was gone. We came to the U.S. for treatment. She needed surgery every three months to reconstruct her face. She is doing better now, but she is blind.

Because of the virus, all her medical appointments were canceled. She has a tracheotomy. This is a tube in her neck that helps her breathe. Before the pandemic, Chi Chi went to the hospital every six weeks to have the tube changed by the doctor. But now this is not possible. Instead, I must wash it three times a day to prevent infection.

Here is another example of how the virus has changed her treatment. I noticed that she had an infection on her cheek. I called the doctor and sent him a picture of my daughter's skin. The doctor told me not to come to the hospital due to the virus. Instead, I treated her on my own at home. God helped me and she got better.

Because of the virus, it is extremely hard for us to shop for food. We used to take a bus, but it is not safe anymore. Luckily, we have a friend. She helps us in the evening after she finishes work. She takes us to the store.

Because of the virus, we miss our church, our friends, and our Bible study. Now we do our church services and Bible study online. It is not the same because we miss our worship songs and the dances we enjoy. Sometimes the internet connection is not good, and we miss part of the services.

The pandemic has changed our lives. However, I feel that all I did was with God's grace. He is by my side. He helps me with my daughter's care. We will be okay.

AFTER YOU READ: Think about the concept of mutual aid. How does Helen aid her daughter? What aid does Helen receive? Do you have a network of mutual aid in your life? Make a diagram of it, and then write about it.



Helen Omeje and her daughter Chi Chi are students in the Literacy Volunteers program at the Thomas Crane Public Library in Quincy, MA. Helen left her husband, 7 children, and 13 grandchildren in Nigeria to bring Chi Chi to the U.S. for medical treatment.