

The Blue Ribbon County Fair

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Residents love to reminisce. Staff loves to have dress down days. It was our challenge this year to come with a week of activities that would bring out the best in everyone, and provide opportunities for wide smiles, laughter and community building for residents, families, friends and staff. That is how the Blue Ribbon County Fair came to be.

National Nursing Home Week begins on Mother's Day, and in years past, we made corsages for all the mothers- both residents and staff, and in the afternoon, there would be a lovely quiet social, with the usual coffee, tea, punch and little finger food desserts. However, this year

would be different.

We started off the County Fair week with a Mother Daughter Pie Judging contest. Letters went out to families, explaining the week in detail and inviting family members to participate in all the activities. Mother's Day afternoon proved that the word had gotten out there. The six foot table was covered with pies, pies, pies and more pies. Each person got to taste a little of this and that, and then they voted of course, for the best. Shhh! The blue ribbon in that event actually went to a berry pie that was a store bought frozen, bake it yourself type! Can we just tell you that sales went up the following week for that pie. It was simply delicious!

Monday was Pickles and Preserves Day. Residents made applesauce which they flavored to their own specifications, and they also made freezer pickles and freezer strawberry jam to enter into the contest. Family and staff donated jars of pickles, jams and jellies, and in the afternoon, another taste test was underway.

Of course, the freezer pickles won in the pickle division, with red and yellow ribbons going out to none other than a couple of store bought varieties again! Residents also voted for the tastiest applesauce. The winners proudly lined up for photos, with their ribbons.



Tuesday was Down on the Farm Day. A rubber chicken and pig became the items to toss in the Chicken in a Basket exercise program for the day. Residents enjoyed barnyard BINGO, as they made animal sounds when they got the required five across. In the afternoon, residents and others enjoyed a visit from two local alpacas, who with their gentle ways, delighted all. There was a cow patty toss, with cow chips made from chocolate cake mix, coconut, and oatmeal, just in case someone decided to have a taste! That day ended with Old MacDonald's word game. Residents got to make as many words as they could out of 'Old MacDonald's Farm'. Staff joined in calling out

answers, too.

Wednesday was Craft Day. In the morning, the Many Hands Craft Club made sunflowers from paper plates and crepe paper. In the afternoon, residents, families and staff were invited to share their artistic abilities. Knitting, needlework, painting and other crafts were displayed, but it was the wood carvings of one resident that brought out the blue ribbon. The residents were so proud, sitting by and

explaining their crafts and artistry. It was great for families and friends to see and reminisce about how their loved enjoys or enjoyed making these items.

On Thursday, Tractor Day, the Northeast Two-Cylinder tractor club took a road trip to show off a lot of green, yellow and red in our back yard. Residents made tractor welcome signs in the morning, which they decorated to look like John Deere's. It was pouring out when the big tractors arrived, so they drove right up onto the patio. Residents headed out the door to examine the monster tires, and reminisce about the grand models from the 50's. One resident even talked about using horses before the days of tractors. The environmental services department transformed a wheelchair into our very own "John Deere", and residents enjoyed having a tractor pull of their own. Late in the day, residents were entertained by a local country singer. After supper, the everyone settled down by watching a video from the tractor club.

Friday was the big day, with an old fashioned hymn sing to start the day, a picnic at lunch time and then the afternoon at the Midway. Booths with everything from Greasy Bill's popcorn, and Purdy Mae Butterbean's Ice Cream to the Lucky ducks booth and the Wheel of Fortune, made out of wheelchair wheel and other recycled items, were the hits of the day. Residents also loved having photos taken of themselves in silly hats and other crazy get ups. Old Uncle Roy, a volunteer entertained us with his brand of country karaoke. Residents laughed and remembered their trips to the fair years back when they won prizes and stopped by the food booths to grab a goodie or two.

Saturday, we closed the fair with our family brand of dog show. Family members, staff and friends brought in their dogs, fourteen total (!) to share with the residents. Even with the variety of sizes and personalities, the dogs remained very well behaved, and residents got to pat them and vote for their favorites. We are already looking forward to our trip back to the fair next year!

Recipe for the cow patties

2 chocolate cake mixes

Large handful of uncooked oatmeal

Large handful of coconut

Up to 1 cup of water (or more as needed)



Mix all the dry ingredients. Add water a little at a time until the consistency of thick cookie dough. Drop by tablespoonful onto greased cookie sheet. 1 regular size cookie sheet will hold 4-6 'cow patties' depending on how large you make them. Bake at 350 degrees for 12-15 minutes or until the top springs back when poked and they begin to dry and brown around the edges. Totally edible! I like to make them a few days ahead of time so that they can ripen and harden for a good realistic tossing!