

Creative Program Ideas for April 2012

The birthstone for April is the diamond.
The flower is the sweet pea.

It is said that, "April showers bring May flowers." Over the years we have found this to be true. April ushers in the beauty of spring; however, many days are filled with rain, which keeps the residents inside, looking for things to do. Use these days to prepare for spring by having the residents plant seeds for the facility's garden beds, clean their closets and drawers to make room for lightweight clothing, work with the activity department staff to plan outings during the warmer months, etc. Encourage the residents to be more physically active in preparation for becoming more involved in the community. Ask the residents what they used to do when they were children and the weather was rainy. Try to incorporate some of these into the facility's intergenerational program.

Celebrity Birthdays:

April 1, 1929 ~ Jane Powell	April 16, 1947 ~ Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
April 2, 1939 ~ Marvin Gaye	April 17, 1923 ~ Harry Reasoner
April 3, 1924 ~ Marlon Brando	April 18, 1921 ~ Barbara Hal
April 4, 1928 ~ Maya Angelou	April 19, 1937 ~ Elinor Donahue
April 5, 1937 ~ Colin Powell	April 20, 1949 ~ Jessica Lange
April 6, 1929 ~ Andre Previn	April 21, 1925 ~ Queen Elizabeth II
April 7, 1939 ~ David Frost	April 22, 1935 ~ Glen Campbell
April 8, 1918 ~ Elizabeth (Betty) Ford	April 23, 1928 ~ Shirley Temple Black
April 9, 1926 ~ Hugh Hefner	April 24, 1934 ~ Shirley MacLaine
April 10, 1915 ~ Harry Morgan	April 25, 1932 ~ Meadowlark Lemon
April 11, 1928 ~ Ethel Kennedy	April 26, 1936 ~ Carol Burnett
April 12, 1947 ~ David Letterman	April 27, 1932 ~ Elizabeth Taylor
April 13, 1935 ~ Lyle Waggoner	April 28, 1941 ~ Ann-Margaret
April 14, 1935 ~ Loretta Lynn	April 29, 1919 ~ Celeste Holm
April 15, 1933 ~ Roy Clark	April 30, 1933 ~ Willie Nelson

Important Dates to Remember in February:

- April 1 ~ **April Fool's Day** (<http://www.brownielocks.com/aprilfools.html>)
Palm Sunday (Beginning of Holy Week)
- April 6 ~ **Passover** (Begins at sundown)
Good Friday
- April 8 ~ **Easter**
- April 15-21 ~ **Volunteer Week**
- April 16 ~ **Income Tax Day** (http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-31749_162-57334377-10391698/grammy-awards-2012-nominations-list/)
- April 22 ~ **Arbor Day** (<http://www.brownielocks.com/arborday.html>) usually combined with
Earth Day (<http://www.brownielocks.com/earthday.html>)
- April 24-28 ~ **NAAP Annual Conference** (Preconference is April 24 and 25)
<http://www.thenaap.com/>

Celebrate Diversity Month: America is known as a "melting pot" because of the diverse ethnic groups who have settled here and made this country strong. Today is the day to celebrate this diversity. Determine how many different ethnic groups are represented at your facility – residents, volunteers, and staff. Put a large map of the world in a prominent place within the facility. Attach a small flag to indicate from which country someone's ancestors immigrated. During the month, feature ethnic meals, crafts, music, intergenerational activities, etc. based on the countries represented. Incorporate ideas from the residents, families and staff.

Community Spirit Days: During April, many communities participate by collecting items for charities that benefit those in need within the community. Work with community leaders to be part of this celebration. Meet with the residents to determine what part they would like to play – becoming a drop-off site, sorting donations, serving as volunteers at the local food pantry, etc.

Jazz Appreciation Month: Celebrate jazz by highlighting the glories of this music as both an historical and a living treasure. Discuss great jazz artists and play some of their music. Have the residents choose their favorites. Contact your local high school to see if they have a Jazz Band and invite them to perform for the residents. For more information, visit: <http://www.apassion4jazz.net/>, <http://www.redhotjazz.com/index.htm>, or <http://www.jazz.com/>.

Humor Month: Ask the residents what makes them laugh. Discuss the therapeutic value of laughter. Begin each activity with a joke and invite the residents to bring a joke to share with the group. Write original jokes and put them in the residents' newsletter for everyone to enjoy. Show episodes of comedic classics, e.g., *I Love Lucy*, *Laurel and Hardy*, *Red Skeleton*, *The Danny Kaye Show*, as well as current television comedies.

April 2 ~ Children's Book Day

Commemorate the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen by discussing the many children's books written by this world famous author. Andersen's books are still read to children across the world. Invite the children involved in the intergenerational program to come for a special story hour. Have the residents choose which book to read to the children. After the book is finished have the participants draw pictures featuring scenes from the story. For more information, visit: <http://hca.gilead.org.il/>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Christian_Andersen, and <http://www.andersenfairytale.com/en/main>.

April 9 ~ White House Easter Egg Roll

Traditionally held on the first Monday after Easter, this event began in 1810 on the Capitol grounds and later moved to the south lawn of the White House in the 1870s. Organize your own Easter egg hunt for the residents and their grandchildren within the facility and outdoors (if appropriate). Have the residents and children involved in the intergenerational program decorate the eggs. Purchase some plastic eggs and hide small prizes and money in them. Add the plastic eggs to the hunt. Distribute small baskets to use for collecting the eggs. Set your own rules – limit the number of eggs each person can collect, pair residents and children, define an area, divide the children into age groups and stagger starting times to give the younger children more time, etc.

