Ruby's story

"When Steve and I retired from being busy publicans for over 30 years we had a few holidays - as we promised each other. That was wonderful but when the reality kicked in of retirement we were at a bit of a loss.

"We had always been in the service industry, and enjoy being in the hub of a community. So with eyes and ears open we started looking for that something that would fill some of that criteria but without the commitment of going back to work full time.

"It was on Facebook I spotted Shared Lives for Older People, laughing to myself - being old but definitely not feeling it and Steve not acting it.

"On reading the questions:

- do we have a spare bedroom?
- do we want to feel valued?
- do we have patience, empathy, a sense of humour that everyday life presents?...

"Well it was a yes to all! My only worry at that point was we had no qualifications as such. We had cared for my mother and my very elderly father-in-law, and felt we would like to know more. To our great surprise we have been given all the training and are doing our Care Certificate, which has been a real bonus in so many ways: it keeps the grey matter going and we have learnt so much and feel an important part of our community.

"You might ask what do we do? What is Shared Lives? We provide home-from-home care for (to support) a family who need a respite or temporary care. They feel safe and secure being part of a family. We meet up and have afternoon tea or similar, and get to know the person, also for them to get to know us as well. Show them our home, where their room is and generally chat to make them feel comfortable. It’s a wonderful feeling knowing you can give this support to all involved, the family and the person needing the respite. We have had some amazing times, and made some lovely memories for ourselves and the person we are caring for. As for their family or carer they can feel safe in the knowledge that their loved ones are being well cared for while they have a well-deserved break."
"So summing up, we have felt Shared Lives has enriched our lives with education, friendships, purpose, challenges, being valued, feel good factor, being needed and with all of this and being paid. What more could we ask for!"

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