

Carer Feedback

A Carers History

Christina (and Keith) R: Is it only 3 ½ years since Christina made contact? – it seems that they has been part of or “family” for so much more. As so often, they came to the Project through Christina’s phone call and our invitation to the Carers Club and Info Café. Since then they have made our lives a joy in just being able to make a difference and being a part of all we do. Christina is amazing in her love and care for Kieth, her resilience and stamina, and her “it’s so hard, but without you

I first became aware of the Debenham Project at the tail end of 2022. Having given up work in the summer of that year to care full time for my husband who has Alzheimer's, I was rapidly finding myself feeling quite isolated. By January 2023 the cold, dark days finally made me make the phone call that, quite honestly, has been a life saver.

My first contact was with Sue who, with what I now know is her customary love and patience, listened to me, making little sense babbling on about how I was finding things and she suggested we come along to the info cafe that afternoon. We walked in and amazingly were greeted by Lynden with our names, (could anything make you feel more at home!) he quickly found us somewhere to sit and introduced us to others whilst tea and cake arrived in front of us. The low ebb I had found myself in earlier in the day evaporated and by the time we left to go home I knew we had found a very special place and some extraordinary people.

Now, three and a half years later, I can truly say that my first impressions were so correct. Since the original visit we have been lucky enough to enjoy Fit Club, Songs for sharing, TLC, fish & chips at Felixstowe, the garden party, many more Info Cafes and more recently to benefit from respite care.

As my husband's condition has progressed it often feels like it would be easier to stay at home rather than go out but the smiling faces, the chats, the laughter, the love and emotional support we receive always recharges my batteries giving me the strength to continue caring and, seeing my husband, despite his worsening state and not knowing who these people are, being shown the love and respect he deserves, being addressed by name, included in conversations and enjoying tea and cake brings a smile to his face and fills my heart with joy. None of us carers who access the Project would choose to be in the roles we are in but we are, and thanks to the project life is made a little easier and brighter, we feel we have become part of an extended family and many of us have made friends for life. The fact that several former carers, who themselves benefitted from the work of the project, now volunteer is testament to what the project means to us all.

The Debenham project is truly an amazing charity. Thank you everyone.

With Love, Christina

Summary

Christina and her husband Keith first connected with The Debenham Project in early 2023 after Christina had given up work to care full-time for Keith, who has Alzheimer's. Feeling isolated and overwhelmed, she contacted the Project and was warmly welcomed to an Info Café, an experience she describes as life-changing.

Over the following three and a half years, they became active participants in many of the Project's activities, including Fit Club, Songs for Sharing, TLC, outings, social events, and respite care. Christina highlights the kindness, friendship, emotional support, and sense of belonging that the Project provides to both carers and those they care for.

As Keith's condition has progressed, Christina says the Project has continued to give her strength and encouragement, while ensuring Keith is treated with dignity, respect, and warmth. She describes the organisation as an extended family that makes the challenges of caring more manageable and brings joy to difficult situations.

Christina concludes by expressing her deep gratitude, calling The Debenham Project "a truly amazing charity" and thanking everyone involved for the difference they make in the lives of carers and their loved ones.