April 10 ~ Siblings Day

Invite the residents to share information and stories about their siblings. Ask the residents to describe their funniest and most memorable moments about their siblings. Help the residents write a note or send a card to each of their siblings. Take a picture of the resident and include a copy with each note or card. Volunteers and family members can help with this project.

April 11 ~ Barbershop Quartet Day

Discuss barbershop quartets and what made their type of music so appealing. Determine if any of the residents sang in a barbershop quartet and what they thought about the experience. Gather pictures of barbershop quartets and examples of their music. Ask the residents what they like best about this type of music. For more information, visit:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbershop_music, and
<http://www.acappellafoundation.org/essay/bbshistory.html>.

April 12th ~ National Licorice Day

When one thinks of licorice, black licorice comes to mind; however, many other flavors now exist. There is chocolate, cherry, and strawberry to name a few. Pass out samples of the various flavors and have the residents choose their favorites. To learn about the history and health benefits of licorice, visit:

http://www.wholehealthmd.com/refshelf/substances_view/1,1525,801,00.html and
<http://www.wholefoods.com/healthinfo/wholehealth/licorice.html>.

April 15-21 ~ Coin Collecting Week

Collecting coins can be a lot of fun and very interesting. Discuss the history of coin collecting. Determine if any of the residents collected coins. A good way to get started is with pennies, so break open those penny jars lying around the house. Purchase a set of penny coin holders. Using a magnifying glass, ask the residents to help catalog the pennies according to the date and place where it was minted. Perhaps you'll find a penny of real value! For more information, visit: <http://coins.about.com/b/2006/09/11/the-history-of-coin-collecting.htm> and <http://www.aboutcoincollecting.com/coinhistory.htm>.

April 17 ~ Ford Mustang Day

The Ford Mustang was introduced in the 1960s and has achieved international fame. Invite a Ford Mustang Club to visit the facility and display their cars. Invite family members, volunteers and employees who have Mustangs to participate in the event. Encourage each owner to share pertinent information about their vehicle with the residents. This is an excellent men's activity. For information about the Mustang, contact a local dealership and ask for brochures and videos or visit: <http://www.fordvehicles.com/cars/mustang/>, <http://www.allfordmustangs.com/>, and <http://www.mustangworld.com/>.

April 22 ~ Jelly Bean Day

Jelly beans have been around since biblical times. Jelly Belly is the most well-known variety of this confection. Purchase a variety of these name-brand jelly beans for a taste comparison activity. Have the residents vote for their favorite flavor. Demonstrate how mixing two flavors can result in a new taste sensation. Use the flavor guide as a reference. For more information, visit: <http://www.jellybelly.com/404.aspx> and <http://weirdweb.net/jelly/menu.html>.

April 23-29 ~ Astronomy Week

Discuss the science of astronomy and telescopes. Contact a local astronomy group and invite the members to present a program about astronomy for the residents and children involved in the intergenerational program. Discuss how a telescope is made, how they work, the location of the largest telescope in America, famous astronomers, etc. For more information, visit: <http://www.astroleague.org/al/astroday/astroday.html>, <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/>, and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astronomy>.

Tin Can Herb Pots

What you'll need:

- empty aluminum can
- Screwdriver and hammer
- Liquid gesso (recommended: Liquitex Basics Gesso)
- Acrylic craft paints in colors of your choice
- Acrylic sealer spray, matte finish
- Craft stick
- Thin cardboard
- Pinking shears
- Black permanent marker
- 5-10 small rocks, stones or pebbles
- 1½ cups potting soil
- 4-inch potted herb plant
- White craft glue
- Water
- Flower stickers (optional)



How to make it:

1. Completely wash and dry the aluminum can. If necessary, sand off any rough edges from the opening of the can.
2. Turn the can upside down. Have a volunteer use a screwdriver or other pointed object to poke holes in the bottom of the can. Use a hammer to tap the end of the screwdriver to make the holes.
3. Paint the outside of the can with one coat of gesso. Let it dry completely.
4. Paint the can in the desired color; repeat coats if needed.
5. Have the residents decorate the can the way they want. Use a thin paint brush for long lines; dip the end of the paint brush into paint for polka dots.
6. Decorate with stickers if desired.
7. Have a volunteer take the decorated cans outside and spray the outside of the completed can with acrylic sealer spray. Let it dry.
8. Place enough rocks or pebbles in the bottom of the can to form a single layer.
9. Add enough potting soil to fill the can two-thirds full.

10. Remove the potted herb from its container and transplant it into the can.
11. Fill edges with remaining potting soil, gently pat down so that the plant is firmly in the can, but not compacted so much that it's too tight.
12. Place the can on a plate (to catch any water drainage) and add some water to the newly planted herbs.
13. Have the resident paint a craft stick any color he or she likes. Allow it to dry.
14. Cut a piece of thin cardboard into a small rectangle (about 1½ x 3 inches) using pinking shears.
15. Paint both sides of the cardboard with gesso and let it dry.
16. Glue the rectangle to the top of the craft stick.
17. Use a black permanent marker to write the name of the herb on the rectangle.
18. Insert the plant marker into the soil, being careful not to crush any roots.
19. Place your new garden in a sunny window and remember to water them!