



**When Joan moved into Brentwood Care Centre in January 2021, her husband Manual had one simple request for the care team, 'she's my life' he said 'please make sure you look after her'.**

Trust takes time to build and for Joan, relying on strangers to support her was difficult to accept. Staff recognised she needed time to settle, to feel safe and secure.

The team led by Melanie Cole, Brentwood's Dementia Ambassador spent time getting to know Joan and her family, and discovered she was a published children's poet who did all her own illustrations. The Team used the 'My Life History' to document all the useful information to help build a picture of Joan. This information was utilised by the team to provide meaningful engagement, talking to her about things she liked and places she had been, and about her life growing up and being a Mother and Wife. The care team visited Joan in her room daily and supported her to continue writing, encouraging her to read her poems aloud. Joan did not like coming out of her room and was reluctant to meet those living around her, but through positive conversations Joan has been encouraged to join in more.

Joan has built trusting relationships with the whole team, and knows they are all here to help her in her daily life, but in particular with

Melanie for whom she regularly writes poetry. Joan has also enjoyed participating in group activities, painting and crafts, baking (and tasting of course!). Joan particularly enjoys the virtual reality trips through London streets reminiscing about people and places she knew. Joan's physical health has also improved during her time at Brentwood Care Centre as staff have ensured hydration and hygiene are a focus to stop the acute infections Joan had previously suffered with. Joan is supported to maintain independence in all aspects of her life and earlier this year was featured in the 'Romford Recorder' for her work with the children of local Hopscotch Day Nursery during National Storytelling Week.



Joan's family are delighted with the care she receives, and recognise the great relationships she has developed with the care team. Joan was very happy to share her story with us. She acknowledged that at first, she found living in the care home difficult but with the Teams help she now feels happy and content, spending her days chatting to her family, drawing and writing new poetry. [Click here to watch Joan's Storytelling](#)