

The Enquirer-Gazette

The Sky Bridge at Town Center celebrates Grandparents Day with family

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Amanda Claudie, left, joined her great aunt Patricia Smith during this month's poetry reading.

Every third Sunday of the month, residents of The Sky Bridge at Town Center flock to the community's new poetry readings — a growing tradition that gives residents the opportunity to express themselves, connect and build friendships. This month, family members joined the poetry readings in recognition of Grandparents Day, which was celebrated on Sept. 7.

These monthly poetry readings began with resident Patricia Smith, who moved to the community in December 2024. A newcomer to senior living, Smith had never lived alone before and wondered how she would fit in. But from the start, Smith said, "people welcomed me with open arms." With support from the community and its associates, she started the poetry readings as a way to return that kindness.

This reading, in honor of Grandparents Day, was particularly special for Smith as her grandniece, Amanda Claudie, will join her at the performance. While Smith read her poetry, Claudie danced to help bring a visual element to the stories she shared. Smith was thankful for the opportunity to share the stage with her grandniece, as they both do what they love.

Smith began her own poetry journey much earlier at an open mic at her church. She took a chance, not knowing at the time that she was on the precipice of a new passion for poetry writing. She shared a poem about procrastination after retiring and recited it at the open mic event.

"I never thought of myself as a poet," she said. "I am inspired to write by God. He has been so good to me."

Now, two decades later, Smith is still following her passions, writing poems about everything from letting go to how much she enjoys living at The Sky Bridge at Town Center in a poem called "A Dream Come True."

"I believe that God has his hands on the wheel, and he calls on me to spread an uplifting message," Smith said. "Sometimes I'm surprised that he chose me to share it, but I'm honored all the same."

When Smith began the poetry readings, she feared that there would not be much of an audience, but to her delight each reading has been well attended, and more poets sign up each month to read. She makes it easy for everyone to share and encourages anyone to take a chance and step onto the stage with their poetry. She often opens with some of her own poems and hosts the rest of the show, incorporating music and group readings.

Smith hopes to one day publish her poems in a book, but in the meantime, the poetry readings continue to give her and her fellow residents the chance to shine on stage. Claudie shared that passion this week.