

Creative Program Ideas for March 2012

The birthstones for March are the bloodstone and aquamarine. The flowers are the daffodil and sweet pea.

Celebrity Birthdays:

March 1, 1904 ~ Glen Miller	March 16, 1926 ~ Jerry Lewis
March 2, 1917 ~ Desi Arnaz	March 17, 1919 ~ Nat "King" Cole
March 3, 1911 ~ Jean Harlow	March 18, 1926 ~ Peter Graves
March 4, 1938 ~ Paula Prentiss	March 19, 1935 ~ Phyllis Newman
March 5, 1908 ~ Rex Harrison	March 20, 1906 ~ Ozzie Nelson
March 6, 1923 ~ Ed McMahon	March 21, 1944 ~ Timothy Dalton
March 7, 1934 ~ Willard Scott	March 22, 1931 ~ William Shatner
March 8, 1943 ~ Lynn Redgrave	March 23, 1904 ~ Joan Crawford
March 9, 1934 ~ Yuri Gagarin	March 24, 1930 ~ Steve McQueen
March 10, 1940 ~ Chuck Norris	March 25, 1920 ~ Howard Cosell
March 11, 1934 ~ Sam Donaldson	March 26, 1911 ~ Tennessee Williams
March 12, 1921 ~ Gordon MacRae	March 27, 1924 ~ Sarah Vaughn
March 13, 1939 ~ Neil Sedaka	March 28, 1944 ~ Ken Howard
March 14, 1912 ~ Les Brown	March 29, 1918 ~ Sam Walton
March 15, 1916 ~ Harry James	March 30, 1930 ~ Peter Marshall
	March 31, 1915 ~ Henry Morgan

Important Dates to Remember in March:

March 2 ~ **Employee Appreciation Day** (See ideas under Employee Spirit Month)
March 5 ~ **Casimir Pulaski Day** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casimir_Pulaski_Day)
March 11-November 4 ~ **Daylight Savings Time**
March 17 ~ **St. Patrick's Day** (<http://www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day>)
March 20-June 19 ~ **Spring**

Craft Month: Making crafts can be a lot of fun for the residents. Selling the residents' crafts can lead to income for the activity department or the Resident Council. Ask the residents, families, volunteers, and staff to share their favorite craft ideas and instructions. Be sure to make a sample of the finished project, so the residents can see what the craft item will look like when it's completed. Consider doing the craft as a team project by forming an assembly line. Give each resident the responsibility of completing one step of the project – cutting, gluing, sewing, stuffing, etc. For sample craft ideas and instructions, visit: <http://www.closetsamples.com/2012/01/free-craft-patterns.html> and <http://www.craftplace.org/>.

Employee Spirit Month: During these challenging economic times, many employees fear losing their jobs. This, and other fears, can create low morale in the workplace. Use the next month to boost the employees' spirits by honoring each department. Provide slices of pizza or make other treats available for employees on all shifts, or give each employee a meal coupon for the staff dining room. Use your computer to create certificates of appreciation for each employee. Endeavor to include specific examples of what makes the employee special. Ask the residents and families for ideas about how to celebrate. Have a "dress down" day once a week for **ALL** employees.

Go Fly a Kite!! Since March is known for its windy days, it's time to think about making and flying kites as an intergenerational activity. Discuss the most successful kite designs and materials the residents used when they were children. Ask the residents to help choose the materials and kite designs they would like to make with the children. Divide the participants into teams. Each team will build a kite and then fly it on a windy day. For design ideas and lists of suitable materials, visit: <http://webtech.kennesaw.edu/jcheek3/kites.htm>, <http://www.aloha.net/~bigwind/20kidskites.html>, and <http://www.kiteplans.org/>.

Ideas Month: Encourage the residents and staff to share their ideas for new activities, service projects, field trips during warmer weather, etc. This can be done during small group activities, e.g., Resident Council, and staff meetings. Enlist the help of the residents and staff to plan and execute the ideas that are generated. Remember to recognize the individuals who contributed the ideas used. The best way to generate ideas is to "brainstorm," which means everyone shares whatever comes to mind. Here are a few rules for this process:

- **all** ideas are written down on a large flip chart; **no one** is allowed to comment on anyone else's idea;
- the list is reviewed by the group and prioritized;
- the best ideas are chosen to execute; and
- the **team** is responsible for planning and executing the idea, **not** just the originator.

Nutrition Month: Work with the facility's dietitian to develop a series of informational activities about good nutrition for the residents, families, and staff. If you're tired of the Resident Council meeting being "all about food," it's time to develop a Resident Food Committee. This committee should be run by a dietary supervisor. Have weekly "taste tests" to introduce new foods from different vendors and ask the residents to choose their favorites. Provide tours of the facility's kitchen or show a video of the facility's kitchen staff preparing and serving a meal to the residents. This will give the residents a good idea of what is involved in preparing all those meals each day.

