Do you remember the first time you went on a treasure hunt with your best friend? You marched out the back door with brave hearts and headed for the woods, or the park, or just the flower box, and began to dig for buried treasure. The time flew by... and then you jumped for joy when you heard your names called to come in for lunch. Munching golden brown, buttery grilled cheese sandwiches and sipping steaming cups of cocoa, you sat with rapt attention while grandma told funny stories about the old days.

The pleasure of that moment was the real treasure unearthed that day, which makes Treasure Our Elders, this year's theme for National Nursing Home Week®, May 13-19, 2007, extra special. Take this special week not only to treasure your residents but to treasure everyone in your facility and those that come through its portals. Honor your staff, volunteers, family members, and community; highlight the care and love they show your residents and are given, in return, love by the residents. The idea of "treasure" evokes thoughts of things that enrich a person monetarily, yet we know there are many other ways to enrich our lives. The challenge this week is to find the hidden (and not so hidden) treasures in your facility within the minds and hearts of your residents and in the life of your facility. Real treasure hunters may be too eager for tangible objects that they can hold in their hands and put on display that they never stop to look at the beauty around them. The sunrise, the coolness of the moist earth, or the whisper of the trees, or the bold strident colors heralding the dusk of the day. The real key to our treasure hunting is recognizing the treasures that might otherwise go unseen. You are surrounded each day by people who can open your eyes to priceless treasures you have never seen, people who bestow pearls just for the listening. Recognize and coax these treasures out of those around you and see what hidden riches you discover. Keep your senses alert for these treasures and you may realize that you are richer than you ever imagined. Enrich your life by learning from those you care for on a daily basis. Allow your residents, people from the community, and visitors to share their treasures with you. And make sure to share your own treasures in the way of stories and activities.

Most importantly, treasure the time you have with the people around you. Recognize the precious moments, the prized stories, and save them, filling your own personal treasure chest. You'll be able to reach in whenever you need to be refreshed or uplifted. Open your treasure chest at a quiet moment and revisit a scene, experience, or tale and contemplate the wisdom of each pearl on its own. The value of these treasures will grow all the more when shared again and again. Our planning guide is filled with suggestions and ideas to help you find and recognize the treasures in everyone. Make sure to visit our Web site at http://www.nnhw.org for all of your needs. - END
The theme for this year’s NNHW is “Treasure our Elders!” The following activities are from the AHCA website at http://www.nnhw.org/resources/index.cfm. Be sure to download their Planning Guide for further help in planning your week.

**An Object to be Treasured**

Create a facility-wide quilt that can be displayed and treasured by all. This can be done by forming a traditional quilting bee, or for an easier version, make one out of felt.

**What you will need:**
- 36 inch by 36 inch Felt Sheet
- 16 - 8” x 8” Felt squares
- Glitter glue pens
- Gems and other embellishments
- Felt fabric adhesive or tacky glue

**Instructions:**
Give each resident an 8” x 8” felt square. Have the resident decorate their felt squares with the glitter pens and embellishments. After the felt squares are complete, help the resident glue their felt pieces onto the larger 36” x 36” felt sheet to make the quilt. Display this on the wall or ask to have it displayed in your community at a local library or town hall.

**Sharing Treasures**

Not only is it important to cherish and appreciate what is in others, it is equally important to share the treasures that are inside of one's self. Hold a resident showcase and ask those with special or secret talents to participate. Perhaps, you have a woman who loves to sing. See if you can find someone who might like to sing but hasn't done so in the past and match them to do a duet. Or, ask two residents who both grew up in a specific area or had a similar upbringing, family life or profession to read two short accounts of what it was like for them and then compare and contrast the stories. If you have a resident who was a writer and a resident that has always wanted to write, match them together to write/read a short story.

