

Creative Program Ideas for October 2011

The birthstones for October are the opal and aquamarine.
The flowers are the cosmos, marigold and calendula.

Celebrity Birthdays:

October 1, 1924 ~ Tom Bosley	October 16, 1925 ~ Angela Lansbury
October 2, 1938 ~ Rex Reed	October 17, 1918 ~ Rita Hayworth
October 3, 1941 ~ Chubby Checker	October 18, 1927 ~ George C. Scott
October 4, 1924 ~ Charlton Heston	October 19, 1932 ~ Robert Reed
October 5, 1917 ~ Alan Ludden	October 20, 1931 ~ Mickey Mantle
October 6, 1908 ~ Carol Lombard	October 21, 1917 ~ Dizzy Gillespie
October 7, 1917 ~ June Allyson	October 22, 1917 ~ Joan Fontaine
October 8, 1941 ~ Jesse Jackson	October 23, 1925 ~ Johnny Carson
October 9, 1940 ~ John Lennon	October 24, 1936 ~ David Nelson
October 10, 1946 ~ Ben Vereen	October 25, 1912 ~ Minnie Pearl
October 11, 1884 ~ Eleanor Roosevelt	October 26, 1914 ~ Jackie Coogan
October 12, 1932 ~ Dick Gregory	October 27, 1914 ~ Dylan Thomas
October 13, 1915 ~ Cornel Wilde	October 28, 1914 ~ Jonas Salk
October 14, 1927 ~ Roger Moore	October 29, 1921 ~ Bill Mauldin
October 15, 1924 ~ Lee Iacocca	October 30, 1945 ~ Henry Winkler
	October 31, 1912 ~ Dale Evans

Important Dates to Remember in October:

October 9-15 ~ Fire Prevention Week

October 10 ~ Columbus Day

October 11 ~ Casimir Pulaski Day

October 15 ~ Sweetest Day

October 17 ~ Boss's Day

October 31 ~ Halloween is a favorite time of year for children. Begin by contacting the schools and arranging specific times for daytime parades at the facility so the children can show off their costumes, and the residents can enjoy them. Work with community leaders to arrange trick-or-treat times at the facility. Have the residents make goodie bags for the children and help the residents create costumes for those who wish to greet the children and pass out the treats. Facilities can provide a safe place for children to celebrate Halloween by hosting a community Halloween Party. Contact businesses to help with refreshments and prizes for games and costumes for the event. Recruit community volunteers through the high schools and civic organizations to help with the event. Organize carnival games and costume judging in several categories, and serve refreshments. Don't forget to invite the families of the residents and staff to participate.

Foods showcased this month: apples, chestnuts, chili, popcorn, pears, pineapples, pumpkins, rhubarb, sausage and spinach.

October brings cooler days and beautiful colors of the changing leaves on trees and foliage all around us. Plan some walks with the residents and children involved in the intergenerational program to collect leaves for collages, craft projects and identification. Press the leaves under heavy books or weights. Have a contest between the children and seniors to see how many leaves they can correctly identify. Arrange the leaves on contrasting construction paper and

laminated as placemats and cut some apart to use as coasters. Mat and frame some of the more colorful leaves and hang the artwork around the facility or sell them at a bazaar.

Go on a Field Trip Month: As the good weather begins to fade and winter approaches, prepare to take advantage of Indian summer by getting the residents out into the community on field trips. Be sure to take extra lap robes and sweaters in case the wind changes. You can enjoy a picnic lunch at a local forest preserve, take a walk in the neighborhood and collect colorful leaves, play yard games in the local park, or just drive through the country or forest preserves and marvel at the beauty of nature. Visit the garden center to purchase bulbs and perennials that have to be planted now to enjoy in next year's garden. Attend a local high school's football game or track meet.

Reading Group Month: It's time to schedule some indoor activities the residents can participate in as a group or independently throughout the coming months. Provide a list of newly released books the residents may enjoy reading, or have the residents choose a book they would like to read aloud during a book review group. The residents can also select some books to read to the children involved in the intergenerational program or after school reading program sponsored by the nursing home.



Photographer Appreciation Month: Photographers capture family life, vacations, nature, everyday events, weddings, birthdays, etc. Activity professionals take lots of pictures, and too often put the pictures into a file or throw them into a box that gets put on a closet shelf and forgotten. Gather the pictures and organize a photo exhibition starring the residents. Using a scanner or digital photographic memory stick, enlarge your favorite photos. Have the residents pick the ones they would like featured in the exhibition. Help the residents mount each photograph on a sheet of construction paper in a complimentary color. Ask the residents to add captions under the photos. Display the photos on a central wall using Fun Tak so you don't damage the paint or wallpaper. (It would be a good idea to get permission from the administrator before putting the pictures up!!) Invite the families to a formal showing and serve refreshments.

