

## *Creative Program Ideas for April 2011*

The birthstone for April is the diamond.  
The flowers are the sweet pea and daisy.

### **Celebrity Birthdays:**

April 1, 1932 ~	<b>Debbie Reynolds</b>	April 16, 1924 ~	<b>Henry Mancini</b>
April 2, 1920 ~	<b>Jack Webb</b>	April 17, 1918 ~	<b>William Holden</b>
April 3, 1924 ~	<b>Marlon Brando</b>	April 18, 1946 ~	<b>Hayley Mills</b>
April 4, 1928 ~	<b>Maya Angelou</b>	April 19, 1935 ~	<b>Dudley Moore</b>
April 5, 1921 ~	<b>Gale Storm</b>	April 20, 1941 ~	<b>Ryan O'Neal</b>
April 6, 1937 ~	<b>Billy Dee Williams</b>	April 21, 1915 ~	<b>Anthony Quinn</b>
April 7, 1939 ~	<b>David Frost</b>	April 22, 1928 ~	<b>Aaron Spelling</b>
April 8, 1918 ~	<b>Betty Ford</b>	April 23, 1936 ~	<b>Ray Orbison</b>
April 9, 1926 ~	<b>Hugh Hefner</b>	April 24, 1934 ~	<b>Shirley MacLaine</b>
April 10, 1921 ~	<b>Chuck Connors</b>	April 25, 1932 ~	<b>Meadowlark Lemon</b>
April 11, 1928 ~	<b>Ethel Kennedy</b>	April 26, 1933 ~	<b>Carol Burnett</b>
April 12, 1947 ~	<b>David Letterman</b>	April 27, 1922 ~	<b>Jack Klugman</b>
April 13, 1926 ~	<b>Don Adams</b>	April 28, 1941 ~	<b>Ann-Margret</b>
April 14, 1925 ~	<b>Rod Steiger</b>	April 29, 1919 ~	<b>Celeste Holm</b>
April 15, 1933 ~	<b>Elizabeth Montgomery</b>	April 30, 1926 ~	<b>Cloris Leachman</b>

### **Important Dates to Remember in April:**

April 1 <sup>st</sup> ~	<b>April Fool's Day</b>	April 21 <sup>st</sup> ~	<b>Maundy (Holy) Thursday</b>
April 10 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> ~	<b>Volunteer Week</b>	April 22 <sup>nd</sup> ~	<b>Good Friday</b>
April 17 <sup>th</sup> ~	<b>Palm Sunday</b>		<b>Earth Day</b>
April 18 <sup>th</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> ~	<b>Passover</b>	April 24 <sup>th</sup> ~	<b>Easter Sunday</b>

**Food and beverages enjoyed in April:** beer, brussel sprouts, cabbage, deep dish pizza, egg salad, fish, gooseberries, grilled cheese sandwiches, jelly beans, licorice, pecans, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes.

**Jazz Appreciation Month:** Present programs about the rich history of jazz in American culture. Help the residents study the roots of jazz and the musicians who made it famous, e.g., Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Fletcher Henderson, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, and Benny Goodman. Discuss the glories of jazz as both a living and historic treasure. Organize a jazz appreciation activity and feature some of the residents' favorite jazz tunes. Encourage residents who went to jazz concerts featuring one of the "jazz greats" to share their experience during a discussion group. For more information, visit:

<http://42explore.com/jazz2.htm>, <http://www.apassion4jazz.net/>, and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz>.

**Humor Month:** The value of humor is well documented. Laughter makes us feel better and can improve our overall health. Starting this month, begin using humor as an opening for each activity. Share a joke, ask a resident to share his or her favorite joke or funny story. Enlarge cartoons and add



them to the floor/unit bulletin board. Rotate the cartoon each Monday. Tell a joke during the morning announcements. Show comedic films or television broadcasts featuring comedians from the residents' era. As a small group activity, listen to an old time radio show featuring some of the great comedians of the 1940s. Offer a weekly matinee featuring films starring some of the residents' favorite comedians. For more information and ideas, visit:

[http://www.comedyorama.com/great/great.htm#Old% 20Time%20Radio](http://www.comedyorama.com/great/great.htm#Old%20Time%20Radio),  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comedian>, and <http://www.wxs.ca/jr/riddles.html>.

