

I DON'T MIND DYING AT ANY TIME, BUT I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE TROUBLE FOR OTHER PEOPLE

Shiori (90) from Western Tokyo (Japan), lives alone in housing for elderly people with care services ('Sakoju')

LIVING NEAR MY CHILD

I am 90 years old now and will turn 91 in January. I had lived in the Kyushu region (southern Japan) for a long time. But I fell, broke a bone, and stayed in a hospital for a while. After being discharged, I moved into this facility 3 years ago so that I could be near my child, because I could die at any moment. The facility has been taking care of me since then. I still fall sometimes when I'm walking, so I need to watch myself. I keep telling myself to be careful. I don't want to be a burden to my child.

DELICIOUS SASHIMI

COVID-19 has turned the world upside down, but my life hasn't changed. In March, I went to see cherry blossoms in the neighborhood with other residents of the facility. Since then, I didn't go outside for 6 months, except when I walked along the river bank near here. But just last Monday, I met with my daughter for the first time in 6 months. She works at a flower shop. We went to the station and bought delicious sashimi, which I hadn't eaten for 6 months.

I COOK WHAT I LIKE

In general, I don't go out. But since a supermarket is right in front of our facility, I go there, buy stuff, and cook what I like. For the first 14 months since I moved in, I had a meal plan and ate in the dining room on the ground floor. But I have access to a kitchen, so I cook for myself now.

ENJOYING THE HAIKU CLUB

I'm a member of a haiku (Japanese short poems) club in this facility, and I've been working on it quite hard. In haiku, we make a poem that has three lines, with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern. There are five members in the club, and we meet twice a month. But we make 3 poems per month. So, I often write and use my brain quite a lot. We write those poems on strips of colored paper and post them on the wall. That's pretty much what I enjoy now. I can't go outside, and I hesitate to visit other residents because we're worried about infecting each other.

DON'T WANT TO CAUSE TROUBLE

My children used to visit me often, but not as much lately. My son lives in a neighboring prefecture, and he needs to take a train to get here. He does come over once in a while on his days off, keeping a mask on. But the COVID problems are still there, and the number of infections keeps increasing in Tokyo. It will be too dangerous for older folks to go out. I personally don't mind dying at any time, but I don't want to cause trouble for other people, so I stay inside the facility as much as I can. I'm looking forward to the day when the COVID pandemic is over and we can enjoy the cooler weather.

Shiori was interviewed on 17 September 2020. Her story was shared with us by [International Longevity Center \(ILC\) Japan – 国際長寿センター](#), member of the ILC Global Alliance, an international federation researching and advocating the vitality and the societal and economical position of older people. In the Netherlands, the ILC network is represented by [Leyden Academy](#).