Vegetarian Month: Ask the dietitian to discuss how a vegetarian diet can be healthier for everyone. Have the residents work together with the dietitian to create a vegetarian special meal during the month. Focus on vegetarian dishes during cooking groups this month and experiment with recipes. Share the residents' favorites with the dietary department. For recipes and information about vegetarian diets, visit: <http://www.tryveg.com/cfi/toc/>, <http://allrecipes.com/Recipes/Everyday-Cooking/Vegetarian/Main.aspx>, and <http://www.vegetariansrecipes.org/>.

Bake and Decorate Month: Decorating cakes and cookies can be a lot of fun. Invite a volunteer or staff member who enjoys decorating cakes and cookies to demonstrate simple techniques for the residents to use. You can also invite the local bakery to do a cake decorating demonstration for the residents. During a baking activity, have the residents make cupcakes or sugar cookies. After the cupcakes are cooled, frost the tops. Make some stiff icing and divide the icing into several small bowls. Add a different food coloring to each bowl and mix thoroughly. Using the appropriate decorating tip, fill a decorating bag with the desired color of stiff icing and allow the residents to decorate the cupcakes and/or cookies. Take pictures of the finished products before allowing the residents to eat their creations. This is a great intergenerational activity.

Class Reunion Month: Many of the residents had to leave school to help raise their younger siblings or get a job to help their family financially because they were raised during a World War and/or the Great Depression. Talk about the residents' school memories and what a class reunion would mean to them. Determine with whom they have kept in touch. Help the residents write to their friends from school and invite them to a reunion at the facility. Form a reunion committee, and help the residents plan a reunion for their friends who are still living in the community or nearby. Helpful hints include, but are not limited to:

1. Hold the reunion on a weekend during the day so that families can bring the residents' friends to the reunion.
2. Choose a theme and decorate accordingly.
3. Plan simple refreshments.
4. Have plenty of seating, around small tables to encourage conversation.
5. Ask the families to provide a **copy** of a school picture. Place the pictures on colorful sheets of construction paper, and allow for a small border around each picture. Write the name of the individual at the bottom of the border. Use Fun Tak (or another reusable adhesive) to hang the pictures (at wheelchair height) on the walls around the room where the reunion will be held. Encourage the residents and guests to see if they can recognize the persons pictured.
6. Have a welcoming committee at the main entrance.
7. Encourage the guests to write their names and information in a guest book.
8. Take lots of pictures.

October 1 ~ Anniversary of the Model T: In 1908, Henry Ford introduced the Model T priced at \$850, but by 1924 the basic model sold for only \$260. The first Model Ts were hand built, but as the demand for these cars grew, Ford began using an assembly line method to produce the cars. Gather pictures of the Model T and other early car models. Ask the local Ford dealership for pamphlets featuring the new Ford models. Gather the men for a



discussion about their first cars. Discuss the Model T and how cars have evolved. Distribute the new car pamphlets, and ask what the residents think about the new models. Arrange for an antique car club to bring their cars to the facility and display them. Ask the owners to share information about their cars, and ask if the residents can sit in some of the cars. Be sure to take pictures of the residents in the antique and new cars. For more information, visit: <http://www.thehenryford.org/exhibits/showroom/1908/model.t.html>.

October 2 – 8 ~ Carry a Tune Week: Television's prime time is filled with various talent shows – American Idol, America's Got Talent, etc. – featuring amateur performers singing in front of a studio audience. During the week, have your own talent contest to determine exactly who can Carry a Tune, and garner the audience's applause and approval. Open the contest up to the residents, staff, volunteers and families. Secure a pianist to accompany each contestant. Try to have at least one rehearsal before the big day, or practice a different song each day and perform it for a specific floor or unit as an impromptu performance.

October 2 - 8 ~ Mystery Series Week: Join this celebration of continuing characters in mystery fiction. Most new mystery books feature a series detective. This tradition dates back more than 100 years. Ask the residents who their favorite detective in a mystery series is and why. Have a social, and ask everyone to come as their favorite detective. Take the residents

to the local library. Explore some of the newer mystery series. Have the residents choose a book to check out, and establish a time when they will get together and read the story as a group project. Discuss each chapter, and try to guess what is going to happen next. Have the creative writing group write their own mystery in a short story format. Discuss the more famous detectives such as Sherlock Holmes, Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, etc.

