

Monthly information:



National Holiday(s) and Celebrations:

- Dr. Seuss' Birthday – 2nd (Tuesday) Check out the Dr. Seuss activities on my column for ideas.
- Alexander Graham Bell's Birthday – 3rd (Wednesday)
- Daylight Savings Time – 14th (Sunday)
- Albert Einstein's Birthday – 14th (Sunday)
- Saint Patrick's Day – 17th (Wednesday)
- First Day of Spring – 20th (Saturday)
- Women's History Month

Birthstone:

Aquamarine – Foresight, courage, happiness, and is said to increase intelligence and make one youthful.

Flower:

Daffodil – Regard, Unrequited Love

Monthly Quote:

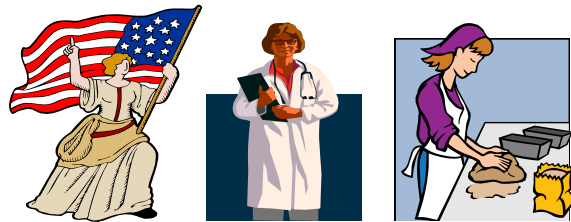
“Be proud of who you are and what you do. You define the things around you – things will never define you.” Suze Orman

Activity Theme Overview:

- 1) Celebrate Amazing Women
- 2) Garden by Design
- 3) To Market We Go

Bonus – Suggestions for St. Patrick's Day

Activity Theme Details:



Celebrate Amazing Women

Learn & Listen – In celebration of International Women's Day on March 8th and Women's History month today's discussion will be around amazing women. Start the activity off with some historical information about women from all areas of life such as the Bible, military, medical field, royalty or inspirational. Examples: Biblical – Mary, mother of Jesus, inspirational – Mother Teresa, etc... Also find local community women in your area that are well known for their contributions to include in today's topic. Then talk about amazing women in each of their lives such as a mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, friend, teacher or someone that was a mentor to them that helped them through out their life.

Game – Make a list of historical women and what they are known for in history. Ask residents to match the names with the accomplishment. Have at least 15 to 20 matches to make it challenging enough for the residents to want to participate while having fun remembering or learning some historical facts.

Exercise – During exercise time today play music only by women and point out during class any interesting facts about each of the singers to share with the group as they stretch and tone to some great songs by amazing musical women.

Facility activity – Make an announcement that you are holding a contest to celebrate three women that have made a big impact in their life. Set a nomination box at main points in the facility along with nomination slips and pen. Let all residents and staff members place one nomination each from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM for a woman within your facility that they consider to be an amazing woman. This nomination can be for a resident or staff woman. At 2:30 PM pick up the ballot boxes and total all the nomination slips. The most nominations will win 1st place, the next highest nominations will get 2nd place and the next will get 3rd place. The winners will be announced during the social to “Celebrate Amazing Women”. If you happen to have a tie then place them in a bowl and let a voluntary draw them out with the first one being the 3rd place winner, then 2nd and the last being the 1st place winner.

Social – Decorate a cake to serve with something relating to the theme written on it such as “Celebrate Amazing Women”. Serve the cake with coffee and/or tea before announcing the winners to all residents and staff. Present a special award to the women who won 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. In order to recognize all the amazing women in your facility give each woman attending a single flower in honor of how special they are.

Movie – Suggestions (note – as always preview the movie to see if it appropriate for your residents)

- Amelia Earhart movies – several to choose from such as:
 - Following Amelia Earhart: Heroines of the Sky
 - Biography – Amelia Earhart
 - National Geographic: Where’s Amelia Earhart?
- Not for Ourselves Alone – The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (1999). This documentary is an accurate story for their fight for women’s right to vote. No rating listed and if you can’t find it at the video store Amazon.com has it for sale.
- The Miracle Worker – The story of two extraordinary women, teacher Annie Sullivan and her deaf and blind student Helen Keller.

Garden by Design



This will be a work day or stretch it out for a week theme to prepare for the residents upcoming garden. By letting the residents help plan the garden you will have more to participate and it will give new comers a chance to meet other gardeners in the facility.