**How to Make a Treasure Chest Cake**

**What you will need:**
- One 13- x 9- x 2-inch cake
- 6 cups chocolate frosting
- Edible treasures, for example chocolate coins, Rolo candies, chocolate almond kisses or Necco wafers
- Red fruit leather by the foot
- Jelly beans
- Candy jewels, such as candy necklaces and rock candy
- Graham Crackers (Optional)

**Directions:**
Cut a section approximately 2-inches wide in the center of the cake. The two remaining 5 1/2- x 9- x 2-inch rectangular pieces will form the bottom and top of the chest. Slice the 2-inch section on an angle to form two long triangular wedges. Place the wedges on the bottom half of the chest, about an inch apart. Both wedges should face the same direction (tall end toward the front of the cake) as they will support the top of the treasure chest and keep it propped open. Then frost the bottom half of the cake, including the wedges.

(Continued on page 15)
Robert’s Ramblings
By Robert Lucas, H.F.A. (retired)
Co-owner: The Activity Director’s Office
http://www.theactivitydirectorsoffice.com

TWISTED PROVERBS
From My e-mail

I get all kinds of funny stuff sent to my e-mail box. Here is a compilation of some of the good ones to share with your residents and staff:

- A day without sunshine is like night.
- On the other hand, you have different fingers.
- 42.7% of all statistics are made up on the spot.
- 99% of lawyers give the rest a bad name.
- Remember, half the people you know are below average.
- He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
- Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.
- The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese in the trap.
- Support bacteria. They're the only culture some people have.
- A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
- Change is inevitable, except from vending machines.
- If you think nobody cares, try missing a couple of payments.
- How many of you believe in psychokinesis? Raise my hand.
- OK, so what's the speed of dark?
- When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- Hard work pays off in the future. Laziness pays off now.
- How much deeper would the ocean be without sponges?
- Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.
- What happens if you get scared half to death, twice?
- Why do psychics have to ask you for your name?
- Inside every older person is a younger person wondering, "What the heck happened?"
- Just remember -- if the world didn't suck, we would all fall off.
- Light travels faster than sound. That's why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- Life isn't like a box of chocolates. It's more like a jar of jalapenos. What you do today, might burn your butt tomorrow.
- Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
- Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.
- Nothing is fool proof to a sufficiently talented fool.
- 50-50 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there is a 90% probability you’ll get it wrong.
- If you lined up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try to pass them, five or six at a time, on a hill, in the fog.
- If the shoe fits; get another one just like it.
- The things that come to those who wait will be the things left by those who got there first.
- Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
- Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries
- The shin bone is a device for finding furniture in a dark room.
- A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing right.
- When you go into court, you are putting yourself in the hands of 12 people who weren’t smart enough to get out of jury duty.

- END

About Bob

Robert Lucas is a retired Nursing Home Administrator and is married to Linda Lucas, a retired Activity Director. Bob has a B.A. degree in Ministry and is an ordained minister. He has served the elderly community more than 35 years. His many talents include portrait artist, musician, writer and website designer (learned after his retirement).

Having a special place in his heart for Activity Professionals, Bob began building The Activity Director’s Office website. His goal was to create a hub on the Internet where Activity Professionals could find meaningful and current resources. That goal has been achieved and continues growing yet today.

For more information visit the website at: http://www.theactivitydirectorsoffice.com/ and select “About Us”
First Crush…!

(Small Group)

Materials

- Audio equipment
- Recordings (and lyrics) of famous love songs
- Chair for all participants arranged in a semicircle

The activity

Play the songs and invite your elders to sing them together.

Next, ask them to remember an adolescent crush, someone unattainable they loved from a distance, such as a famous person—perhaps an actor or a singer—they never actually met.

- Who was, and how would you describe, this person?
- What did you admire most about them?
- What would you have liked to say to this person if you had met them at that time?
- What would you like to say to them if you met them now?

Make sure there is enough time for everyone in the group to tell their stories.

Then, invite each elder to write down a short, playful, and humorous lyric about their first crush, and take turns singing it, improvising the melody.

Things to consider

Ensure person-centeredness by selecting songs that your elders like. Before the activity, ask them about their musical preferences.

Person-centered music interventions are widely recognized as valuable therapeutic tools for the well-being of the elderly, particularly those living in nursing homes. Residents who are involved regularly in activities of this kind have been found to have better cognitive skills and be less depressed. (Reference: Myskja A. “Individualized music—A method for integrating music therapy into health care practices,” Twelfth Congress of the International Psychogeriatric Association, 20-24 September 2005, Stockholm, Sweden.)