October 4 ~ World Card Making Day: Greeting cards are easy and fun to make. You can use computer programs, rubber stamps, scrapbooking materials, used greeting cards and sample greeting cards. Organize volunteers to help the residents create holiday cards on the computer. Purchase several stamp pads in different colors and seasonal rubber stamps. Demonstrate how to create the front of the card using the rubber stamps. Have volunteers help the residents glue a verse from a used greeting card on the inside of the card. Gather scrapbooking decorations, and help the residents arrange and glue the decorations on the front of their cards. Have volunteers help with the verses or notes. Use greeting card sample books to create the fronts of new greeting cards by cutting around the verse and affixing it to the outside of the residents' cards. To help with the costs, ask for donations of card stock, seasonal rubber stamps, stamp pads, computer inks, envelopes, seasonal scrapbooking decorations, glue sticks, etc. Ask a local card shop to save its sample books and any outdated greeting cards and envelopes for you. For more ideas, visit: <http://www.making-greeting-cards.com/>, <http://www.mycardmaker.com/>, and for those with Microsoft Office on their computers - <http://office.microsoft.com/enus/help/HA011912371033.aspx>.



October 5 ~ World Teachers' Day: Ask the residents to share stories about the teachers who really influenced them. Determine how many of the residents taught school, and ask them to share information about their career and the students that stand out in their memory. Invite the students involved in the intergenerational program to work on a small gift or a large thank you card for their teachers. Discuss the common practice of bringing an apple to the teacher and how it originated.

October 6 ~ Intergeneration Day: If the facility has not established an intergenerational program with a local school, now is a good time to organize a program. A good program takes planning with everyone involved. The activity director should visit the school children and talk about the residents and explain what to expect when the children visit. Bring a wheelchair, quad-cane, walker and straight cane. Explain how and why the residents use these aids. Leave the assistive devices in the classroom for the children to get used to. Develop a small handout for the children's' families telling them about the program and inviting them to visit the facility. You should also meet with the residents and talk about the children and the correct way to discipline a child in today's society. Talk about some of the activities you have planned, and get the residents' feedback. Be sure the residents you have in mind really want to participate. Laying a good foundation is the key to success.

October 7 ~ Denim Day: Work with the administrator or management to declare a dress down day, and allow the staff to wear denim in exchange for a \$5.00 donation to the activity department or a charity chosen by the Resident Council. Be sure to develop guidelines requiring the denim clothing to be clean and free of rips. Hemlines should be below the knees, and no sayings should be printed on the garments, etc. Place the list of guidelines in the employees' paychecks closest to the day of the event. Discuss the invention of the first blue jeans and how this article of clothing has evolved over the years.

October 8th ~ Great Chicago Fire: Anniversary: On this date in 1871, the Great Chicago Fire began in a barn located on DeKovan Street. According to the legend, Mrs. Catherine O'Leary's cow kicked over the lantern in her barn. The fire leveled 3.5 square miles of the city, destroying 17,450 buildings, leaving 98,500 people homeless, and killing about 250 people! On the same day just north of Chicago, in the small town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin, there was a more devastating fire! Because of the prolonged drought in the area and the extremely high temperatures, a cyclonic wind swept through the forests. The Peshtigo Fire killed five times more people than the Chicago Fire and 2,400 square miles of land was wiped out. Discuss the two fires and explore how the legend of Mrs. O'Leary's cow got started. For more information, visit: <http://genealogytrails.com/ill/cook/fire.html>.



October 7 – 9 ~ Storytelling Week: At one time, history and religious information were passed down to the next generation through storytelling. Many stories were turned into songs that were repetitive and easy to learn. Over time, we have lost this tradition. Have the residents practice telling stories from their past, and then share the stories with their grandchildren during a special storytelling celebration. Serve light refreshments after the event.

October 9 – 15 ~ Fire Prevention Week: Work with the local schools on a poster contest with the residents judging the entries for each grade level. When the posters are completed and organized by grade, instruct someone from the school to bring the posters to the facility or go and pick them up. Using Fun Tak, or other reusable adhesive, hang the posters on the walls of the activity room or other large space. Schedule specific dates and times for the residents to judge the posters. Provide a printed ballot and a ballot box. Have the awards ceremony at the facility, and invite the press to cover the event. Ask the teachers to invite the winners and their parents. Have the Resident Council president announce the winner, and present first, second and third place ribbons to the winners in each grade. Be sure to award certificates to everyone who submitted a poster. Serve simple refreshments, and provide guided tours of the facility after the event.