Make this a fun filled day to prepare your upcoming schedule for the garden duties which you can count as individual activities, one on one, and/or group activity, depending on how you set up your schedule for garden duties. If you assign a schedule for water or weeding duties you can rotate resident gardeners every other day to tend the garden as an individual activity. This will also help so each person will get a turn to work the garden. To make it a one on one activity meet the gardener at the schedule time to help them with the assigned duty. This will also allow you time to get to know the resident in an environment other than their room. The group activity will really be at the beginning during the planting season and at the end to either clear out the garden or to replant for a winter garden, depending on your residents choice or your planting zone permits.

Learn & Listen – Start out by explaining to the residents that today is all about planning a design for their garden(s) and it is up to them to determine when, where, how and what will be done in the design of the garden. Talk to the residents about past facility gardens. Ask them what they would like to do different. The discussion is a way to get them excited and motivated about working in the garden this year. It should also let them know it takes more than one person to work the garden and it allows new comers to join in on the garden fun too.

Game – Name that Plant! This game requires some research on your part. You can either Google descriptions or check out a good garden book from the library. Read the plant description and see if the resident can guess what type of plant it is. Below are some suggestions for descriptions:

What plant is this?

Plant season – Annual which produces in early summer to early fall.

Special features – Average yield is 4 lbs per plant.

Best conditions – All zones, full sun, shelter from wind and water to help them to grow.

Description – This vegetable is considered a fruit which grows on a vine.

Answer – Tomato

What plant is this?

Plant season – Perennial flower

Special feature – Long lived plant with large flowers, fragrant and attractive leaves all season.

Best conditions – Full sun and well drained soil. Cut back in fall.

Description – Good cut flower that grows 2 – 4 feet in height and 2 – 4 feet in space.

Answer – Peony or Paeonia

You can also print out pictures for this game.

Food – Let residents help make cucumber sandwiches or garden dip to serve during the Garden Party.

Exercise – Remind the residents that gardening is a lot of hard work and their bodies need to be limber so they won't be so sore after all the planting, weeding, hoeing and harvesting. They all need to come to exercise to prepare their bodies with some daily stretches and lots of moving to keep flexible. This will allow them to enjoy working in their garden instead of dreading it.

Design Time – Make sure you have a calendar, paper, pens and a facility layout for both inside and outside. You will need to discuss the following with the residents to determine your garden design:

- Layout – Which area can be used outdoors and which areas can be utilized indoors for container gardens. Mark the areas for outdoor gardens on the layout and which rooms in the facility they can use to set up garden containers. Make sure indoor rooms have lots of access to the sun light
- Plants - Decide what to plant. Veggies and flowers for both in and out side gardens.
- Schedule – Have residents choose which area and time they will commit to working in the gardens and which type of gardening they want to participate in. Example:
 - Ms. Millie – weeding – Monday at 9:00 AM.
 - Mr. Johnson – watering – Tuesday and Thursday 6:00 pm
 - Ms. Lilly and you– weeding – Wednesday at 4:00 PM
 - Mr. Bill and Mr. Bob– pest control – Friday 8:00 AM
- Harvest distribution – What will they do with the harvest? Do they want to give it to the kitchen so they can use it in their food preparation? Donate it to a local homeless shelter kitchen? Have their own veggie stand to sell it to the public and the money will go to either a charity of their choice, or towards saving for a trip they would like to take as a group activity? Or use the money to purchase bingo gifts? They are working the garden and it is up to them to decide together what they want to do with their produce. They may want to divide it up at each harvest and give it to family/or friends, or keep to use for themselves. If they donate it then this can be a community activity and worthy of marketing contacting the newspaper for some facility publicity.

Remember the indoor container gardens can be attended by those that are in wheelchairs or use walkers that have a harder time accessing the outdoors. Indoor containers can grow leaf lettuce, tomatoes and some other veggies, as well as flowers to beautify the facility. Don't forget to have someone log daily garden activities in a journal to help with next year's garden.

Craft – Have residents paint veggie and flower markers for the gardens. Wooden markers would be okay, but plastic markers can be kept to use again for next planting season.