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The Basics of Writing Therapeutic Goals
By Debbie Hommel, ACC

Being able to write resident/client oriented goals is a necessary skill for activity professionals. As a member of the interdisciplinary team, we often support primary interdisciplinary issues by adding interventions. However, we may also initiate new concerns and problems, which would require us to offer individualized, outcome oriented and resident centered goals for the resident/client care plan.

In our first goal writing lessons, we learn that goals need to be measurable and specific. A common mistake is to use activity attendance as the measure. “Resident will increase socialization by attending three social groups per week” is a goal that may be measurable but it does not focus on a specific outcome. The resident could be attending three groups per week but they could be dozing, sitting off to the side of the program and not interacting with peers. The attendance at group does not provide a suitable outcome measure for increased socialization. To introduce a measurable outcome, the activity professional should focus on behaviors, reactions, responses or tasks completed within an activity. The activity attendance should be a means to change a behavior or provoke a response rather than be the ultimate goal. Rather than “resident will increase socialization by attending three groups per week”, an outcome oriented goal would be “resident will demonstrate social skill by greeting peers at the start of three groups per week” or “resident will demonstrate social skills by sharing opinion during reminiscent or discussion group once per week”.

Another goal writing lesson we learn is that the goals need to be realistic. The activity professional is sometimes pressured by the team to promote certain behaviors or participation in activities. “You need to get them out of their room and get them into activities”, we sometimes hear from the care plan team or from the families. We need to rely on our assessment skills to define an appropriate and individualized goal for the residents/clients. If an individual resident/client had never attended or participated in many groups or was not a “joiner”, the chances of them becoming one at this stage of life is minimal. That is not to say we shouldn’t try to engage them in our programs, however each resident deserves a program (whether it be a 1-1 or group) based on their needs. If the individual prefers a 1-1 or individual program, the resident care plan should reflect that need.

Finally, the goals we establish should be resident/client centered. We hear that term a lot, especially with the revised guidance for nursing homes. But, is this a new idea? Is this something that was born out of new regulations? Person centered therapy was first defined by Carl Rogers, an American psychologist. In the 1960’s, Carl Rogers wrote that “the client knows what hurts, what directions to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences have been buried”. He helped people in taking responsibility for themselves and their lives. He believed that the experience of being understood and valued, gives one the freedom to grow. So what does this mean to us as we write care plan goals? It means we need to involve the resident/client in the goal development process as much as possible. As caregivers, we sometimes assume the role of “expert” and believe we know what is best for the patient. Even though the resident/client is invited to the care plan meeting, the care plan is often already completed and the meeting is simply a means to inform the resident of what services will be provided. Goals are often created with little input from the resident/client. To truly embrace resident/client centered care planning, the resident/client, whenever possible, should be involved in discussing potential goals. What the resident wants may be different than what the team member or therapist thinks they need. That input should be respected.

There are a number of books on care planning available to the activity professional. Books are helpful but the activity professional should not rely solely on the goals listed in the books. The activity professional should strive to become competent in goal writing in order to be able to develop truly individualized and resident/client centered goals.

Care Planning Books for Activity Professionals
The Care Planning Cookbook by Recreation Therapy Consultants
The New Care Plan Answer Book for Activity, Psychosocial and Social Workers by Greenwald and Davis
Activity Care Plans for Long Term Care Facilities by Sander

ABOUT DEBBIE
Debbie Hommel is a Certified Activity Consultant on State and National level, with over twenty-seven years of experience in providing direct care and consultation to long term care, medical day care, assisted living, and ICF/MR facilities throughout New Jersey, New York, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.
She is an experienced trainer and workshop presenter, conducting a variety of seminars throughout the Tri-State area for the Activity Professional, Administrator, and allied healthcare professional. She is ACC certified through the NCCAP.
Training Your Staff the Right Way

Often times we hire staff and place them on the units without proper training. Here are some tips to develop a trained staff.

- Once the new employee has completed the facility general orientation they should then complete a job specific orientation. Once completed the employee should sign off on the job specific orientation form. The form is available at [www.activitytherapy.com](http://www.activitytherapy.com) website. The job specific orientation covers everything from room set up to types of programs to documentation.

