**Oral History Transcription - Ranjana – St Cecilia’s**

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

**Filmed - 2016**

**Start of transcription**

[Text on screen: What is your background?]

[Ranjana]

00:00:10 - Well, I was born in Kenya, in the Rift Valley, actually, at my grandmother's place. I came to England when I was 7 in 1968, and I didn't speak a word of English, so it was quite difficult, you know, to adjust. And also, we had this romantic idea of the weather in England. Never knew what snow was. And, of course, we really felt it. We had quite a harsh winter that... 1968. So it was a shock to the system, I must say.

[Text on screen: What was life like as a young adult?]

00:00:45 - I had met my husband by that stage. I met him when I was 17. And he was the best thing that happened to me. And so, um... I started working in the city. It was only my second interview, so it was... I was so, so fortunate. The people were lovely. But also, I soon discovered I was struggling with the Underground or the stairs that I had to climb up and down. And, um... That's when we discovered that I had this condition. And they named it, after a long time, um... that it was limb-girdle muscular dystrophy. Uh, so that was quite devastating. And then, um... I carried on working there because they were very kind people and they really did look after me. My husband was looking after me. And, um... It was too much for him, because... he had even given up work, and we were getting help in to look after me, but it was quite intrusive. And it was a wonderful opportunity to just find ourselves again. So, it was hard. It was the hardest decision we had to make, I must say. But we knew we had to do it. So that's why... I thought I'd go into a nursing home and there was one down the road, which, you know, was amazing. So we came here. And it was pretty daunting, I have to say, coming in to a huge place like this. But I knew it was the right decision I had to make.

[Text on screen: What are your early memories of St Cecilia’s?]

00:02:30 - When you came here first, you had to share a room, and there were three double rooms. Yeah. So you kind of lived in half a room. Yeah. And it was, you know, from having a wonderful flat to then coming... But, you know, in a way, it was quite good, because... it forced you to get to know somebody quickly. And, in fact, I couldn't have asked for a better roommate. Molly was a lovely lady, and her husband, Tony. And he still comes in, he still volunteers... and drives for us. So we became really good friends and with some other volunteers, and had a lovely little circle of friends. So I used to go out a lot, and Molly as well, we used to go to the church, evening prayer, healing sessions. And we used to go to galleries and the theatre. So it was really nice.

[Text on screen: How do you feel about your time at St Cecilia’s?]

00:03:35 - Oh, it's very important. It's the best thing that happened to me, really. Being... Although it was so hard, I think I've really blossomed here. And also, I know this is where God wanted me. You know, my faith is important to me, it changed my life, and I knew that, um... God wouldn't allow anything if it wasn't good for me. So I had to hang onto that truth. And it's been true, you know, I've met amazing people.

00:04:09 - My personal development, you know, has happened. I've discovered myself, and other... I just see the beauty in people. I've met amazing people, and it's ongoing. I think this is like a little village here. We have a cross-section of society, in a way, here. Very important, I think. And I think it is important that people are looked after in a place like this, because you can be quite isolated at home. And independent living sounds wonderful, and if you are quite independent, that's lovely. But when you have needs, and, um... multiple complications with conditions, as we have these days, I think it's very important that you're in a place where you're supported well. So, it's a wonderful place. And, um... I hope it continues for a long time.

**End of transcription**