March 2 ~ Dress in Blue Day: Encourage the residents and staff to wear something blue today. Discuss how many different shades of the color blue there are. During a group activity, ask the residents to list everything they can think of that is blue, e.g., the sky, robin's eggs, one of the colors in the rainbow, etc. Write a group poem about the color blue. Discuss other meaning of the word blue, e.g., I'm feeling blue today, etc. Have the residents list all the words they can from the letters in the word blue. Give a prize to the resident who lists the most words within a given time.

March 4 – 10 ~ Celebrate Your Name Week: Names identify who you are to the world. Many of us were named after someone. Discuss how the residents got their names. Help the residents celebrate their names by writing a name poem. A name poem uses the letters of one's name as the first letter of each line of poetry. The following is an easy example: *Rhonda*
is ~ Radiant

Honorable
Organized and
Named after her
Dad's
Aunt

March 5 ~ Fun Facts About Names Day: Use a name your baby book or go online (<http://www.behindthename.com/>) to research the meaning of the residents' names. Use the Internet to research for fun facts about their names. For instance: Does the dog piece, in the game Monopoly, have a name? What was the former name of the White House? Does the doll we call Barbie have a last name? Google is an excellent search engine to use. For the answer to the last question, visit: <http://ask.yahoo.com/20040827.html>.

March 9 ~ Anniversary of Mattel's Barbie Doll: On this date in 1959, this popular girls' doll debuted in stores across America. The doll became an instant hit with preteen girls. Since its début, more than 800 million dolls have been sold along with clothes and other accessories. Invite the residents and their granddaughters to an afternoon tea party and ask the girls to bring their Barbie dolls. Share the story of Barbie and her friends, which can be found at: <http://inventors.about.com/od/bstartinventions/a/The-History-Of-Barbie-Dolls.htm>.

March 17th ~ Quilting Day: Take this opportunity to display some of the residents' handmade quilts. Ask the families to bring some of the quilts the residents made and display them in a central location. Invite a group of quilters to demonstrate the art of quilting. Invite the community to come and see the beautiful quilts and talk to the residents who made them. If the residents won an award for their quilt, display the award with the quilt.

March 19 - 24 ~ Celebrate Chocolate Week: This is a chocolate lover's delight! Have your own chocolate week festivities and invite the families, volunteers, and staff to take part. Ask the families, staff, and volunteers to make their favorite chocolate creation and include the recipe for inclusion in a small cookbook. Have the residents bake several chocolate recipes during a baking group activity. On March 24, hold the facility's chocolate week festival and distribute samples of the various creations. Everyone who provides a chocolate item can receive the cookbook filled with the recipes. To see how one facility celebrated chocolate, visit: http://www.nursinghome.org/pro/frmNewsletter.asp?strFile=/pro/newsletters/closeup_new/1999/cu0319.html

March 19-25 ~ Wellderly Week: Today provides an opportunity to honor and recognize elders who never act their age. Have a party to honor the residents who continue to be involved in the community and facility life. Present a certificate to the residents who accept leadership roles in the facility, volunteer in the community, and display qualities usually attributed to younger adults. Invite local dignitaries to take part in the recognition festivities.

March 20 ~ Farewell to the Snowman: Herald the end of winter and the approach of spring by reading poems about both seasons. Have the residents make a list of the things they will miss about winter and another list of the things they are looking forward to once spring arrives. Have each resident make their own snowman out of three marshmallows stacked one on top of the next and held together using butter cream icing. Use the icing to attach raisins on the face of the snowman for its eyes, nose, and mouth. At the end of the activity the residents can sing *Frosty the Snowman* as they say farewell to their snowman by eating their creation!

March 21 ~ Common Courtesy Day: Ask the residents to define what common courtesy means to them and ways individuals can demonstrate acts of common courtesy. Write down the residents' answers on a flip chart. Transfer their hints to several poster boards. Place the posters around the facility to remind everyone how important common courtesy is to everyone. Encourage the staff, volunteers and residents to practice common courtesy not only today, but throughout the year.

March 22 ~ Anniversary of the Activation of the Tuskegee Airmen: On this date in 1941, this pioneering and highly decorated World War II African-American aviation unit was activated. This courageous unit gained its name during training at the US Army airfield near Tuskegee, Alabama, and at the Tuskegee Institute. Discuss the history and accomplishments of this group of African-American airmen and how their distinguished service ultimately led to the integration of the armed forces. Take the residents to see the recently released movie about the Tuskegee Airman. For more information, visit: <http://www.tuskegeeairmen.org/>.

March 26-31 ~ National Cleaning Week: It's time for spring cleaning. Take this opportunity to clean the activity storage areas and offices. Organize files and supplies. Donate unused items to a scout troop or church group. Encourage the families to help their loved ones clean their rooms and purge unused items. Instruct the families to remove the bulk of the residents' winter clothes and put their summer clothes in their closets and drawers. Discuss what spring cleaning was like when the residents were growing up and later when they had families of their own.