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

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

**Filmed - 2016**

**Start of transcription**

[Text on screen: When did you start volunteering at St Cecilia’s?]

00:00:11 – [Jean] …1978. I came as a volunteer... because it was the same year that my husband died. It was as if... He died in the September, and by the November, it was as if God was saying to me, "Start thinking of other people and not just yourself." And I lived ten minutes away from here then. And I came, and the head of the home was a Miss Cashman. And, um... I did, really, whatever they wanted me to do. Mostly when I came in, it would be round about lunchtime, and I would help with feeding. And, um... tidying, you know, tidying the drawers or putting things away or just, you know, like they are. Especially those that haven't got any...don't have many visitors. They like us to chat to them. And I'm fairly good at that.

[Text on screen: Do you have any special memories of your time at St Cecilia’s?]

00:01:21 - Well, the personal event, of course, was that I was nominated for the Mayor's Award for my voluntary work within the borough. [Man] Right. [Jean] Especially with St Cecilia's. And, you know, so I've got a medal. When the Queen and Prince Philip were coming to Bromley, not many years ago, and people were asked if they had, you know, anything special to wear. And so I went with Sheila at the time, and we went, you know, in with the crowd that was in the front. And, um... Prince Philip... And we were asked, so I had my medal on. And, um... Prince Philip touched it and he said, "And what was this for?" And I said, "My voluntary work with the Leonard Cheshire Home." And he said, "Very good." Said to Sheila, "And where's yours?" And she said, "I've just got..." Has she told you this? [Man]— No, she hasn't. [Jean] — Oh. She said, "I've just got a certificate." So he touched her on the shoulder, and he said, "Well, do better next time." (Both laugh)

[Text on screen: How has St Cecilia’s changed over the years?]

00:02:42 Well, the main thing, of course, that I noticed is that the residents have got en-suite. That's the main thing that I can think. And they all have a bedroom. A room. Whereas when I was first here, I think it was three or maybe four where there were two together. Still 30 residents. [Man] — Double rooms. [Jean] — But there would be double rooms, you know. It was more of a family, that's the only way that I can... to say to you, really. It's been better for the residents, better for the residents because of them having this — I keep on about this en-suite. That's so important to how it used to be, you know, queueing up at the end of the corridor. And, you know, and it was more open... [Man] — Not nice. [Jean] — No, it wasn't private. It wasn't private.

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

00:03:45 - I suppose the happiest time was that when we were all together... And the fact that we used the, um, the ambulance more. I can't remember if it was one or two, now I stop to think about it. So that I used to be out with them, perhaps a bit more, which made me happy because we were doing something different for them. I like doing things for them, you know, that they have pleasure. Especially doing the bingo. That's why they call me 'Jean the Bingo Queen', you know... Anything that gives them pleasures.

00:04:19 - One of the residents said to me, "We've got a new volunteer, Jean, "and I'm sure you'll like her, she's ever so nice." And, of course, it was Beryl. Beryl Ramanathan. And, uh... So we did, we... Although, you know, she's much younger than me, but we became... And of course I was driving then, so I could, you know, go to her. And, uh, and then... Of all the people that I worked with, and we were only in an office down at Mottingham, you know, it was quite near. But Sheila was the only one who said, you know... They came to any social events that I told them about. But, um, yeah, so it was through... through my... my being here that Sheila came. Yes, yes. That's right. That's right. And so we're like a big, you know, one sort of family.

**End of transcription**