

## **Cocktails in Care Homes transcript of Episode 1**

### **'What is Cocktails in Care Homes'**

Woman's Voice 1: What's your favourite tippie, come on go on, go on tell us

Woman's Voice 2: I think it's white wine too, isn't it

Woman's Voice 3: She likes Baileys

Women's Voices 1 and 2: Ooh Baileys, Baileys

Woman's Voice 3: Or a red wine

Woman's Voice 4: I love gin and tonic with cucumber in it as well as ice

Man's Voice 1: My favourite tippie would have to be an espresso martini, because I feel like falling asleep half the time so the coffee is a good boost

Man's Voice 2: My favourite tippie is a tasty craft beer, very tasty, like 4 or 6 perhaps

Woman's Voice 5: My favourite tippie is pina colada

Woman's Voice 6: I would say right now it's a vodka soda because I feel like it's very hydrating and it's good to stay hydrated

Woman's Voice 7: I like a wine, a white wine

Woman's Voice 8: Yeah

Phoebe: Welcome to the Magic Me Cocktails in Care Homes podcast, cocktails in care homes is a project where we throw cocktail parties in care homes and extra care schemes across London to combat social isolation. This podcast series will share our stories and experiences of this intergenerational project and offer some ideas on how to engage with people living with dementia through arts, community and fun. We have four episodes exploring what is cocktails, dementia, music, and décor. Enjoy.

This episode is going to focus on 'What Is Cocktails in Care Homes?'

[People singing along to Que Sera, Sera ; "the future's not ours to see que sera, sera, what will be will be, when I grew up and fell in love I asked my sweetheart what will I be."]

Magic Me is the UK's leading provider of intergenerational arts activities we've been based in Tower Hamlets since 1989, it's our thirtieth birthday this year, and our award winning project models have pioneered creative ways to successfully bring together younger and older people in our communities. Our core activities include Arts & Ages programme which links school pupils and older people, we have a women's only intergenerational arts project, and of course Cocktails In Care Homes where we hold monthly parties in care homes and extra care schemes connecting residents with local volunteers.

Helen: Hello my name is Helen I'm at Elgin Close Extra Care I work here as a carer, tonight we have a cocktail party and its run by Cocktails In Care Homes

Georgina: and what is Cocktails in Care Homes?

Helen: so every month, on a Wednesday night a charity called Magic Me come to our care home, they come and set up our lounge, they make the room look amazing, we have disco lights, we have

table cloths we have decorations, we have snacks and we have alcohol. And I usually come with music, I have a playlist that the customers love, and we drink, we party, we chat and we have lots of wonderful volunteers who come and chat to our residents.

Phoebe: My name's Phoebe Grudzinskas, I am the project manager for Cocktails In Care Homes. Basically the idea came from actually residents, having a conversation with our director, Susan, and it was during an evaluation session, that Susan went along and the residents were like, 'we love the stuff that happens in the day, we love it when the school children or young people come in but we really would like something to happen in the evening basically, because dinner is served at about 5 or 6 then there is a change over of staff so there isn't really anything planned in the evening, it's quite quiet and also young adults, or adults who are working in 9-5 jobs who knew of Magic Me and knew of the work they did in care homes and in the community were saying, well we work 9-5 do you have anything else that you do that we can get involved with? So Susan came up with the idea of Cocktails In Care Homes, we started in 3 and at this moment in time we are in 15 across 9 London boroughs. And what is really wonderful is that 2 out of those 3 care homes that it was piloted in still have the cocktail parties happening, so they've been having parties once a month for 9 years. It started just basically with a few table cloths, fresh flowers, a bit of music, whatever the care home had, what was really lovely in one of the care homes was a resident called Vera, who used to be a singer in the 40s would close every party with a song. So there was the bare bones element of the parties. So generally how it works is you turn up as a volunteer, you sign into the care home, you'll be directed to a room, you'll hear music and laughter, hopefully, as you're walking through the corridors, you'll be greeted by one of our volunteer party managers, they are a core group of volunteers, we have 36 and they are assigned to each care home and they go to that same care home once a month and they arrive early, they set up the room, they work with the care staff to serve drinks, they are DBS checked, and then they manage the party and host it, look after the volunteers and residents, with the care staff and then at the end of the party they pack everything away and then they work with us, Magic Me staff a bit closely, we meet with them three times a year to just share and get feedback. So you'll arrive, you say hello to the party manager, you get a drink, you sit down, you can chat to one person all evening, you can work the room as you would at any other party if you're a bit of a networker. I love to dance, so I do a bit of talking but I generally dance around the room, cos that's what I like to do, um yeah. And then at 715/730 we ring last orders and everyone says goodbye and everything gets packed up in a box and yeah, that's how it works.