**Celebrate Diversity Month:** This month provides an opportunity to explore the concept of diversity. Begin with the definition of diversity. Each individual is unique, with individual differences and preferences. Provide a secure environment to honor the residents' differences in race, religion, ethnic background, socio-economic status, etc. Encourage the residents to share their thoughts about diversity. Write group poems or short stories about the importance of diversity and how to move beyond tolerance to acceptance of our individual differences. Offer activities based on diversity – special meals/refreshments, dance, native dress, traditions, etc. For more information, visit: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diversity>.

**Community Spirit Month:** Discuss what community spirit means to the residents. Help the residents identify a special project to help individuals in need. Invite community leaders to visit the facility and offer ideas about how the residents can become more involved in community life. The possibilities include collecting food for the food pantry, gathering “gently used” children’s books for underprivileged children, collecting food and toys for an animal shelter, and organizing an open house or health fair for the surrounding community.

**Stress Awareness Month:** According to Webster, stress is "mental, emotional, or physical tension or strain." There are two different kinds of stress – the kind that makes you feel overwhelmed (when you have too many things to do), and the kind that makes you feel excited (when you are looking forward to something). However, both "positive" and "negative" stresses have the same physical effect on your body when left unchecked – they deplete your reserves and leave you drained. The only solution is to either make a conscious effort to spend more time in a lower gear, or take time in between bursts to rest and recuperate. Stress has become so universal that it seems to affect everything and everybody. Levels of stress – both physical and mental – and the ability to cope with it are different for everyone. Work with the residents and your staff to identify the stressors in their lives and discuss ways of relieving this stress.

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Children’s Book Day:** Commemorate the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen by discussing his many books. Andersen’s books are still read to children across the world. Invite the children involved in the intergenerational program for a story hour. Have the residents choose the book they would enjoy reading to the children. After the book is finished, have the participants draw pictures featuring scenes from the story. For more information, visit:

<http://www.andersenfairytale.com/en/main>, <http://hca.qilead.org.il/>,  
and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Christian\\_Andersen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Christian_Andersen).



## April 5th ~ National Birding Day



Bird watching is a national pastime, often enjoyed by the residents. Contact a local Boy Scout troop and ask if any of the scouts are working toward their Eagle Scout Rank. Ask if these scouts would be interested in helping the residents make birdhouses and birdfeeders for the facility scouts to cut out the pieces and help the residents assemble them. Hang the birdhouses/birdfeeders around the facility. Have the residents log the different birds that visit the feeders or nest in the birdhouses. Discuss the most exotic birds the residents have seen. Practice drawing pictures of the birds or provide coloring sheets of local birds. Post the finished pictures on the floor/unit bulletin boards. Encourage the residents with cameras to take pictures of the birds using the birdfeeders and/or birdhouses. Organize a photo gallery in a central location so that everyone can enjoy the pictures the residents have taken. To help identify visiting birds, visit: [http://www.birding.com/bird\\_identification.asp](http://www.birding.com/bird_identification.asp), or <http://www.whatbird.com/>. For free patterns, visit: <http://www.choosefreedom.com/birdhouse.html>, <http://rubyglen.com/crafts.htm> (scroll down for birdhouses/birdfeeders), and <http://www.craftybirds.com/>.

**April 9<sup>th</sup> ~ Honor an Antique Day:** Celebrate the “good old days” when items were made by experienced craftsmen and not by machines. Ask the families and staff to share some of their favorite antiques with the residents. During a special event, ask the owners of each item to share a little about it, e.g., whom it belonged to, who made it, how old it is, a story about it, etc. Take pictures of the objects and organize a display of the photos. Take a trip to an antique store and ask the residents to point out common objects from their childhood. For more information, visit: <http://www.goantiques.com/>.



**April 10<sup>th</sup> ~ Siblings Day:** Invite the residents to share information and stories about their siblings. Have them describe the funniest and most memorable moments involving their siblings. Encourage the residents to share pictures of their siblings during a discussion group. Invite the residents' siblings to a special party just for them. Honor the siblings involved in the intergenerational program with their own party. Help the residents write notes to their siblings. Take a picture of the resident and include a copy with each note or card. Ask several volunteers and family members to help with this project. For more information, visit: <http://www.siblingsday.org/>.

**April 11<sup>th</sup> ~ 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 the experience was like. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbershop_music), <http://holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/April/barbershopquartet.htm>, and <http://www.acappellafoundation.org/essay/bbshistory.html>.

