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- View Article Gallery [1]
- Print This Page [2]

Resident Profile: Althea Rankins

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A long-time resident of Berkeley, Althea Rankins is a lively member of the community, and a new resident at Harper Crossing. Despite being almost 70, Ms. Rankins lives an active life playing keyboard each Sunday at the Humanity Missionary Baptist Church in Emeryville and different functions around town. She loves gospel music and giving back to those less fortunate.

Growing up in Florida, she fell in love with gospel at the age of 12, playing keyboard at her grandfather?s church. She?s been hooked ever since. Ms. Rankins has a small amount of fame in South Berkeley. She played keyboard for several productions at the Black Repertory

Group Theater, and her name and a music note appear on a local artist?s mural ? a small thank you to Althea for her love and kindness.

Ms. Rankins likes to share her faith through a street ministry she started several years ago. When she was more mobile, she would spend time in South Berkeley, reaching out to the youth who hung out, encouraging them to find positive role models, and make self-affirming choices. That is where she got to know the mural artist.

Althea has slowed down a bit since those days, but she is still very active. She takes a daily walk around the block for her exercise, and enjoys the activities that Satellite staff organize.

She?s already made friends at Harper Crossing, and re-connected with some old friends who are now living there too, including a friend from church. She says there are many musicians at Harper Crossing. There is even talk of starting a band!

Ms. Rankins says she loves living at Harper Crossing because managers jump on issues if they come up, and take care of residents? concerns right away. ?They have a love for the people they serve, and you can tell they love what they do. Bless them.?

?SAHA is beautiful because it is designed for seniors. The details like railings, seats attached to the tub, energy saving, all helps seniors and makes them feel at home,? she says.

Living at Harper Crossing keeps Ms. Rankins close to her family. Her granddaughter goes to St. Mary?s and often comes to visit her. She says she missed her family the most when she was forced to leave Berkeley for a brief time. As Ms. Rankins has aged, her needs for accessible living conditions has grown. Last year, she was forced to leave her Berkeley apartment because it was no longer possible for her to navigate on her own. She briefly moved to a senior apartment building in Hayward.

Thanks to help from her daughter, and the Berkeley resident preference at Harper Crossing, Althea has moved back to Berkeley and the family, friends and activities that keep her young at heart.

Ms. Rankin is grateful for affordable senior housing projects like Harper Crossing. She says, ?Keep it going. We need more housing for seniors. We are living longer, eating healthier, and exercising. Us seniors still have a lot of love to give to our communities.?

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[3]

Events
Harper Crossing Groundbreaking [3]

[4]

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[5],
[5],
[5]

Features

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Links

[1] https://www.sahahomes.org/%3Finline%3Dtrue%26scrollbars%3Dno%23node-images-lightbox
[2] https://www.sahahomes.org/printpdf/806
[3] https://www.sahahomes.org/news/02-01-2016/harper-crossing-groundbreaking
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