

2008 NATIONAL NURSING HOME WEEK CONTEST WINNERS

Creative Forecasting is pleased to announce the winners of our 16th Annual National Nursing Home Week Contest. Their activities are in the May 2008 issue of Creative Forecasting on pages 9 - 11.

WINNERS

*YouTube SING-ALONGS - Recreation Services Department, North Carolina Veterans Home, Fayetteville, NC

*THE MEMORY FARM BOOK - Activity Department, Robinson Terrace, Stamford, NY

*OMBUDSMAN DAY - Activity Department, Heritage House Health and Rehab Center, Jasper, IN

*FRENCH WEEK - Activity Department, Dale Commons, Modesto, CA

*OUR RESIDENTS MEAN THE WORLD TO US - Activity Department, Mt. Vernon Countryside Manor, Mt. Vernon, IL

HONORABLE MENTION

*HARMONICA PLAYING - Activity Department, The Lodge Retirement Community, Cincinnati, OH

*TASTE OF PIERREMONT - Activity Department, Pierremont Healthcare Center, Shreveport, LA

*SOCK HOP PARTY - Nursing Department, Woodview Home, Ardmore, OK

15th Annual National Nursing Home Week Contest

NATIONAL NURSING HOME WEEK

May 11 - 17, 2008

“Love is Ageless”

We are excited to present the winners of *Creative Forecasting's* Annual National Nursing Home Week Contest. Thanks to all the subscribers who sent entries! These winning entries can be adapted for all settings.

The sponsor of National Nursing Home Week is the American Health Care Association (AHCA). The week was created in 1967 and always begins on Mother's Day.

The 2008 theme is “Love is Ageless.” AHCA member facilities should have received the product catalog and planning guide by mail in February. For non-members, the product catalog and planning guide can be downloaded free of charge from AHCA's web site, www.nnhw.org. They can also be requested by calling 1-800-321-0343.



WINNERS

YOUTUBE™ SING-ALONGS

Whitney Bell, ADC, CDP, Recreation Services Director, North Carolina Veterans Home, Fayetteville, NC

We have improved our sing-alongs by combining reminiscing with them using the YouTube™ web site (www.youtube.com). Our veterans request the music, and we use YouTube to find footage of the original music by the original musician, so they can sing along with it. This activity really stimulates their memories, and the feelings this gives our residents is priceless.

THE MEMORY FARM BOOK

Kathy Weisenbarger, ADC, Activity Director, Robinson Terrace, Stamford, NY


I have been in the field of activities for over 30 years and continue to look for ways our residents can be involved with children and the community. This project was a joint effort of our residents, staff, volunteers, and family members in doing both.

We work closely with local schoolchildren and wanted to give them a tool for learning and understanding what it is like to live in a nursing home. I suggested to the residents that they could write a book about their lives to share with the children. They were apprehensive at first but agreed it would be a good idea. We have a writing group and a fine arts group, and each group worked together to complete this project.

The process started with the writing group and a volunteer, a retired English teacher. They brainstormed the messages they wanted to pass on to the children. They decided to write a story named *The Memory Farm*. They chose animals that they could use to tell the story. The characters included a boy named Ryan, his mother, Boo the dog that was lonely and depressed, Nutty the squirrel that had no teeth, Fluffy the horse that had a brace on his leg, and Wild Yo, the bunny that was in a wheelchair. After the story was written, it was given to the fine arts group to draw illustrations.

Each week, both groups worked together and in four months, *The Memory Farm* was finished. What began as a simple story ended up being a book. The next step was to raise the money needed for printing of the book. Staff, family members, and volunteers donated items that were sold with the proceeds going to the printing costs.

When children visit, we read the book to them. This helps them understand what it is like to live in a nursing home and to have disabilities. I have also used the book to give an inservice to staff, and this was a great reminder to them that the residents were contributing members of the community.

This was a great project which involved almost everyone in the facility. All levels of residents contributed by giving ideas for the story including names of people, animals, and places, giving suggestions for the artwork, and drawing, painting, and coloring the pictures. We found that it was good to have a group of 10 - 12 residents to put the ideas together for the story. This project gave the residents a sense of belonging and accomplishment and was great public relations for the facility. 

OMBUDSMAN DAY

*Sandy Eckert, Heritage House Health and Rehab Center,
Jasper, IN*

During a Resident Council meeting, our residents came up with the idea of having an Ombudsman Day for their ombudsman. They have a great relationship with her and wanted to show their appreciation with a surprise party. I called her and said the residents needed to talk to her. They decorated the room where the party was held, made chili, hot dogs, and cake. They gave her little gifts they had made. Our facility is making this day an annual event on the third Tuesday in September.

FRENCH WEEK

*Linda "Ellie" Ellinwood, Activity Director,
Dale Commons, Modesto, CA*

French Week can be celebrated as a Spring Time in Paris event, held anytime during the year, or adapted as an Evening or Day in France.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Do French manicures.
- Have French language lessons.
- Show the following movies: *An American in Paris* (1951), *The Last Time I Saw Paris* (1954), and *French Kiss* (1995).
- Have a French Fashion Show featuring models wearing berets, painters' smocks, striped shirts, and red scarves.
- Play French music. Here are my favorites: CD *Vive la France*, soundtrack from the movie, *French Kiss*, songs by Maurice Chevalier, *There's a Small Hotel* and *The Romance of Paris* by David Wilson (violin music).
- Have a French Artists Show featuring Monet, Renoir, and Cézanne. I cut out pictures of these artists from old calendars and put them on poster board with biographies of the painters. Borrow Louis Vuitton purses to display and include information about the company.
- Have a French Cooking Demonstration making crepes, cream puffs, and French bread. Use a copy of Julia Child's book, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, to read information from.