Game – Name that tool – You can find pictures of many garden tools when you Google images. Show the picture of the tool and let the resident name the tool and what it is used for during garden season. This will also help you get your tools in order if you elect using the real tools instead pictures, however the pictures will help you have a record of what you will need and assurance that the residents know how use them properly. Don't forget to throw in some old time tools like a mule, which should bring back some funny memories.

Movie –Check out garden DVD's for motivation at video store, library or Amazon.com.

Rebecca's Garden, Vol. 1: Basic Gardening

Organic Gardening Made Easy, with Lee O'Hara by Smith-Corum films

Keidi Awadu and Bro. Moses – Hands On Table Top Gardening Workshop DVD by Reality Speaks

Jerry Baker: Year Round Vegetable Gardening

To Market We Go

Learn & Listen – Open discussion with how markets have changed over the years. Ask residents if they remember open store markets or a general store where it was the only store in town that they had to buy all their goods from. Did they ever go to a fresh market to sell or buy fruits and vegetables? Did they ever shop at a butcher market for their fresh meats? How about a flea market to find unique items for their home? Let residents talk about their market experience from childhood and adult hood.



Talk about the difference in the markets they remember compared to today's market.

Game – You can play the Price is Right game with items found in an old time market. If you can find the price of the item from the residents younger era then that will be fun and don't forget to list the current price for the item as well. This will get some laughs as well and some shock expressions too. Have fun with it! Suggested items:

Flour, sugar, milk, eggs, candy bar, tobacco, cars (you can use pictures of the old Ford model car along with the current model to demonstrate the change in model and price).

Trip – Take a trip to a local indoor flea market or market of some kind, just somewhere different than the normal retail stores you take them to on the regular shopping day. The residents will enjoy the opportunity to get out of the facility and have a new market to explore.

Indoor Market - If you can't take them out shopping then bring the market in to them. Set up one of the areas as an out door market place. Use wooden carts or set up tables covering them with brown fabric or cardboard boxes to give the illusion of wooden carts. Ask staff members and local bakery to donate items to sell to the residents. They can use bingo bucks that you use in your bingo store. You could also award them market bucks when they attend activities from March 1st to the day you have this activity, which can only be used on this day in this market place. This way you don't have to worry about them saving the bucks or trying to spend in a real market place the next time you take them out. Ask volunteers to dress in old world market vendor clothes so it can be a trip back in time as well.

Game – Just for fun, how many Mother Goose rhymes or poems can you remember that relate to a market? Make sure you look each one up to read them or ask some residents if they can recite them to the group. Suggestions:

- Hot Cross Buns
- This Little Pig
- If I'd As Much Money
- To market, to market, to buy a fat pig...

For more ideas Google "Mother Goose" or check your local library for books on nursery rhymes. Remember to keep the rhymes or poems relating to the theme.



“Lucky Sleeves” for your chairs. These are simple chair covers that will add extra charm to your Irish party décor.

Materials:

Pillowcases (standard) prefer light green, orange or white (you can check out the Goodwill store for used pillowcases to keep the cost down. Just remember to wash them.)

Felt squares: light green, dark green, orange and white (you can use the kind that has the sticky backs)

Pencil, scissors, felt glue, ruler, fabric glue

Puffy paint (white, green, orange, black and gold)

Sequins and beads (white opal, shiny green and shiny gold/yellow)

Ribbon – at least two yards per chair (if you are in a large facility then don’t use the ribbon, it will be too costly, however if you want a tie to keep the chair sleeves on you could try white rope or enough ribbon to just tie a knot. Either way the chair covers will look great.) If they are a little long just tuck them under to fit the chair.

Instruction:

1. Cut out for each chair two large (about the size of a drink coaster) shamrocks (one dark green and one orange) and two smaller shamrocks (one light green and one white).
2. Glue the smaller light green shamrock on the large orange shamrock and decorate with white sequins. Do the same with remaining shamrocks alternating the colors (small white on dark green).
3. Cut out a green hat and add black paint to resemble a leprechaun hat. Add either a dot of gold paint for the buckle or a yellow sequin instead.
4. Lay down the pillowcases and arrange the shamrocks and hat so it can be nicely seen on the back of the chair. I suggest the first shamrock be placed three inches on the left top corner, then the hat about five inches down from the first shamrock in the center position and the second shamrock about five to six inches down on the right hand corner. Keep both shamrocks about three to four inches from the side. Think of a large check mark with the decorations being the three points. Once all are in place then glue or peel and stick the decoration on the pillowcase.

