

Interview summary: Eula Harrison, user of the centre from the mid-1980s
Interviewer: Diane Gold
Interviewee: Eula Harrison
Interview date: 09 July 2013

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[00:00:00 - 00:01:27] (Tags: getting involved with Manor Gardens, service user)

Eula was born in Cuba in 1935 and was brought up in Jamaica. She talks about the different places she lived in in London before coming to Islington. Eula then discusses her first interaction with Manor Gardens in the mid-1980s, as a member of the Islington Older Learners Group. She learnt to use a computer for the first time with this group.

[00:03:18 - 00:09:30] (Tags: volunteering, mental health, older community)

Eula s about volunteering with the centre at the same time that she was attending a group there. She recalls helping local schoolchildren with reading activities.

Two years ago Eula became a Mental Health Champion. She helps to provide information for people with mental health issues, and discusses some of the activities this involves. Eula is also currently a member of the Islington Pensioners' Forum and an older peoples' group, which reviews bus services.

[00:09:30 - 00:11:25] (Tags: poetry, older learners)

Eula talks about her poetry writing, which is something she embraced at the Older Learners group. She still writes poetry to this day.

[00:11:25 - 00:17:30] (Tags: past and present)

Eula discusses what it was like to move from Jamaica to London. She found it cold and wet, and disliked the black, foggy weather. She thought that the houses with their smoking chimneys were factories. She also refers to post-War conditions in London.

Eula describes Upper Street in Islington when she first arrived and how it is now.

[00:17:30 - 00:23:40] (Tags: past and present, community, ethnicity)

Eula speaks about attitudes towards black people when she first arrived in England. She feels that today there is a greater mix of people and less separation, which she is happy about. She says that she never felt any sense of separation at Manor Gardens.

[00:23:42 - 00:26:00] (Tags: family)

Eula talks more about her family and grandchildren.

[00:26:00 - 00:32:45] (Tags: events)

Eula discusses events at Manor Gardens, particularly the annual celebrations and also receiving certificates for volunteering. She also talks about meeting Prince Charles when she received an award for volunteering at Clarence House.

[00:32:45 - 00:32:45] (Tags: volunteering; service user)

Eula talks about what volunteering means to her - it encourages her to get out of the house and to meet other people. She also discusses the sense of community at Manor Gardens and how she feels that people know her there because of her long-standing involvement.

[00:32:45 - 00:36:30] (Tags: volunteering; older community)

Eula talks more about her Mental Health Champion work, attending meetings, and the Islington Older Group where she was responsible for monitoring buses.

[00:36:30 - 00:39:40] (Tags: older community)

Eula talks about Manor Gardens' work and, in particular, the services they provide for older people, such as arranging help for people coming out of hospital and providing in-home assistance, as well as a befriending project.

[00:39:40 - 00:43:30] (Tags: proudest moments, community learning)

Eula says that she is most proud of her learning and particularly her poems. She says she has read poems for the mayor. She says that her courses with Manor Gardens were the start of her writing.

She also talks about going to the Old Arsenal Centre to do her training. Today, she is not able to access the new centre and uses the library on Holloway Road instead.