**Film Transcription**

**Rewind – Leonard Cheshire Disability, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund**

**Film Title:** Come To Our Home

**Duration:** 12 minutes, 27 seconds

**Transcription Date:** 17th July 2016

**Archive Number:** N-607509

**Summary of Main Points**

0:21 Introduction of key ethos of Leonard Cheshire Homes

1:32 Leonard Cheshire explains the origins of the homes

2:23 Leonard Cheshire explains the importance of young people to the homes

4:33 Leonard Cheshire explains the work that went into the first home, with accompanying video clip

5:36 Leonard Cheshire explains about the first Christmas in the home, with accompanying video clip

6:49 Leonard Cheshire explains about the contributions and projects of local schools and local children

10:40 Leonard Cheshire makes an appeal for all kinds of voluntary help from all age groups

**Start of Transcription**

0:08 [Introductory music] to 0:21

0:21 **Leonard Cheshire** Well I’d very much like to er today to talk about the homes that we ourselves run for disabled people. And I’d like to tell you the way in which we are trying to make them really a home because those that we’re looking after are nearly all people who have become disabled or paralysed and as far as one knows are never going to get better. And so all their lives they’ve got to live away from their own homes. It’s impossible for them to live at home. The day may come when it’s possible for a great many of them to live at home but that day hasn’t come yet. And so, what we’re trying to do essentially is to make, first, to make them feel at home, just be themselves and lead the kind of life they want. We want our home to be really home to them, so they can feel they belong there and they’re wanted. In fact the only reason that I myself came in to do this some thirty years ago now was that I stumbled across an old man, elderly man of 75, dying of cancer whom the hospital couldn’t keep for the reason that they wanted his bed for others whom they could treat. And er so this set me on the path of the disabled, disabled people, people that had nowhere to go. In his case he was old and he didn’t have long to live and I had somewhere that I could take him and look after him and I thought that would be the end of it, but it wasn’t. There was an old lady of 91 who was a bit more [unclear] to look after. Granny, I used to call her. And then others. And then eventually I realise that er the real need in this country is for the young, the young and up, teenagers and upwards. Not only this country but every country in the world. This is the lowest priority up until now in all medical and social services. And as I say what we’re trying to do is to make them feel at home and to make them feel that there’s a purpose to their life. Because just picture if you’ve suddenly become paralysed, disabled, unable to live at home, unable to fulfil the hopes that you had. Your life is broken. And so you want to rebuild it. And now the truth is that… today we make great progress in er technology and so on, we’ve become aware of this problem and er there’s hardly anybody given the right help, who can’t do something useful, get back something of his independence. That’s one thing of course. But the other thing is the human aspect of making them feel wanted. And one thing that has struck me so much ever since I started almost the very year that I started is the interest of young people. When I say young, I mean from seven, eight years upwards, right up through the teens. And this is growing and growing and growing so that t-today we can almost say that a fairly large part of the help that we’re getting is coming from young people. And it’s something to me quit extraordinary because in the world that I brought up, we knew nothing about it. We knew nothing about the underprivileged world, we knew nothing about disabled people, or very few of us did; something quite new. And I must tell you the day that it started because it’s something burned in my mind and I’m never going to forget. We had our second home in a derelict hut, an RAF hut, on an abandoned RAF station right down in the windy part of Cornwall, near the Lizard. And the sea winds had blown over and broken the panes of glass and the salt had got in, [unclear?] got in. It was a completely derelict building. The reason that we took it was because we got it for nothing. And, erm, we get people to come and help rebuild it, even the sailors from the navy station at [unclear] came over and helped.

5:15 [Music] with images of the building work to 5:36

5:36 **Leonard Cheshire** But come the first Christmas, when we had eight residents, as we call them, eight disabled people, the problem was we had no proper dinner and we didn’t have enough money in the bank to go and buy a turkey, or something nice. And down in the nearby village of [unclear], about four miles away, a little boy of eleven, had won a duck in a raffle. And all on his own, without telling his mother, he decided to give it to us. And he walked on his own, all the way up the four miles to the home on Christmas Eve, knocked on the door… and gave us the duck. And that made our first Christmas dinner. And ever since then, we’ve had more and more young people coming forward to do something.

