Mónica Piñera, who lives in Moab but is originally from Mexico, knew last spring that the coronavirus pandemic was history in the making. She wanted to document the stories of people living through it, so she got in touch with friends and family, both in the United States and in Mexico, to ask them to share their memories and experiences of quarantine. She wrote down their stories in both English and Spanish.

The resulting collection of stories will be on temporary display at the Moab Museum and is also the topic of the next Tuesdays with the Museum event, Memories of the Quarantine/Memorias de la Cuarentena, hosted on Facebook Live and Zoom on Feb. 23 at 6:30 p.m. Museum Director Forrest Rodgers and Moab Valley Multicultural Center Director Rhiana Medina will discuss the pandemic and how it has affected people in Moab and those they care about who may be far
away. They will also read aloud some of the stories in the exhibit. The exhibit may be viewed in person at the museum by appointment during the month of March.

The stories were displayed at the Moab Valley Multicultural Center’s Day of the Dead celebration in November [See “Moab does fall holidays COVID-safe,” in our Oct. 16, 2020 edition. -ed.] Medina noted that the story collection fit well with the theme of reflection that is part of the Day of the Dead, so it was a perfect opportunity to give community members a chance to engage with those quarantine stories.

However, Medina was impressed with Piñera’s project and wanted to give it a larger audience. Collaborating with the Moab Museum accomplished this. Langworthy said the museum hopes the exhibit is the first of many in partnership with the Moab Valley Multicultural Center.

The exhibit is staged as dual-language displays of personal stories and photos.

“They’re pretty striking to look at,” said Mary Langworthy, Moab Museum community relations officer.

She said the stories in the display represent a broad range of perspectives and experiences—for example, there is an account from a business owner in Guadalajara, Mexico.

“That seems very far removed from us, but that’s someone that a person from our community cared about and reached out to,” said Langworthy. She said the emotions captured in the display are universal.

Another, from a Salt Lake City resident, recalled an earthquake that shook the city in March 2020.

“I had totally forgotten about that earthquake until I read that story. It was cool to be reminded of everything that’s happened,” said Langworthy.

Ultimately, the stories illustrate how united and connected human beings are.

“There’s some heartache there, and some fear, and all those emotions we’ve become pretty used to,” said Langworthy.

Memorias de la Cuarentena/Memories of the Quarantine will be displayed at the Moab Museum (118 E. Center Street, Moab) through the end of March. For more information on the exhibit or the discussion on Tuesday, Feb. 23 go to www.moabmuseum.org

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– Mary Langworthy

When: Livestream on Tuesday, Feb. 23 at 6:30 p.m.; in-person appointments at the Moab Museum (118 East Center Street) available through March.
Where: Visit the Moab Museum's Facebook page to watch the livestream event or visit the Museum's website at www.moabmuseum.org to find the Zoom link.

Contact: email info@moabmuseum.org 48 hours in advance to make an in-person appointment at the Museum