- When new employees begin, have the new staff shadow a seasoned staff member for one week. This will help train the new employee on how things should be done at your facility, introductions of residents and staff, where products are located and documentation procedures.

- The new employee should be provided with the Activity Department policy manual and allowed one day for them to read it and ask questions. This is often times overlooked but should be a very important aspect of the training. We recommend that you place a form in front of the manual for staff to sign when they complete reading the policy manual.

- Always assign a mentor within the department who can invite them to lunch and answer their questions and concerns related to the activity department.

- For the first 30 days meet with your new staff daily to review their concerns. That will you to address those potential problems immediately. You should have a daily morning meeting with all your staff to go over new admissions, documentation, announcements, big events, etc. The staff should always sign for staff meetings. Always ask if they have concerns, suggestions and recommendations. Document their input as this shows you take their input seriously.

- At 10 and 2 take the time to observe your staff during programs to insure the activity is being conducted professionally and safely. Take the time to meet privately with suggestions and concerns as well as praise. You can never praise too much.

- Observe your new staff in care plan meetings and when completing initial assessments. Until you are comfortable with the new employee, always ask to see progress notes, care plans, MDS and initial assessments before they are placed in the chart. It is better to correct mistakes now before you have to do damage control when the documentation becomes a part of the permanent record.

You will build a very strong department if you take the time and invest in a strong training program.

-SANDRA

Sandra Stimson has experience as a corporate consultant, Corporate Trainer and National Speaker. Her experience is in long term care, as Activity Director, Director of Alzheimer’s Units and Assistant Administrator of a 550 bed long term care county home. She is Co-founder of Pet Express Pet Therapy Club, is a Life Replay Specialist. Sandra implements dementia units nationwide. Sandra has written several books, Volunteer Management Essentials for Long Term Care and Pet Express Pet Therapy Program. Sandra has been a facilitator for Alzheimer’s support groups and is the Awards Chair for the NJ Association of Activity Professionals. Sandra is the Executive Director of National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners [http://www.nccdp.org](http://www.nccdp.org)

-Be Sure to REMEMBER Those Who Have Gone Before Us

Memorial Day May 27th

Suggested Activity: Take your residents to the cemetery to view their loved ones’ gravesites. They will love you for it.

-OUTSIDER

Suggested Activity: Take your residents to the cemetery to view their loved ones’ gravesites. They will love you for it.
It’s obvious that anyone reading this article on the Activity Director’s Office website understands the importance of humor and recreational activities. How many activity directors do you know that announce, “This place has too much fun. I’ve cancelled all the BINGO games and don’t expect any May Day activities this month!”?

I too, used to think that everyone saw the value in games, crafts and celebrating special events. Things changed when our family was asked to appear on the Fox reality show, Trading Spouses. Yes, our family was one of those crazy families that “bared our souls” to the world in the form of reality television. The premise of the show involves two families with different lifestyles, where the moms trade places. For this show, I spent a week living with a family in another state while their mom stayed with my husband Allan and daughter Sondra. Even though I didn’t know the ages of the children, I packed an assortment of craft and activity supplies such as fabric crayons, wooden race cars to decorate, cardboard dinosaurs and a kaleidoscope making kit. I even brought a parachute!

Upon arriving at the new home, I discussed because he didn’t want his son to participate in such a girly activity. The 12-year old boy loved drama but his dad felt drama was not a “manly” activity. He cussing in the background.) Evidently a large portion of the viewers agreed with the dad that kids don’t need to take classes or get involved in activities. My e-mail box was flooded with messages such as “You are a *#% @*^ mother!” “How can you be so %#$%%@ stupid to have that boy take a drama class? He’s smart. Only idiots are involved in drama.” Why did you make those kids do crafts? Crafts are for pre-schoolers!” (Get the idea?) We got prank calls at midnight. The Trading Spouses chat boards were overwhelmed with people calling me the crazy activity lady that forced kids to ride bikes and be creative instead of watching TV.

