

Now that the all-clear has been given, I can finally see my daughter again. She is mentally/physically disabled and has been locked down inside her house with the workers and her three housemates since this whole pandemic started. I've been over regularly to talk to her through an open window, from 3 metres away of course, but this is first time I've been able to hug and kiss her. I cried and cried. She gave me a smile, which made me cry more. I hope she remembers who I am. No one knows how much she understands about what has gone on. It is nice to be able to walk in the woods in the Conservation area again with my friends, without having to worry about being fined. The animals obviously enjoyed the long break from having to share their woods with humans - I have never seen so many deer before in here. So maybe the one good thing that has come out of this is that nature has had a chance to heal somewhat. Certainly more people are walking and riding bikes in my community than they ever did before. Whether this leads to less reliance on cars in the future remains to be seen. My community is very car-oriented, and people became afraid to take the bus because they were afraid of picking up the virus. So either private vehicles or walking was the primary mode of transit. We'll see what happens..... The province where I live has a very conservative leader who was elected about one year before this all began. One of the first thing he did after taking office was to begin to cut spending by cutting funds for public health. Boy did he learn quickly what public health does! Ironically, as much as I couldn't stand him as a leader to begin with, he grew into his role and became a very good advocate for doctors, nurses and, yes, the importance of having a strong public health system. I hope that when they do a political post-mortem about all the things that went wrong leading into this, the politicians will act on those lessons and not blow them off 15 years from now as happened post-SARS. They are already talking about the importance of having a reliable domestic source of ventilators, and PPE, and not relying any longer on the U.S. or China for supplies. We certainly know now that the U.S. is no longer a trustworthy ally. My advice to politicians and leaders of all stripes is to follow the advice learned more than 15 years ago from SARS and not be so short-sighted again! A balanced budge isn't necessarily the best thing for a country if it comes at the cost of not having a strong health and social system that is able to withstand a pandemic like this. Because it undoubtedly won't be the last one.,