[background sounds of party]

Georgina: what makes the party such a special part of the month, how is it different to the rest?

Older woman's Voice: well it's entertainment isn't it? And um, you get people get to know you and they come and talk to you and say a few words to you, to remind you of them you know and they like remembering you, you know.

Keith: My name is Jonathan Keith Weston, and I prefer to be called Keith and we are at a Magic Me party in Mildmay. Well we said it's a two way thing, because you know I don't know your world,

(Georgina: yeah)

Just like you don't know mine,

(Georgina: yeah)

my world in the in 60s and 70s

(Georgina: yeah)

but I don't know your world now.

Latifa: My name's Latifa I work in Westport care centre and I'm a health care assistant. I think, I think to be honest I think they are really good and beneficial to our residents, because they get to have more one to one time with individuals have more of a chat instead of like sitting watching the telly all day, they can actually interact with other people, have a good little chat and you know communicate more with everybody, so I think, yeah.

Georgina: and what do you think to having drinks and booze on site?

Latifa: I think, to be honest, the one's that can drink I think its quite good because we want them to feel free and we don't want them to feel that they are here and it's different to, it's good that in way, that they feel like if they can have alcohol, if they did in the past, it's still the same, sort of thing. Our residents benefit a lot from it because even sometimes after youse have gone, the next day, some of the residents, that we wouldn't expect it from, are still mentioning it, and they would talk about it, and say oh, are we having that party again, or is that lady coming back, and we're surprised because that person don't really, they're not very open like that, and it really, like, so its' very good for them to ask again.

Marion: So I'm Marion, and I am Activities Officer at Mildmay and I work at three centres.

Georgina: so what are we up to tonight, what's going on tonight?

Marion: oh, well, it's a Magic Me party, and I think we have about twelve volunteers joining us and we kind of give out drinks some have beer others have a glass of wine, just a lovely chat, some play games and it's just a great way of getting people down and socialising and when you have so many volunteers they have really meaningful conversations, some have a good joke, so we tend to put some of the men sitting together so then they kind of, they share their own little jokes between them and it tends to work very well.

Georgina: and it's ok bringing alcohol into the home

Marion: yes, you've got to obviously manage it and be sensible, but because its only an hour, and they tend to get two drinks, or sometimes three if you can know they can take it. But yeah, you just be sensible in monitoring it. The rehab unit, obviously we don't give alcohol to those residents because of their medication.

Georgina: and do you think it's positive the party vibe and brining

Marion: yes it's fantastic, um yes, it's the companionship of the volunteers that's the most important thing, I think it's treating them like adults rather than protecting them. If they were at home and fancied a tippie, they could have it, so why should it be different here. I just think it's important to treat people like an adult rather than institutionalising and saying 'no alcohol'. So yeah.

Georgina: they're not invisible they've lived amazing lives

Marion: some of them very amazing, so yes.

Hannah: cool, so, my name's Hannah Randal and I'm a volunteer I volunteer for Cocktails In Care Homes we're at Westport care centre in Limehouse, I come here once a month and I've been coming here since around April 2018 so just under a year.

Georgina: and what do you do here

Hannah: so once a month we put on parties for the residents, it's called Cocktails In Care Homes, we just make them drinks, sit and socialise with the residents, play games, just chat to them, give them someone they can talk to and give them a social night out I guess.

Georgina: drinks, what kind of drinks?

Hannah: so it's dependent on the resident really, we do soft drinks, cocktails, well cocktails with fruit juices and stuff like that, we do beers, wine, spirits so it depends on what the residents feel like and fancy, we also put out some crisps and snacks and cakes – which normally go down quite well, so yes, a lot of variety.

Georgina: and what, how come you wanted to do this and keep coming back?

