

Dr. Ruby J. Long Discussed The 4th Covid Anniversary and Releases a New Book

Dr. Ruby J. Long gives meaning and perspective to a moment in time that changed so many lives.



Durham, North Carolina Mar 18, 2024 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Dr. Ruby J. Long, Founder of Casualty Consultant® will be releasing her most heartfelt work, [Love Letters To Patients](#). It is an invaluable resource for addressing questions and concerns during challenging health events. It is an immersive collection of letters offering hope and empowerment, by a Physician Leader & Health Equity Advocate,

who's been an Overlooked Patient before. Covid was a critical time in this doctor's professional life. The many imbalances in our system were elevated. Many have moved on. For Dr. Long, it still weighs heavy.

299,275... at least **299,275 children** in the United States (U.S.) have been orphaned by parents since COVID began (Global Reference Group). March 13, 2024, marks the 4th Anniversary of when a national emergency was declared, and public efforts were mobilized to contain the spread of a never known before viral disease, COVID-19.

At least **299,275** children in the U.S. are without one or both parents (i.e., orphaned) since COVID began 4 years ago. Their entire lives have been turned upside down by the death of people who were nurturing and guiding their steps in life. This number is worse when including children that grandparents and other caregivers raise. In June 2023, international researchers published studies that calculated the number of children whose parents or caregivers died from COVID-19. The current number is only worse as COVID has now become a factor of everyday life. These losses have spared no racial or ethnic group in the U.S. The death of a parent or caregiver is traumatic at any age. Imagine a child's experience when their understanding of the situation is so vastly different than an adult with coping skills. Professionally, traumatic life experiences that occur during youth are considered [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#). COVID has created conditions that trigger ACEs for many children. Loved one's deaths, evictions, and the loss of routine support from physically attending school have marked their childhoods as they tally ACEs.

Each COVID wave knocks many children down, taking some under the current forever. 51% of teens studied experienced an ACE during the first wave of COVID. By the time the next COVID wave came, one out of 3 teens studied experienced a second ACE (Hertz). Over the course of the entire pandemic, three out of 4 high school teens have experienced at least one ACE (Anderson).

With each ACE, children develop toxic levels of stress which robs them of physical and mental health. As children who have experienced ACEs grow into adults, we see disparate heart and lung diseases and mental health challenges. Toxic stress also places children at increased risk of learning difficulties, and school absenteeism and threatens graduation success.

No state or territory has been spared the death of parents/caregivers. Almost "1 out of every 336 children under the age of 18" have experienced the traumatic death of a parent or caregiver during the pandemic. I wish I could write that the impacts of COVID have been spread evenly amongst all the children of this land. It is alarming that in comparison to White children, Indigenous American "children were 4 times more likely to lose a parent or grandparent caregiver; Black children were 2.2 times more likely" (Global Reference Group); and Latinx "children were nearly 2 times more likely to have lost a parent to COVID-19" (ACF).

Many of the children who lost their support person(s) also struggled with COVID-19 and the long-term complications of the illness. Previously healthy children had to overcome their own traumatizing illness, and then grapple with surviving the very illness that killed their support system. Many struggled with why they lived and other members of their household did not. Likely, these whys will go unanswered for the rest of their lives. For the children who have died from COVID-19, we will never know what their thoughts and fears were about the impact of COVID-19.

I'm exhausted from the carnage that COVID has created because helpful healing resources are almost nonexistent. Professionally, I have cared for too many children who have experienced abuse and mental distress from food and housing insecurity since the pandemic. Some of whom have tried to kill

themselves to make the pain go away. I will make a plea for the children that have been battered by each COVID wave. Help is needed NOW.

This may be our last call to garner hope. Each child that is orphaned loses community, support, and many tools for innovation. As a society, we lose the potential for civil, productive neighbors and friends.

COVID was never “just a cold” for the children who lost parents and caregivers. Birthdays, holidays, graduations, and other life milestones will never be the same in the “new normal. ” As neighbors in this thing, we can help build safer communities by providing nurturing relationships for these young survivors. We can hold our civic leaders accountable for providing child and community-centered supports that incorporate trauma-informed approaches. Healthy interventions now will make a long-term difference.

Immediately, you can make a positive impact on these children with a few tiny efforts. The next time you go out in public, wear a high-quality facemask when in indoor spaces and wash your hands frequently. Then, have an informed discussion with your primary doctor or healthcare provider about receiving the updated COVID vaccine as a step in building safe, healthier communities.

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Source : Sand and Shores

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