## April 11th - 13th ~ Trivia Days

Dust off your trivia books and get ready for some fierce competition. Use these few days to determine which residents are able to answer the most trivia questions. Have a group of volunteers develop a series of trivia questions for each level of care. At the beginning of each day, distribute a sheet of trivia questions to the residents who would like to participate in the

three-day trivia contest. Ask the residents to answer the trivia questions and return the finished sheets to the activity department. Have volunteers determine the number of correct answers on each sheet. As a small group activity, hold trivia contests on each floor/unit. On April 13th determine the male and female winners on each floor/unit. Honor the winners at a special event. For sample trivia questions, visit: <http://www.triviaplaining.com/>.

### April 13th ~ Plant Appreciation Day



Organize a plant appreciation day at the facility. Gather different size containers, bags of sterile soil, fertilizer, plants that need separating or to be put into a larger pot, etc. Organize a workspace for the plants that need separating, planting, trimming, etc. Push several tables together and cover them with newspaper. Ask volunteers to help the residents bring their plants to the activity center. Help the residents determine the right size pots for their plants. Demonstrate how to separate plants to give the roots more growing room. Encourage the residents to give their "extra" plants to a resident who doesn't have a plant and would like one. Do some research about the residents' plants – the amount of water needed, how much light they need, how often to fertilize the plants, etc.

### April 15th ~ First McDonald's Opens: Anniversary

On this date in 1955, the first McDonald's opened in Des Plaines, Illinois. On opening day a hamburger was 15 cents. When the Big Mac was introduced in 1968, it cost 49 cents. In 1971, you could purchase a Quarter Pounder for 53 cents. Today, there are more than 32,000 McDonald's in 117 countries. Plan an outing to the local McDonald's or treat the residents to McDonald's hamburgers for lunch. Discuss why this franchise has succeeded. For more information, visit: [http://www.mcdonalds.com/corp/about/mcd\\_history\\_pg1.html](http://www.mcdonalds.com/corp/about/mcd_history_pg1.html).

### April 12<sup>th</sup> ~ Easter Bonnet Parade: Gather materials for the residents to make their own



Easter bonnets. Invite the residents' grandchildren to join the fun. Play the song *In Your Easter Bonnet* while everyone works their original creations. Provide paper plates for the base and lots of ribbon, glitter, silk flowers, yarn, buttons, feathers, small bunny figures, plastic eggs, etc. to decorate the hats. Once the hats are finished, organize a parade throughout the facility so everyone can model their Easter bonnets.

**April 19<sup>th</sup> – April 25<sup>th</sup> ~ 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 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 22<sup>nd</sup> ~ 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 *Jelly Belly* 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/fun\\_stuff/official\\_50\\_flavors\\_flavor\\_guide.aspx](http://www.jellybelly.com/fun_stuff/official_50_flavors_flavor_guide.aspx) and <http://weirdweb.net/jelly/menu.html>.

**April 25<sup>th</sup> ~ 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. Have the residents and children involved in the intergenerational program decorate the eggs as a project. 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, etc.

## *Simple Craft Idea for the Month of April 2011*

### **Imitation Stained Glass**

#### **What you'll need:**

- wax paper
- worn down and/or broken crayons
- crayon sharpener (or a table knife to make crayon shavings)
- scissors
- flat objects (glitter, dried leaves, stickers, paper scraps, pictures from magazines, etc.)
- iron (You'll encase the flat objects and crayon shavings in the waxed paper, iron it, and then hang your masterpiece in a window.)



#### **How to make it:**

1. Cut 2 pieces of waxed paper (the same size). Choose any size or shape that you want your masterpiece to be. Cut them to be matching shapes.
2. Collect flat things that you want to encase in the waxed paper. Put one piece of the waxed paper on a flat surface. Arrange the objects on the paper. Add crayon shavings for color accents (these will melt later on). The easiest way to get crayon shavings is by using a crayon sharpener.
3. **An adult volunteer or staff member should help with this step.** Put a few layers of newspaper on the ironing board. Put the waxed paper artwork on top of this. Put the second piece of waxed paper on top of the artwork. Carefully put a few layers of newspapers on top of the whole project. Now iron it on medium heat, checking it frequently to make sure it isn't burning. Stop ironing when the waxed paper layers are stuck together and the crayon shavings are melted. To help avoid unsealed parts, try to leave a rim of waxed paper around the edges without any fillings.
4. When the artwork has cooled off, trim the edges carefully. Using pinking shears on the edges can look nice (don't trim near any of the fillings). If there are any unsealed parts, patch them with some transparent tape. Punch a hole near the top for hanging (or just use tape).