The program aired, showing the kids in my new family happily engaged in hiking, painting and gluing. (With their dad cussing in the background.) The dad agreed with the dad that kids don’t need to take classes or get involved in activities. He called his twelve year old son a “sissy” for enjoying the craft project.

I discovered this family never attended community festivals, sent the kids to camp or just did family activities at home. Throughout the next four days, the two younger kids kept asking if I had more things to do. We rode bikes, went hiking and played games. Sounds pretty normal doesn’t it? The dad was so upset with all my activities that he constantly swore and fought every activity I suggested. He refused to spend one hour bowling with his daughter because he saw no purpose in doing something fun with her. The kids on the other hand, seemed to thrive. They stopped fighting because they were actively involved in a project. Crafts were a big hit. We designated a shelf to display their creations for their mom. The TV crew bought more supplies because the family didn’t even have colored markers or construction paper. The so-called hyper-active eight-year old spent two hours intensly mixing paint colors together. She’d never used paints and was fascinated that red and white paint created pink. The 12-year old boy loved drama

The show is designed that for the first two days I fit into their lifestyle. On the third day I declare, “Now we’ll do things MY way”. (That’s where the fun starts!) First change was turning off the TV. I bought fresh fruit and started serving breakfast. (Miraculously the headaches disappeared!) We went hiking, read books and rode bikes. Then the crafts appeared. We started with the family making kaleidoscopes. The very macho dad made constant negative comments including four letter words that weren’t “glue” and “lace”. He called his twelve year old son a “sissy” for enjoying the craft project.

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Upon arriving at the new home, I discovered the three children, aged eight, twelve and seventeen, spent their summer days watching R rated TV and videos for 14-16 hours a day. Breakfast consisted of coffee. Around noon, the kids complained about headaches. Dad kept telling me his eight year old daughter had ADHD, was hyper-active and a poor reader. (In front of his daughter.) Lunch consisted of ice cream eaten directly from the carton while watching more TV.

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(Continued on page 15)
Spring Into Training!
Employee Training Tips for Recreation Directors
By Kimberly Grandal, CTRS, ACC

“All the world is a laboratory to the inquiring mind.”
Martin H. Fischer

Providing training is one of the numerous responsibilities of the Recreation Director in a health care facility. Recreation Directors often state that they just do not have the time to train, but the needs and benefits of training are worthy of making an appearance in our monthly planners, and in many cases, a requirement. According to McNamara (2006) there are many benefits to training employees. Such benefits include:

- Increased job satisfaction and morale
- Increased employee motivation
- Increased efficiencies
- Increased capacity to adopt new methods
- Increased innovation in strategies
- Reduced employee turnover
- Enhanced company image

State and Federal regulations, as well as accrediting bodies such as JCAHO, require training and orientation programs in health care facilities. It is important to review these mandatory education requirements to ensure the Recreation Department is in compliance. Also, it is recommended that the Recreation Director review education requirements with the facility educator. The facility may require various additional mandatory education programs because of corporate standards, JCAHO, or even as part of a deficiency plan of correction. Though state regulations vary, some common mandatory in-services include: Tuberculosis/


So, with many benefits and requirements, why don’t managers, such as Recreation Directors, train their employees? As mentioned earlier, many managers state there is not enough time in the day. Training should be scheduled on a regular basis and should not be viewed as additional work. Set up training schedules such as a series of in-services, on a quarterly basis or as needed. Consider hiring a consultant or educator to help out in this area. In addition, Recreation Directors should consider making arrangements for employees to attend the MEPAP 2nd edition, outside workshops, conferences, and seminars.

Additional reasons why managers do not train their employees often include the lack of know-how and confidence to perform this duty. Practice makes perfect. Find a mentor, take a class, attend a seminar, research, etc. Educate yourself on training techniques. There is an abundance of free information and training resources available on the internet. Each time you train someone or a group of people, you gain experience, knowledge and eventually the confidence to continue. Many training programs require a lot of research, preparation, and planning, so give yourself plenty of time to organize your sessions. Other training may be spontaneous and be as a result of immediate intervention from management.

