

## Transcript

Title: Swinburne Volunteer and Digital Story Program

Creator: Wellbeing Clinic for Older Adults

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Audio/video for this transcript available from: <http://commons.swinburne.edu.au>



VANESSA WYLIE: As a digital stories volunteer with Swinburne University, what that entailed was going into an aged care centre on a weekly basis. I must say that until that time, I had never actually even set foot in an aged care centre. So this whole experience was quite enlightening, both personally and professionally. The program began with meetings on campus, of course, this was pre COVID, and where I would have the opportunity to attend lectures like this one. And I've got to learn so much about older adults through these lectures, and the topics were - as some of you may have attended some - quite varied and very enlightening and interesting.

Our small group - and there was a group of us creating these stories and we were visiting aged care centres all around Melbourne. Mine was a centre in Camberwell and Canterbury. What we were tasked with was, as Rebecca said, to find the essence of the person that we were, the resident that we were meeting. So over a period of about five to six months, I would meet weekly with my resident, and we would sit down for about an hour and have a chat just about their life. Having this, this shared goal of creating a story really facilitated the conversation and made it very easy to get to know my resident in a really short period of time. So over those few months, a story was created. As I said, I've never set foot in an aged care centre before so it was all quite a new experience for me.

The very first story that I did was with a wonderful, humorous 85 year old lady. I learned so much from these encounters. I learned about what life was like for a woman, young woman in in that time when she had finished school. I learned that career choices were limited, that they were limited to things like nursing, teaching or secretarial duties, and these had to be abandoned upon marriage. I learned that it was this lack of choice that inspired my resident to later advocate for education opportunities for young women. And then she would spend her life volunteering, teaching literacy skills to disadvantaged young ladies. I learned that it was really hard work raising a family and children at this time there was no modern technology and things that we take for granted today. I learned that aged care actually provided her with an opportunity to feel cared for and safe and secure. She actually shared with me that it was a relief at this stage of her life not to have to worry about looking after others and to feel that she was getting the support she needed at that time.

I got to see her joy as I showed her the final edit of the digital story, one that she had personally created. She was very clear that this was a story that it was her and hers alone, not one that was told by her children or her husband. This was her story.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]