Bonus:

Suggestions for St. Patrick’s Day

These may or may not be new ideas to you, but since I have some Irish heritage in my family tree I thought I would throw in some ideas just for fun.

Craft – Since most will have a party on this day how about decorating it a little differently this year. As a craft project the week before have residents make

5. Now randomly glue sequins over the back of the cover or you can use puffy paint instead of the sequins when finishing the decorating. Only do this towards the upper half of the cover, so not to take away from the ribbon or rope if you plan on using them.
6. After the glue and paint are dry then slip the covers over the chair. Finish off with the ribbon in a bow or the rope in a knot.

Lucky chest –

Material:

Medium to small box

Brown and black paint

Floral foam blocks (enough to fill the inside of each box)

Silk flower stems – any kind will do as long as you use orange, yellow and white flowers

Silk Irish Ivey and/or shamrock stem (enough to fill in for fullness in the arrangement)

Chocolate candy coins covered in gold foil

Floral stems

Glue (hot glue will work for everything, but be careful when you glue on the stems to the candy...you don't want them to melt)

Instructions:

1. Painted box brown and paint black lines down front to resemble a treasure chest.
2. When paint is dry glue in floral foam blocks inside. Let dry.
3. Arrange silk yellow, orange and white flowers along with Irish Ivey and/or shamrock stems.
4. Glue about 10 to 15 floral stems to the back of the candy coins (less if the arrangement is in a small box). Let dry.
5. Add the candy coin stems in the arrangement as fill in to complete the arrangement.
6. When placing the lucky chest on the table make sure to have some loose candy coins to spread around the chest and it gives the residents a lucky treat they can take with them as they leave the party.

Treats –

Leprechaun Squares: Makes about 16 treats

Ingredients:

6 cups of Lucky Charm Cereal

½ stick butter

40 large marshmallows

Irish-themed candy cake decorations

Aluminum foil and Square 8 inch pan

1. Line square 8 inch pan with aluminum foil with about a two inch hang over for easy removal. Spray the lining and pan sides with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In large pan melt the marshmallows and butter over medium heat until smooth.
3. Add Lucky Charms cereal and stir till well covered.
4. Spread in pan and press evenly in pan. Let cool for 10 minutes.
5. Take the aluminum foil hang over and lift the treats out from the pan. Cut into 16 square and top with Irish cake decoration candy.

OR make regular Rice Crispy treats and call them “Blarney Stones”.

Follow the Rainbow – This game can possible take all day to play depending on how fast the residents find all the rainbow pieces. Now you can play two different ways.

1. Make an extremely large rainbow and divide it into many pieces, kind of like a puzzle with numbers on the back of each piece. This will make it easier to reassemble. Cut out all the pieces and hide them throughout the facility OR pin them on the back of staff member's shirts.
2. Tell the residents to find the rainbow and collect the rainbow pieces. They can collect as many as they find.
3. At a designated time have all residents to come to the appointed room with all their rainbow pieces. The one that collected the most wins a prize. Then let all the residents take part in putting the rainbow back together by taping it on a wall so everyone can enjoy the finish rainbow.

If you are pinning the rainbow pieces on staff members shirts then instructed them to have fun and back out of residents room or try to hold on to their rainbow piece till the appointed time. They cannot cover it or hide it anywhere else; they just have to be creative in sliding past the residents so they can't see it pinned on their back. If a staff member can keep their piece of the rainbow by the appointed time then they get a prize too.

I found a website that has Irish newspapers you can down load to read for the morning discussion. It also has live satellite view of Ireland, poems, songs, traditions and other fun Irish things to help you possible find something new to do this St. Patrick's Day. It's called IrishPage.com and would be worth your time to explore.



These things I warmly wish for you –
Someone to love,
Some work to do,
A bit o' sun
A bit o' cheer
And a guardian angel
Always near.
Old Irish Greeting

May your March be filled with lots of fun!!!

Blessings,
Christine Jennings
Concord, North Carolina