Hannah: I think for me, I just found, so I actually have a partnership through my work with this company, and I just thought it's one night a month, well it's flexible to however much you can do, but I thought it's just an hour and I just thought if I'm not doing too much with my evening if I come and make a difference to one resident and give them someone to talk to then it's an achievement for me and I feel like I've actually given back something back to someone. There's a lot of different characters, I think, as you come to more parties, you sort of understand a bit more how to be with certain people and sort of understand how they are in social situations, so there are some people who like to keep themselves to themselves, they like to sit at the back but even just going up to them at the start, introducing yourself, asking them if they want a drink sort of makes them feel included, there's some who like to get up and have a dance who are like big characters, like to have a joke, there's some who like to play games, so it's a big variety in sort of people and it sort of depends how they are in certain situations. Other volunteers are lovely and it's actually a really good opportunity to meet people that you'd never think you'd meet before, so I've met with people who are older, younger, from other areas across London

Georgina: And what do you think the residents get from it

Hannah: I think it just gives them, sort of time away from their room and to meet new people, a lot of residents don't have any family, or relatives or partner so for them, us coming once a month, it's a new face, someone they can talk to, someone a bit different to the carers and just someone they can talk about their life with, I just think it just sort of gives them a fresh face and fresh opinions and fresh personalities as well, being like such different people coming to help there are so many different stories you can talk about, so I think it's just for them someone to have a bit of fun with, bit of chat, just to sort of talk about their life.

Helen: Hi I'm Helen and we're here at the magic me cocktails party in Rose Court in South East London

Josephine: Hi I'm Josephine and I'm also at the valentine's party for magic me at Rose Court.

Georgina: and how long have you both volunteered? I know that's a complex question

Helen: I've been volunteering since 2011 but I think I've been managing this party since 2013 maybe.

Georgina: so 8 years in total

Helen: yes

Josephine: and I met Helen actually at the Olympics as a dancing nurse at the opening ceremony and she told me about this, but it took me a few years to get round to volunteering so I've probably been maybe 3 or 4

Georgina: so what have been the highlights of volunteering?

Helen: I think the best ones, and some of them were in the really early days ones, when you would come round the corridor and you could hear the party well before you got here, and I always said, I know I'm in South East London when I come to here because it is always loud and raucous. By the time we leave, not necessarily when we start, but it's always loud and raucous by the time we leave!

Josephine What are you saying about South East London?!

Helen - I live in South East London! I'm convinced that it's louder than North London,

Josephine - yeah, I think for me is the dancing, when we get some of the residents up dancing, or not necessarily even 'up' dancing but I find I'll sometimes say to them 'let's have a dance' and they'll say 'no, no, I can't, I can't move' but I'm like just 'we can chair dance' and you know they get in to it and before you know it a few are standing up and having a wiggle with their zimmer frames and that's such a lovely feeling as well.

Helen - You can't really have any expectations about who that person is going to be, who dances, I remember one time there was one very tiny lady and she sat super quiet and super still for the whole party and then we got the right song on and that was it, she was up and dancing, she never said a word the whole time, but

Georgina- it's these small moments

Josephine - mmm – you are communicating in different ways as well not just through speech but just through fun, dancing, drinking and sharing a nice moment

Helen – definitely

Josephine - I think its lovely as well when you have those moments and yeah, you are just, you know, you might be holding hands and that's a shared moment and it doesn't have to be all action and I think as a volunteer it can be a bit daunting at first because you are coming into a room with lots of people you don't know, volunteers and guests alike, and um, not being sure, exactly what to do and seeing that it's Ok just to sit and enjoy a moment together and that's something special as well.

Male voice – and then I've got some fruit here, again, it's pretty important for a gin and tonic to have garnish and a nice piece of fruit a lime or a lemon and that kind of makes the cocktail and if you just squeeze it over the top of the drink there that gives you a nice, when you put it up to your nose, a nice citrus aroma, a bit of zest, gin and tonic who wants that first of all?

Laughter

So that's it gin and tonic, so the same if you are making a rum and coke or something else, pretty much one part to three or four parts, depending on how strong you like it, so sort of 1 to 3, or if you want it weaker 1 to 4 or 1 to 5 - so shot and then fill it up -easy ey?

Sarah: Gin and Tonic cos its fizzy

Laughs

Rosie: a G and T, Espresso Martini, Strawberry Woo Woo, oh and I feel like there's one I'm missing – oh! Porn Star Martini – no that's my favourite Porn star martini

Woman's voice: Oof, well, I do love a Cosmopolitan, but at the parties I'm normally a bit lazy and go for a red wine

Phoebe: red wine, Negroni

Woman's voice: it would be a Negroni

[Man Singing – what will be will be, que sera sera

What will be will be.]