# POETRY TOGETHER

A project by Gyles Brandreth and Dukes Education

2026

This exciting initiative brings younger and older generations together through the joy of poetry. It is founded by Gyles Brandreth, funded by Dukes Foundation and has been wonderfully supported by Her Majesty The Queen.

Previous winners, Colin and Avi sum up the impact of Poetry Together nicely in their ITV interview. Watch it here.

# The Project

**Poetry Together 2026**

Getting young people and older people together for tea, cake and poetry between September and Christmas.

write or recite a poem based on this year's theme **'memories and dreams'.**

share your poems with your local elderly community (or vice versa if the elderly community are taking the lead)

send us your poems and pictures to enter our competition.

This year's theme is inspired by a quotation from H.G. Wells

"We all have our time machines, don't we. Those that take us back are memories...And those that carry us forward, are dreams."
— H.G. Wells

# In more detail...

## STEP 1

Children under 18 and those of 70 years and above are asked to:
Write a poem or choose an existing poem to learn by heart based on the theme, 'memories and dreams', not exceeding 14 lines
OR
choose a poem with any theme to learn by heart.

Then, practise performing them.

## STEP 2

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.

## STEP 3

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

## STEP 4

Send your poems, pictures and videos to **poetrytogether@dukeseducation.com**, including the name of your poets and school. The deadline for entries is 18th December, 2026.

We will be in touch to inform you if we are able to offer any of the prize opportunities.

## You could win

£200 worth of books for your school library, organisation or care home.

We're always on the look out for other oppotunities to celebrate our winners. In the past this has included invitations to perform for the Queen at Buckingham Palace, live on ITV's This Morning and on stage at Central Hall Westminster.

## Making an impact...

“What struck me was watching both residents and children arrive quietly; but leave smiling and laughing”.

“Thank you for prompting what has been a profoundly meaningful exchange”.

“We’re going back for Christmas Carols”.

“Working on the poem together provided the perfect opportunity for him to bond with his newly adoptive grandfather”.

“Being around children again reignited a spark in her”.

“They've absolutely loved it and discovered they can make friends with people of different generations”.

“This was an amazing way to cover poetry in school”.

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!

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.

# Plus....

# Poets on the Road

Apply for a free school visit from one of our poets on the road for a fun and interactive day celebrating the joy of poetry in the Autumn term.

We'll work with you to tailor an experience that can include an assembly, creative writing and performance workshops and creating your own poems.

In line with Poetry Together's aim to bring younger and older generations together, we ask that you then share your poems over tea and cake with grandparents, a local care home or elderly community group.

**Apply at: www.poetrytogether.com/poets-on-the-road**

# Meet the poets...

**Kate Wakeling** writes for children and adults. She is the author of three acclaimed children's poetry collections: Moon Juice, Cloud Soup, and A Dinosaur at the Bus Stop (for younger readers). Kate's work for children has won the CLiPPA prize, The Week Junior 'Book of the Year' for poetry and been nominated for the Carnegie Medal. Kate loves sharing and performing her work with young audiences, with recent appearances at Shakespeare's Globe, the Cheltenham Literary Festival and the Imagine Children's Festival at Southbank Centre. She is a keen player of Balinese gamelan music and an enthusiastic champion of guinea pigs.

**Rhiannon Oliver** is an actress, poet, and workshop facilitator based in Cardiff. Rhiannon trained as an actress at RADA and has worked with companies such as Shakespeare's Globe, The National Theatre, National Theatre of Wales, BBC, and Sky TV.

She has been writing poetry for children since 2020. Her debut poetry collection for children age 8-12 will be published by Firefly Press in 2026. Her poems feature in anthologies from Oxford University Press, Macmillan Children's Books and Firefly Press, with further forthcoming. She has also been widely published in children's poetry magazines and websites including, The Caterpillar, Tyger Tyger, The Toy, The Dirigible Balloon, Northern Gravy and Paperbound.

Rhiannon has written and created performance videos for The Big Welsh Rhyme Time (Book Trust Cymru) and her poetry has appeared on TV (Only Boys Aloud Christmas Concert, S4C).

“The children were inspired by hearing a variety of poems … This experience sparked a real love of poetry, with pupils continuing their learning journey after the event in the classroom by writing their own poems”.
Afon y Felin School

“Fantastic afternoon and a great intergenerational experience, would love to do it again”. Coedpenmaen Primary School

“It was an absolutely wonderful day that all of our children loved….it was so engaging that it had all of our children involved and happily taking part”.
St Francis Primary School

“The reciprocal sharing fostered empathy and mutual respect”. St Joseph’s Primary

“Thank you for a fantastic immersive day of poetry with Rhiannon Oliver. The children developed their confidence and presenting skills in front of a fantastic turn out of grandparents”. Corneli Primary School

“It was the best attended event we have held in school recently”.
Ynysafach Primary School

“All our KS2 pupils were truly inspired by her… and everyone came away having learnt something new, including us as teachers, who picked up so many ideas for teaching poetry more creatively….

…The visit to the care home was a beautiful experience. The children loved sharing their poems with the residents, and it was wonderful to see such genuine connections being made between generations”.
Pencaerau Primary School

The Queen enjoying Poets on the Road in action at Cyfarthfa Primary School

## Share what you have done with your local community...

A wonderful community event like this is likely to be of interest to your local newspapers, magazines and radio stations. You can simply search online for their newsdesk contacts.

Help us spread the word to young and old, far and wide.

Your poems, pictures and videos will be perfect for your own social media platforms, and we'd love to see what you've been up to as well.

You can tag us using these accounts and hashtag.

poetry_together

Poetry Together

@poetry_together

#poetrytogether

## Contact

If you need any advice or have any questions, please contact the team at Dukes Education. We will be very happy to help.

**Email:** poetrytogether@dukeseducation.com
**Tel:** 020 3696 5300

Go forth our budding poets,
let your imaginations glide.
We're excited to see what you create,
and share the joy of poetry far and wide.

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