October 12 ~ Bring Your Teddy Bear to Work Day: Celebrate the joy and stress relief a teddy bear brings to its owner. As children, most of us had a teddy bear that comforted us at night or when we were being punished for something we did. Studies show that teddy bears can bring comfort at all stages of life. Discuss the continued popularity of teddy bears. Organize a "teddy bear drive" to collect teddy bears for the residents to cuddle. Ask the staff to go shopping for the teddy bear they will bring to work, and then give their teddy bear to a resident who has not already received a teddy bear from one of the staff. The activity department will also need to hold a fundraising event to make sure that each resident receives a teddy bear.



October 15 ~ Sweetest Day: Do something nice for someone today. The original intent of this day was to bring flowers, cards or candy to shut-ins, orphans and the sick. The activity department can use the day to spread cheer to the residents by delivering bouquets of balloons or small vases of flowers to each resident. Ask the dietary department to provide a special treat at the main meal of the day. Invite an entertainer and after the performance have an ice cream social.

October 16 – 22 ~ Food Bank Week: With the high gas prices and increased unemployment, more families and individuals depend on food banks to supplement their basic food needs.



Help the Resident Council organize a food drive for the local food bank. Have the residents decorate collection bins and place them around the facility. Advertise the food drive in the facility newsletter, local paper, cable station and hang flyers around the community. Send flyers home with the local school children. Help the residents collect and box the food several times during the week. Take some of the residents along to deliver the food. Arrange for the residents to take a tour of the food bank and ask questions about its operation.

October 16 – 22 ~ Chemistry Week: Chemistry sets used to be a popular toy for older children. Determine if any of the residents had chemistry sets and what kinds of experiments they performed with their sets. Discuss the history of chemistry and the importance of chemistry in today's world. Do some simple experiments using everyday chemicals. For more information, visit: <http://www.chem1.com/chemed/history.shtml>, <http://scifun.chem.wisc.edu/HomeExpts/HOMEEXPTS.HTML>, and <http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/explore/chemistry.htm>.

October 21 – 27 ~ Scarecrow Festival: Have the residents and staff from all the units/floor design and make a scarecrow for display on the grounds of the facility. Collect old clothes from garage sales and resale shops. Ask the families and staff for donations of old shoes, hats, jewelry, shirts, blouses, jeans, overalls, etc. Purchase several bales of straw/hay, and make additional "stuffing" out of wadded up newspaper pages. Name and number each scarecrow and place the scarecrows around the facility's campus. Invite the facility's visitors to vote for their favorite scarecrow. Have a pizza party for the winning floor/unit. Ask the Resident Council president to award certificates to the other floors/units. Be sure to take lots of pictures of the residents with their scarecrows.



October 28 ~ Statue of Liberty: Dedication Anniversary: On this date in 1886, the Statue of Liberty was dedicated on Bedloe's Island in New York. Groundbreaking for the structure was in April 1883. A sonnet by Emma Lazarus, inside the pedestal of the statue, contains the words, *"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door."* Discuss the Statue of Liberty and determine how many residents have visited the statue. Ask these residents to share what it was like to visit the statue and the island. For more information, visit: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statue_of_Liberty, and <http://www.statueofliberty.org/>.



October 30 ~ Broadcast Anniversary of the War of the Worlds: Discuss the near panic that resulted when listeners believed the simulated news bulletins, which described a Martian invasion of New Jersey, to be real. Determine if any of the residents remember hearing this radio broadcast of H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*. Ask them to describe what happened in their community and why they believe there was such panic. Show the movie, which was released much later. For more information, visit: <http://www.transparencynow.com/welles.htm>.

October Craft Idea

What You Need:

- Lollypop – Tootsie Pops work best
- Old bed sheets cut into circles or scraps of white material
- Felt-tip Pen
- Yarn – orange or black
- Scissors

What You Do:

1. Cut out a circle of material with a diameter about two times the length of the lollypop stick.
2. Wrap the material around the lollypop and tie its neck with a yarn knot or bow.
3. Draw scary eyes on the material with the felt pen.
4. Makes the perfect Halloween Party Favor.



Work on these all month, and collect the finished ghosts in the activity room. On Halloween have the residents give the ghosts to all the trick-or-treaters who visit the facility.

Ask your laundry for clean, torn sheets to use for this project. Have volunteers cut out the circles of fabric. Make several templates out of cardboard, and instruct the volunteers to draw the circle on the fabric before cutting. A felt-tip pen works best for this. Make sure the scissors used are very sharp.

White tissue paper can also be used, but this medium is hard for the residents to work with. I've found that fabric is a better option.