6.30 [Old film footage of Christmas in the home, to 6:45]

6:30 **Male speaker in old film footage** [Background voices] You don’t mind my saying so sir that I [unclear] better [unclear] this wing.

6:37 **Leonard Cheshire in old film footage** [Background voices] Oh, I see. Well thank you Patrick. [Moaning] I’m not used to it, you see. [unclear to 6:45]

6:45 **Female voice** Five, six, seven, eight, nine… ten, eleven

6.49 **Leonard Cheshire** If I mention an absolutely extreme case in the other part of England, up in Lancashire, north Lancashire, er, where they’ve had to raise 50,000 pounds to renovate a building, more than half that sum has been raised by local schools. A, er, on, er, what they call the desert trekkers, a sponsored walk along the sand, the desert trek… But the fact is of course that, it isn’t really the big things that, erm, although obviously we need them, that we’re looking for, we’re looking for all kinds of help, and I think that one thing that today is lacking, and that people are not so willing to give is time. And if you can picture somebody, in a wheelchair, in that wheelchair all day, except when putting to bed, probably put into bed with a hoist, as he’s heavy to lift, er, he sees the same faces round him all the time… Just picture what it means to him if somebody comes along, interested enough in him to come and listen to him. Write a letter for him. Read to him or even just be with him. And a lot of these people, as I say, our young, so what they want is somebody who is interested in the same things that they’re interested in. For instance, somebody who’s interested in pop, who will come and talk pop. I mean, I can’t talk pop with him. But er you may be able to talk pop with him and play a record with him and enjoy it. Because we all know how we like to share things... And this… very fact that people who live nearby will come in and do something maybe help somebody, give him his tea, help shave him, er, clean his wheelchair, because very often wheelchairs get muddied and somebody’s got to clean them. All this is not only augmenting the staff in the home, because we have to, obviously, a nucleus of paid staff, regular trained staff, but in order to cut the cost down, we need to augment it with voluntary help. So, we’re looking for voluntary help, whom in fact normally we call the slaves. And, erm, they come from different countries, er, nearly always in the younger age groups, and some of them will spend a fortnight, some will spend a little longer, between er college and a job or between school and college, or an evening, just when you happen to have one. We had one little group of children, aged only seven to eleven. And they’ve got extraordinary initiative I find, er children, think of things that you couldn’t possibly think of. They decided to organise, what they called, a sponsored shut up. And the idea was that they went along to their parents and said “will you give me 25p for every quarter of an hour that I can keep quiet. Well the parents were only too willing. I mean, they’d never known their child to be quiet for fifteen minutes. And they borrowed the local Church and the vicar sat in the Church, to make certain of everything, no cheating, and they were allowed to take books and simple toys and I’m sure you won’t believe it… but they kept quiet for six and a quarter hours. You can imagine what their parents said when they’re [laughs] faced with the bill. And they sent us 167 pounds, just a little group of children aged through seven and eleven, all their own idea. So, I’m trying to say that there’s a whole range of things that anybody can do, from adopting a room, coming and painting it and washing it down and perhaps the girls will come and do the curtains and so on, er, to just on your own, visiting one person. Even the humblest thing… is going to mean an enormous amount to the person that you do it for. And I find that… the residents, the disabled people that we have, especially the slightly older ones, love being visited by a child, or by a teenager. For example, they don’t often go out of the home, it’s not easy, we have most home… homes have got, er, a bus. The bus will take them out, but they like an escort, somebody’s got to push them around, er, take them to see the things that they want, they don’t want to be herded round where someone decides they should go. It’s this personal giving, giving of yourself, to another person, for a time, and er, this is what’s going to make all the difference to the old person’s life. Even if all that you do is kneel down and do his shoelace up.

12.12 [Music] to 12:27

**End of Transcription**