

# WOMEN OF THE HOUSE



Eris Doble (from far left), Lita Tagas and Esterlita Beja have shared a home for years. But lockdown has them even closer.

Annie Wernie/NY Post

## 'We bicker like crazy, but we also laugh a lot more'

Lita Tagas, 72, was accustomed to having the run of the house while her daughter, Esterlita Tagas Beja, 45, and 24-year-old granddaughter, Eris Doble, worked in Manhattan as a child-care consultant and a marketing associate, respectively.

The three women have lived under the same roof with Esterlita's husband, Americo, 51, and 15-year-old son, Ethan, ever since Lita immi-

grated to Queens from her native Philippines five years ago.

Since the lockdown has led to Esterlita no longer going into her job and Eris unfortunately losing hers, the family's quarters have gotten a lot closer.

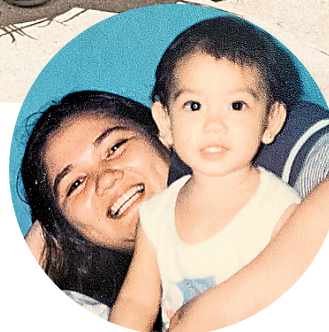
"I am unhappy sometimes because I can't go anywhere," Lita tells The Post.

That said, the trio are blessed with

a backyard where they have been bonding over planting seeds for tomatoes and green beans.

But even that has led to occasional bickering, with Esterlita, a nanny guru at Kids and Kaboodles, revealing they had a silly argument over "cheating" with starter soil the other day.

"My mom is very old-school and



Esterlita Beja at 22 with her then-1-year-old daughter, Eris

was saying, 'This isn't how we do it in the old country,'" she says. "We have to jokingly point out that things are very different in America and have a good laugh about that."

As well as finding humor in what could be considered difficult circumstances, the quarantine has been a prime opportunity to slow down.

"It's actually been so nice talking to each other more — to laugh, to cook traditional meals and sit out in the garden," Eris says.

## 'All three of us had the coronavirus'



Patti (from left) and Kimberli Picarillo with Rita Barci in 1994

Kimberli Picarillo, 28, had long been accustomed to her mom, Patti, tenderly nursing her as a child and teen through bouts of sickness such as mono, surgeries and wisdom teeth issues. But it was Kimberli who had to offer warmth and comfort this past month.

Even though she contracted the virus herself, Kimberli, who works in tech, powered through to nurse Patti, 66, her father, James, 67, and her 101-year-old grandmother, Rita Barci, who all came down with it too.

"Watching my daughter take care of me and the way she is toward my

mom has been exceptionally moving," says Patti, of Englewood Cliffs, NJ. "I like to think all those nights I spent on her windowsill when she was sick paid off."

The mother of three opened up her home to Kimberli, who ordinarily shares an apartment with two roommates in Greenwich Village, and Rita, who still lives in Patti's childhood home in New Milford, NJ, in mid-March — about two weeks before the family took ill.

"She wanted us all under the same roof just in case," says Kimberli.

The devoted daughter tended to her parents and

made sure that Rita's meals were left outside her bedroom door while she was kept separate from other members of the household in the vain hope she wouldn't get sick.

Mercifully, all four members of the family have since made a full recovery.

Now, Rita, Patti and Kimberli are resuming their new normal, which has involved Kimberli and Patti blow-drying the centenarian's hair and giving her manicures.

Kimberli, who is planning a "low-key" Mother's Day, says, "It's the little things that count and show how much we love each other."



Patti Picarillo (from left) has opened her Englewood Cliffs, NJ, home to mom Rita Barci, 101, and daughter Kimberli, 28.

Courtesy of Kim Picarillo