

The Story of Moira's Life

Moira is 55 years old and lives with her Shared Lives Carer in North West England.

MacIntyre's Shared Lives scheme recruits people with a spare room in their house, checks and trains them and then matches them with a vulnerable person who goes to live or have short breaks with them.

Profile

Name: Moira

Age: currently 55

Where Moira lives: North West England

Type of support provided by MacIntyre:
Shared Lives

Personal history:

Moira lived with her mum and dad until her dad passed away when she was 47. Moira had a happy life and enjoyed family holidays, especially cruises.

When Moira was 52 her mum's disability meant that she was unable to continue to support her. She worked voluntarily with Tina in her office. Moira asked if she could stay with Tina and it was agreed she would have a night's respite once a week. This increased and Moira moved in with Tina in 2012. Everyone was happy with this arrangement particularly Moira, who said it was what she always wanted.



About Moira:

Moira has always enjoyed the finer things in life. She loves fancy meals, a good red wine and socialising. Having impeccable etiquette is very important to her. Moira loves nothing more than a cruise where all these things come together.

Her dream is to go on a world cruise and since living with Tina she has nearly achieved this! Moira and Tina have been on 5 cruises together, some with her mum and others with friends. Moira loves music, particularly the oldies and enjoys a good sing. Moira has always been very sure of herself and would be described as a very determined and strong character.

Over the years she has volunteered in an older people's retirement village, offices, and a leisure centre. She had a lovely phone manner and was brutally efficient!

Health history:

Moira has always enjoyed good health. As a younger woman, Moira was very overweight. She started to lose this after her dad died and she began to only eat certain foods, insisting on the same meals, mushroom omelette or salmon fillet, every night.

Over the next 5 years, Moira went down to a size 6. Since living with Tina, Moira has had a hearing test and now has hearing aids and also a sight test and she wears glasses. The sight test was originally done because Moira kept stepping over things that weren't there. In hindsight this was an early sign of dementia but before living with Tina, Moira had always refused to have a sight test.

Moira's diagnosis

Moira was prescribed Sertraline for depression, which seemed to make Moira lethargic and took some of her personality away. Moira at this time said, "I am not depressed, I am very happy." However, when Moira came off the medication as a trial, she became anxious and confused.

She is taking the medication again now and it seems to be helping. Moira has an assistive technology mat by her bed as she gets up in the night and Tina needs to be alerted. She also has an extra rail to help Moira go up and down the stairs.

Moira has not yet had contact with Dementia services; she has been supported through learning disability services, a psychiatrist, community nurse and SALT. Moira does attend a Dementia café and benefits from the MacIntyre Dementia Project, either through Tina who feels well supported and connected or through attending the events they hold.

Tina attended a two-day dementia training that prepared her practically and emotionally for what was to come. It helped her to recognise signs and symptoms and think about whether they could be related to the dementia rather than behavioural or another physical cause.

Tina's role:

- Tina has needed to be an advocate, a researcher, a cheerleader and determined supporter that Moira will get the right support at the right time.
- Early on, she found out about a medicine that would slow the onset of dementia and when she requested it, was told that Moira wouldn't be able to have it. Tina made absolutely sure that this was for physiological reasons and not because of her learning disability.
- Tina's role was to keep Moira's mum informed and latterly to offer emotional support. She trusts Tina implicitly and takes great comfort from Moira being in her care. Moira visits her mum regularly.

Moira's healthcare

Moira had a stroke in 2014, which led to her having a scan. Moira was referred to a learning disability psychiatrist who explained that she had the onset of dementia. For the first 12-18 months, things continued as normal with just small behavioural differences and little accidents, such as knocking things over.

In the last 12 months, the dementia appears to have progressed. Moira is regularly confused about people, reliant on support to eat and drink, needs support with personal care and dressing.

People who bump into Moira in town are shocked at the difference in this once confident, social and well known woman. Moira started to drop things and found picking up drinks difficult. Her impeccable table manners were becoming difficult to maintain and it was distressing for Moira who prided herself on these.

Moira was referred for assistive technology and even though we knew about Moira's dementia, initially thought that her difficulties may have been down to the stroke. Moira is unable to concentrate on magazines or TV anymore. She doesn't always recognise people.

Living well with dementia

Tina has fought every step of the way for support for Moira. Together with Moira's mum, Tina has made a pact to support Moira to enjoy every day. Together they have made sure that Moira has had the things that she has enjoyed. This has included cruises, meals out and a glass of wine, regular pampering sessions with her hair and nails and also massage. Moira has been to the Mayor's Ball and to various other music and theatre events.

As her abilities change, they maintain the things that they know she is interested in, jewellery and nice clothes, as these can be tactile and sensory. Tina has used YouTube to find old songs that Moira loves and these have a definite impact on her mood and ability to connect and engage. Moira and Tina are fighting dementia together and trying every day to remain positive and enjoy life to the full.



Contact details:

The Dementia Project Team

602 South Seventh Street, Central Milton
Keynes, MK9 2JA

Registered Charity Number 250840



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01908 230 100



hello@macintyrecharity.org



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