



11th October 2024

The Lieutenancy through the Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire has been invited to take part in a National project, 'Poetry Together' that brings together older people and younger people to perform poems they have learned by heart or have written themselves and share tea and cake.

This exciting initiative was founded by Gyles Brandreth and has been wonderfully supported by HM The Queen.

“With young children, engaging with poetry helps with language skills in all sorts of ways. Studies have shown that learning poetry by heart improves performance academically at school, improving concentration, and even supporting better sleep.

For adults, evidence shows that learning poetry by heart can give you a happier and more successful life. It improves the ability to communicate and strengthen relationships, improves memory, increases brain capacity and can help keep dementia at bay. It's amazing stuff really. Learning poetry together changes lives!

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The project is a wonderful way to bring communities closer. We don't need science to explain how special it can be when people from two ends of the generational spectrum get together and have a chat over a cup of tea.

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Gyles Brandreth.

Children under 18 and those of 70 years and above are asked to:

Write a poem based on the theme, 'friendship', not exceeding 14 lines OR choose a poem with any theme to learn by heart. Then, practise performing them.

Arrange a get-together with the elderly community in your local area, this could be grandparents, a community group or local care home. You could invite them into school for afternoon tea or ask a care home's Activity Coordinator if you can visit them. Older communities can also take the lead and approach local schools or organisations. Invite your partner school or community to write or choose a poem to perform.

Hold your event and perform your poems to one another. Take lots of pictures and videos (in accordance with photography permissions).

An invitation to present your poem on ITV's This Morning. £200 worth of books for your school library, organisation, or care home may be possible, if chosen by the organising group.

If you like the idea of encouraging young people and older people to get together over poetry, tea and cake, then please contact our Poetry Together Champion Lead, Mrs Morcea Walker MBE DL, at Lord-Lieutenant@westnorthants.gov.uk. Mrs Walker, or one of the other two Poetry Champions, are very happy to come along to your schools, other educational establishments, and organisations that cater for the over 70's to discuss further and answer any questions you may have. If you prefer, this can be done by zoom/teams.

Closing date to register interest is **Friday 18th October 2024**.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'MA Walker'. The letters are cursive and fluid, with the 'M' and 'A' being particularly prominent.

Mrs Morcea Walker MBE DL
Poetry Together Champions Lead