Serve French wine, champagne, and/or lemonade (all available at Trader Joes) along with brie and other French cheeses with French bread and pastries.

Play a French people and places trivia game.

Read selections from books of French authors including Colette, Jules Verne, and Alexandre Dumas.

OUR RESIDENTS MEAN THE WORLD TO US!

*Rhonda Moffitt, Activity Director,
Mt. Vernon Countryside Manor, Mt. Vernon, IL*

We opened the week with a Mother's Day Open House Tea Party. Each day of Nursing Home Week was a different destination with corresponding decorations. Each resident received a passport. The front lobby was decorated as an airport with props (borrowed from staff and family members) such as luggage, airplanes, and travel mementos and a check-in counter used to hand out and stamp passports on. Additional props were added each day, depending on the destination. Staff dressed up each day for the country we were visiting.

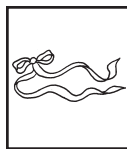
MONDAY: TASTE OF ITALY Residents heard about various Italian traditions and festivals and learned about favorite foods including sampling Spumoni Italian Ice Cream. We watched *Roman Holiday* (1953) starring Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck. An Italian lunch was served, and each table had an Italian flag and facts about Italy while music played in the background. In the afternoon, we had a Wine Tasting Party with alcoholic and non-alcoholic wines served with cut-up fruits and cheeses. An employee from a local winery talked to the residents and provided samples. For a craft project, residents made sun catchers.

TUESDAY: MEXICO "RUN FOR THE BORDER" Residents heard about various Mexican traditions and festivals and learned about favorite foods including sampling Mexican wedding cake cookies and salsa and chips. We watched *Fun in Acapulco* (1969) starring Elvis Presley. A Mexican lunch was served, and each table had a Mexican flag and facts about Mexico while music played in the background. In the afternoon, we had a Fiesta with food, music, and games. For a craft project, the residents made small piñatas they could hang in their rooms. ☛

WEDNESDAY: JAPAN “THE GREAT LIGHTS OF TOKYO” This day was based on Japan having extensive Christmas light displays, so we decorated with lots of lights. Residents heard about various Japanese traditions and festivals such as the Japanese end of year giving (takes place instead of the Christmas gift-giving) and learned about favorite foods including sampling green tea and cold soba Japanese noodles. A Japanese lunch was served, and each table had a Bonsai dwarf tree with an explanation of the history of bonsais while music played in the background. In the afternoon, we had a Tea Ceremony with plants around the area that made it look like a Japanese garden and played music to create a peaceful setting. We posted the following Japanese belief in large letters, “Every human encounter is a similar occasion which will never recur again exactly.” For a craft project, residents tried origami, the art of paper folding.

THURSDAY: GERMANY “OKTOBERFEST” Residents heard about various German traditions and festivals such as Oktoberfest, a harvest festival, and learned about favorite foods including sampling potato pancakes. A German lunch was served, and each table had a German flag and facts about Germany while music played in the background. For a craft project, residents did a German egg craft, decorating hollowed-out eggs and foam eggs with yarn and paint. Residents could hang the eggs in their rooms.

FRIDAY: GOOD OLD USA Residents talked about family traditions and special memories that staff and volunteers wrote in small books that were given as mementos to family members. We watched *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956) starring David Niven and Shirley MacLaine. An American lunch was served, and each table had an American flag and facts about the United States while music played in the background. In the afternoon, we had a County Fair Party complete with several games and food booths including lucky duck game, lollipop tree game, knock down the cans, bowling for quarters, face painting, and cake walk, and we served cotton candy, kettle corn, funnel cakes, and lemonade.



HONORABLE MENTION

HARMONICA PLAYING

*Gabbie Rohdenburg, Activity Director,
The Lodge Retirement Community,
Cincinnati, OH*

We have found that playing the harmonica is beneficial to residents who have breathing problems, especially individuals with Parkinson’s disease. We have a volunteer who gives lessons to residents who show interest. Each harmonica costs \$5. After participants have approximately 10 lessons, they perform for other residents at an activity.

TASTE OF PIERREMONT

*Judy Firmin, Activity Director,
Pierremont Healthcare Center, Shreveport, LA*

Every year, our residents look forward to National Nursing Home Week to enjoy the Taste of Pierremont. The different departments in our facility prepare foods from various countries or ethnic groups for the residents to taste. In the past, some of the restaurants in our community have provided us with their specialties for the tasting. Each table is decorated and music plays as the staff serves their specially prepared food to the residents.

SOCK HOP PARTY

*Brya Wright, Restorative Aide, & Nursing Department,
Woodview Home, Ardmore, OK*

During National Nursing Home Week, the nursing department organized a Sock Hop Party for the residents. They scheduled entertainer and decorated the area with lots of records and a jukebox made out of a large box. They also decorated the windows with window chalk. They called themselves the Woodview Woodcats and dressed in '50s-style clothing for the party. While the entertainer played music, the staff, including the administrator, played inflatable saxophones and danced. Some of the residents also danced. Refreshments served were chips, cookies, and root beer float punch (root beer and ice cream in a punch bowl). CF

