

Glam Rock!

If you visit a care home in Surrey and think the residents look rather glam, chances are that Chrissy Davis may have just dropped by...

I love singing and playing the guitar and have been performing for years, balancing it with my career as a freelance image consultant.

My first performance in a residential home was a good few years ago, but I remember it as if it were yesterday! A very experienced friend asked me to stand in for him at the last moment and, before I started, I was very apprehensive about how my act would be received. But I really shouldn't have worried! After just a few notes it was as if I was playing to my own extended family – the residents were delightful, warm and welcoming, and



I've since become a regular on the 'circuit' and look forward to every 'gig'!

It's good to know that everyone's having a great time so I try to work with each home to plan an act that the residents will enjoy; usually it includes a mixture of country-and-western, rock 'n' roll, sixties' pop, jazz and some nostalgic sing alongs. Singing is uplifting and I always encourage

audience participation: a couple of months ago I had an ex-army sergeant major belting out *The Long and the Short and the Tall*. He had a fabulous voice – as I'm sure most of Surrey will agree!

A few years ago my elderly mum moved into a residential home in Epsom. Watching her struggle to adjust to her new surroundings was heartbreaking: she wouldn't socialize with the other residents and hid herself away in her room. Although she'd always enjoyed my singing-and-strumming, I realised I had to find a more active way to break down the barriers and get her involved with the other ladies in the home.

As an image consultant I'm used to helping others with their make-up and, of course, always helped Mum with hers. So I thought I'd extend this to her new 'friends' at the home and, with the permission of the manager and activities co-ordinator, organised a hands-on demonstration – after all, every girl, of every age, likes to look good!

Mum and her new-found friends loved the attention and the results. The afternoon brought many stories about their younger days and, when I pulled out my guitar, they all joined in for a sing-song. My mission was successful!

In fact, quite by chance, I'd found a stimulating, fun activity about a subject that's all too often forgotten about as we get older. With no need to face the outside world, there can be little incentive to make an effort to look after our appearance. And as the reflection in the mirror gets less pleasing, self-esteem starts to slip and confidence gradually seeps away. Unfortunately, it's an all too familiar tale.



So I've started to provide care homes with two services. One is a practical, hands-on, group activity designed to rekindle that feminine urge to want to look good. It's a fun opportunity to experiment with different colours and styles and to brush up on some sometimes long-lost skills; the girlie nature of the session helping to break down barriers and bring people together.

There's also a need for a more personal, one-to-one service. Residents are used to hairdressers and chiropodists visiting the home – why not beauticians and stylists? Apart from providing individual help and advice about make-up and style, many residents have a desire to want to look 'absolutely fabulous' for all sorts of special occasions but don't necessarily have the skills or dexterity to do so. And sometimes, unfortunately, there can also be a very personal need to mask some of the affects of getting older.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting Esmé Cain, who lives at Sunrise of Purley in Surrey. Esmé had won a Colour Me Beautiful gift voucher in a raffle and, on a wet and windy afternoon in November, we spent a couple of hours together. I provided a full 'colour consultation' and did



Esmé's make-up while she told me all about her Manx roots, her wonderful RAF Metrological Officer husband and her children and grandchildren. We both had a great afternoon rounded off by a photographer taking some photos for her to send to her son in Australia.

Everyone wants to look good and, just as singing can be uplifting, knowing you really do look good can make you feel great and boost your confidence.

For more information, either about singing or the benefits of staying and looking good as you get older, please call [Chrissy Davis on 020 8640 0762](tel:02086400762) or email her at chris@complimentarycolours.co.uk.