Lastly, many managers do not train their employees because there is a high turnover rate. This is of particular concern to the Recreation Profession, where burnout and turnover is very common. Interestingly enough, a good training program can actually decrease staff turnover because employees receive the necessary information they need to perform their job to the standards set forth by the manager.

There are many ways in which a Recreation Director could take on the role of educator. Remember, training does not have to occur in a formal, traditional atmosphere of sitting in rows looking at a Power Point presentation. When training employees, it is important to offer topics that are relevant to the work provided. In addition to the mandatory education set forth by the facility, consider the following activity-related topics:

- Documentation/IDCP
- Cognitively Impaired
- Working with Difficult Residents
- Precautions
- Adapting Activities (techniques)

About Kimberly
Ms. Kimberly Grandal, Founder and Executive Director of Re-Creative Resources, Inc., is a strong advocate for the field of Therapeutic Recreation, with over fifteen years of experience working with the elderly in numerous administrative and consultant positions. She is an Activity Consultant Certified by the National Certification Council for Activity Professionals (NCCAP), and a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist by the National Council of Therapeutic Recreation Certification.

Ms. Grandal is a recipient of the Kessler Institute of Rehabilitation 1997 Triumph of the Human Spirit Award. She is a speaker for various state and local activity associations, colleges, and community groups, and provides educational workshops and consultation to long-term care facilities in New Jersey.

(Continued on page 12)
Improving Your Communication Skills

Brenda Scott ADC
NAAP Vice President/Standards of Practice Trustee

Communication is a learned behavior. Good communication skills can be the key to a strong team in your activity/recreation department. Employees often show concern about the quality and quantity of communication at work. Ineffective communication often results in poor cooperation and coordination, lower productivity, undercurrents of tension, gossip and rumors, thereby increasing turnover and absenteeism.

Some ideas for effective communication are simple. Understand that communication is a two-way street. It involves giving information and getting feedback from employees. It isn’t finished when information is given. When you are giving instructions, is your message clear? Be specific. Listen to what they are saying, show respect for them while they are talking. Ask questions, show interest, clarify by feedback. Don’t rely on bulletin boards, memos and other written communication. Hold regular department meetings. These should be held at a convenient time when all employees can attend. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak. Practice the “open door” policy and demonstrate it by walking around and observing your staff. Comment positively on their performance.

Learn to delegate. Proper delegation creates a team spirit and helps accomplish more in a shorter period of time. Pick people who are responsible and will follow through. Match the person to the task. Try to delegate assignments that will utilize the person’s talents. Remember that the person performing the task may not do it as well as you. Don’t be tempted to take over the project. The important thing is that it gets done. Build a new employee’s confidence by assigning low-risk projects at first. Let delegates do it their own way, who knows, their way might be better. When communicating a task, use words that are easily understood and follow up with printed instructions. Keep track, check to make sure things are on schedule and you will meet the deadline. Always give a due date and if necessary, relate it to other priorities.

When conflict arises, learn to deal with it in a positive non-threatening way. Don’t take sides! Ask those who disagree to paraphrase the other person’s concern. Just saying it may help them learn if there really is a misunderstanding. Work out a compromise. Engage in give and take and finally agree on a solution. Convince team members they may sometimes have to admit they’re wrong; let them know that develops strength of character. Always be firm, fair and friendly in that order.

About NAAP

Founded by Activity Professionals for Activity Professionals...NAAP is the only national group that represents activity professionals in geriatric settings exclusively. NAAP serves as a catalyst for both professional and personal growth and has come to be recognized by government officials as the voice of the activity profession on national issues concerning long-term care facilities, retirement living, assisted living, adult day services, and senior citizen centers. NAAP is nationwide in scope with a growing membership in Canada and Bermuda. The National Association of Activity Professionals recognizes the following values: The quality of life of the client/resident/participant/patient served is the primary reason for our services. The strength of NAAP lies in the diversity of its members. NAAP recognizes the rich cultural, and educational backgrounds of its members and values the variety of resources represented. The strength of NAAP also lies in the development and promotion of scientific research which further defines and supports the activity profession. NAAP values the development and maintenance of coalitions with organizations whose mission is similar to that of NAAP’s for the purposes of advocacy, research, education, and promotion of activity services and activity professionals. NAAP values members who become involved at the state and national level to promote professional standards as well as encourage employers to recognize them as professionals. NAAP affords Activity Professionals across the country the opportunity to speak with a common voice...NAAP successfully worked with members of Congress to secure a change in the nursing home reform title of the 1987 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA). Through our efforts, it became mandatory that an activity program, directed by a qualified professional, be provided in every nursing home that receives Medicare and/or Medicaid funds. NAAP was the only professional activity association to participate in HCFA’s workgroups that revised OBRA’s interpretive guidelines in effect. NAAP provides assistance at the state level to promote certification of activity professionals, working toward uniform professional standards for activity practice.
National Certification Council of Activity Professionals

