

**Interview summary:** Teo Balan, volunteer at Manor Gardens, 1991 to c.2004.

**Interview Summary:** Teo Balan,

**Interviewer:** David Meyer

**Interviewee:** Teo Balan

**Interview date:** 03 December 2013

**Interview code:** MG201321A

**Recording length:** 00:32:14

**[00:00:00 – 00:04:06]** (Tags: introduction; getting involved with the centre; volunteers)

Teo Balan introduces himself. Teo was born in 1959 and volunteered at Manor Gardens from 1991 to 2004/5. During this time he predominantly volunteered with the Stroke Club.

Teo explains how he first became involved with the centre. After arriving in the UK he was looking for activities to fill his time and to improve his English. He met the organiser of the Stroke Club and began volunteering. It was a two-way process - Teo was able to provide help to others and improve his English at the same time.

**[00:04:07 – 00:11:30]** (Tags: community; events; Stroke Club)

Teo discusses the importance of community and how easy it was to get to know all the staff at the centre.

Teo recalls a Black Mens Health Awareness project, which he helped to film. He also remembers days out at Southend and Brighton and the Stroke Club's Scrabble tournaments.

Teo feels that the Stroke Club was quite innovative and, in particular, feels that it made a great contribution to the community by collecting those who had suffered strokes from their homes and bringing them together at the centre.

**[00:11:32 – 00:21:42]** (Tags: people; volunteers; Stroke Club)

Teo introduces members of the Stroke Club and their roles.

Teo says he was born in Romania and arrived in the UK in 1991. He began volunteering at Manor Gardens a month after his arrival. He discusses the significance of volunteering in general, and how it helped him to get a permanent job.

Teo talks more about the Black Men's Health Awareness project and how it felt good to be trusted to co-ordinate the event.

**[00:21:42 – 00:23:23]** (Tags: centre's contribution to the community; Stroke Club)

Teo explains the significance of the Stroke Club and how it provided support and stimulation for those affected by strokes.

[00:23:23 – 00:25:15] (Tags: community)

Teo says that the centre's secretaries were always happy to help him after his time there. The centre felt like an extended family and reminded him of his neighbourhood back home in Romania.

[00:25:35 –00:32:14] (Tags: Stroke Club; community; premises)

Teo discusses how volunteering at the Stroke Club helped him to better understand what a stroke is, and how he was able to learn about people's experiences.

He also discusses the location of the club and describes its building. At the same time there was a lending scheme there providing advice and lending equipment to new mothers.

**END OF RECORDING 1**

**Interview Summary:** Teo Balan,  
**Interviewer:** David Meyer  
**Interviewee:** Teo Balan  
**Interview date:** 04 December 2013

**Interview code:** MG201321B  
**Recording length:** 00:16:05

[00:00:00 – 00:04:13] (Tags: volunteering in the community)

Teo says that he was able to move between and contribute to different projects at Manor Gardens, which he enjoyed. The last project he was involved with was working with stroke survivors in their own homes. He had quite a few clients and he developed a rapport with all of them. Teo enjoyed working with such nice people.

At some point Teo was told that he was the longest serving volunteer with Manor Gardens with more than 10 years of work. He found it difficult to just leave and to leave his clients behind, who he'd developed a bond with and who he often ran errands for.

[00:04:16 - 00:05:09] (Tags: events)

Teo recalls going to Southend with the Stroke Club, and his wife and daughter also coming along on one occasion. Teo still has pictures from the trips and looking back at the photos, he wonders what happened to different people.

**[00:05:09 – 00:06:15]**

Teo is informed that the driving service was cancelled. He was surprised by this and thinks it should be re-instated as the clients would often wait in anticipation of the bus' arrival to be taken to the centre. He appreciates that this service was probably cut due to lack of funds.

**[00:06:15 – 00:08:00]** (Tags: Christmas, events)

Teo discusses Christmas at the centre. He says that really Christmas could have been any day, as everyone just celebrated being there together and interacting.

**[00:08:01 – 00:16:05]** (Tags: volunteering)

Teo shares his thoughts on volunteering. He says there is something special about it - you give not only your time, but something of yourself. You put yourself into whatever you do and hope that it will help others. He feels that people should be encouraged to volunteer, like a village community. However he appreciates that it may be difficult for people to commit to volunteering, as it is unpaid.

Teo says he has never been treated differently as a volunteer [as opposed to a paid worker] and really likes this ethos. He feels that volunteering has opened doors for him and he has stayed in touch with the family of 'clients'.

Teo reiterates that the staff and members of the Stroke Club helped him to improve his English language skills. For Teo, the club's members also had much to teach him and others about people affected by strokes.

**END OF RECORDING 2**