

A LITTLE MORE ENTHUSIASM CAN TAKE YOU A LONG WAY

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The fact that you are reading this publication (an excellent decision, I might add!) tells me that you are a motivated and professional individual who is interested in keeping your Activity Program enjoyable and meaningful for the people you serve. You will undoubtedly come across some unique activity ideas in your reading, as well as familiar ones that are presented with a new twist. Skimming through the pages of *Creative Forecasting* will pump you up with a renewed enthusiasm for your work, which is great. That's what's everyone involved in this publication hopes for.

You can take ideas and do a wonderful job implementing them and then turn around and find yourself (once again) looking for fresh ideas. Over the years, I have learned that the simple, good ideas you come up with can be great points for a myriad of follow-up activities. Let your imagination and enthusiasm take over. Once you get good at this, your only dilemma will be knowing when the therapeutic value has been exhausted and it's time to move on!

Case in Point: A 55-year-old, post-Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA) female with left-arm paralysis came to me with a yarn art project depicting a bird that she had just completed. Since she had done a good job, I praised her for what she had accomplished (truly an achievement for her). Then, I began to worry about what else she would be able to do. Should she try a different art medium? I challenged her to continue with her work and promised her an art show in our nursing home when she had enough pieces to display.

To make a long story short, we took the idea and ran with it. Over the course of three months, we created and unveiled a beautiful display (attended by family members and friends) and enjoyed a variety of group activities related to birds/wildlife. For instance, the facility became a member of the local Audubon Society and had the president of our local chapter speak at the unveiling. A nationally renowned ornithologist sent us an autographed copy of his new book. We purchased one bird feeder which we put by our dayroom window and were given permission by the town's mayor to place homemade feeders in the community, which we maintain. We also contacted Cornell University for a bird-watching poster and became part of a six-month bird observation/counting project. All of these wonderful activities and rewards were ours as a result of one simple bird-art project idea! In other words, don't recreate the wheel. Roll with the idea you have until there's no roll left in it!

By investing just a bit more energy in basic activities, you will create a more exciting, interesting, and meaningful activity schedule. And, as always, be sure to share your experiences with *Creative Forecasting* readers!

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