**\*\* STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01am 25th December 2020 \*\***

**180 School Children surprise care home resident Joan with a video message as she turns 100 on Christmas Day**

Joan Hamblin, a resident at National Charity [Ambient Support’s](http://ambient.org.uk/) Dora Matthews House has received the most wonderful surprise from children at Berry Hill Primary School.

The children made Christmas cards for many of the local care homes in the area, but when the school got in touch with Dora Matthews House in Coleford and heard about Joan’s milestone birthday, they wanted to do something really special to mark the occasion.

Teachers and children at the school have worked brilliantly to create a series of special gifts for Joan which she has received today, Christmas Day. Her special presentation includes a hand drawn A3 Happy Birthday plaque with an illustration of a rainbow and all of the children’s names (over 180) written into it. It is framed so that Joan is able to display it.

The special part is hidden behind three QR codes- which when scanned by the Care Home staff, linked to the school’s Twitter page so Joan could watch three groups of school children singing Happy Birthday to her.

***Lucy Stevens, SENDco at Berry Hill Primary School, says:***

*“We are very community oriented at Berry Hill and having had such positive feedback from the rainbow letters and cards we sent during lockdown, we felt it was especially important to send Christmas cards. When we heard Joan was celebrating a milestone, we felt compelled to do something special for her.*

*“Our gifts to Joan allow the children to give their time and kindness as a way of connecting with others in our local community. It’s very important, particularly during this difficult year, to think of others and do things that will brighten their day and show they’re thought of.”*

***Julie Element, Manager at Dora Matthews House says:***

*“It’s a huge achievement to reach 100 years, made even more special that Joan becomes a Centurion on Christmas Day! We couldn’t be more delighted with the huge effort from the caring staff and children at Berry Hill primary school. It has made Joan’s day even more special and she has absolutely loved watching and listening to the children sing.”*

Alongside the messages from the school, the team at Ambient Support organised a visit from her son, who brought along her birthday cake, a traditional Christmas lunch with residents in her secure bubble and an extra special musical activity.

Joan was born in Brixton, London, on Christmas day in 1920. During the war she worked for the NAFI or Navy-Air-Force-Army in the vehicle department. She then became a mother to two sons and ran a hugely popular fish & chip shop in Bristol. She later moved to Weston and then to the Forest of Dean to be closer to her son and has been a resident of Dora Matthews House since 2019.

**On reaching 100, Joan says:** *“It’s wonderful to reach this milestone birthday and I am overjoyed to receive such a kind and thoughtful tribute from the school children. It brought a huge smile to my face and it is something I will watch many times over”.*

**Tom Harrison, Director of Operations at Ambient, said:**

*“This is a fantastic example of people going above and beyond to bring joy in these stressful times. Against the odds, the staff at Berry Hill along with our Ambient team at Dora Matthews House have united to give Joan a spectacular celebration. This is a brilliant example of our staff living by ‘The Ambient Way’, which is all about being exceptional in what they would simply call their ‘day to day’.”*

Dora Matthews House is an Extra Care service Ambient run in conjunction with Rooftop Housing and offers luxury one and two bedroom apartments to the over 55’s who wish to live an independent life but may need some extra care and support at times.

To find out more visit [www.ambient.org.uk](http://www.ambient.org.uk)

To see the children singing happy birthday, visit: <http://www.berryhill.gloucs.sch.uk/web> and view the ‘social feed’.

**About Ambient:**

Ambient Support (formerly known as Heritage Care and Community Options) is a registered UK charity with over 25 years’ experience in providing care and support services for older people, people with a mental health need and people with a learning disability. Ambient believe that everyone is unique, and they should be able to lead valued lives in their communities, treated with dignity and respect no matter their age, health condition or disability. To find out more visit [www.ambient.org.uk](http://www.ambient.org.uk)

[@ambient support](https://twitter.com/ambientsupport)

***~ENDS~***

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**About Ambient Support:** [www.ambient.org.uk](http://www.ambient.org.uk)

* One of the Top 20 generic Not-For-Profit Health & Social Care Providers in the UK Ambient Support (formerly known as Heritage Care and Community Options) is a registered UK charity with over 25 years’ experience
* They deliver services that meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable adults in our society. Operating in over 130 locations, they provide over 30 thousand hours of care to people on a weekly basis to support a range of needs due to the ageing process, learning disability or mental illness
* Their wide range of quality specialist services are delivered by dedicated, professional, and passionate staff and their success is built on supporting people to live a full and meaningful life.
* Ambient currently employs around 1,325 people across the UK in a number of settings
* Ambient can also help young adults who are transitioning from Children’s to Adult Learning Disability Services
* The Charity has an above industry average with 85% Registered Services rated as Outstanding and GOOD by CQC.