The NCCAP
http://www.nccap.org

Mission Statement: The National Certification Council of Activity Professionals is a credentialing body, which sets standards and criteria to ensure that those we serve have optimal life experiences.

National Nursing Home Week
Kathy Hughes, ADC
NCCAP President

“Treasure Our Elders” is the theme for this year’s National Nursing Home Week celebration. As Activity Professionals we hold the key to the treasure chest of memories that our elders have. We need to take credit for our contribution to their lives and to their quality of life. There are so many festivities being planned for this one week that we often forget that we are the people that help make that treasure trove of memories possible.

During your preparations don’t forget to highlight what a key contribution that you make in your facilities to the bounty of delights that you plan on a daily basis. Display your treasure and show the world that you assist the elders in their journey of life. Share the golden moments that you have had throughout the year with so many individuals. It is not just a week of exhausting programming, but an opportunity to show everyone what it is that makes activities a treasure trove of memories that have been shared all year long.

Write human-interest articles for your newsletter spotlighting the special things that your elders have done in their lives. Make a display of all those who have shared special memories of their families and lives with others. Start a new program that will bring families together to share their bounty of memories. Keep sending this information throughout the year to your local newspapers and magazines. Make this celebration last all year.

Congratulations on making this a special week and remember that there are many resources available to assist you in your celebration.

Why Become NCCAP Certified?

1. Federal Law, OBRA, states that an activity department must be directed by a “qualified professional.” One of the ways to become qualified is to become a Certified Activity Professional.
2. NCCAP certification is recognized by HCFA (Health Care Financing Administration) as an organization that certifies activity professionals who work specifically with the elderly.
3. NCCAP certification assures administrators and surveyors that you have met certain professional standards to become certified.
4. Many administrators will only hire activity professionals who are already certified.
5. Some administrators offer a higher salary to a certified professional.
6. Become NCCAP certified so others will know that you are nationally qualified and giving quality activity service to residents/clients.

QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTION:

A. ACADEMIC EDUCATION May derive from a wide variety of curricula: Social Work, Recreation, Education, and Business degrees. These are a few of the educational backgrounds that represent our certified members.
B. ACTIVITY EXPERIENCE Activity work experience with elderly populations, where at least 50% are 55+ years of age. Some volunteer work with elderly clients may be applied.
C. CONTINUING EDUCATION Current education (within past 5 years):

FEES: The cost of being certified initially ranges from $45 to $65 depending upon the level. Renewal is required every two years with 20-40 hours of continuing education and a fee of $40.

For further information visit http://www.nccap.org

Tug of War with the Departments?
By Ginger Johnston, ADC
NCCAP Secretary

Do you ever feel as if you are in a war zone at your facility? Every department has a mission, and they only have eight hours to meet their goals. Have we lost sight of the reason that we get up and go to work every day? I remember when I decided that I wanted to go into the Activity field. Young and full of ideas, hoping to change the opinions (Continued on page 11)
of those in our community about Long Term Care facilities. "You have heard the comments, "How can you work there, it is so sad and depressing?!" Well, not to me, my residents are full of life and have so much to offer. Yes, things have changed since I found my passion twenty years ago. I seem to have less time to spend with the residents/clients and more time spent doing paperwork. Sound familiar?

So, what is it that an Activity Professional does for the resident's? BINGO, Birthday Parties, and Bible Study? Maybe thirty years ago that would have been the answer, but that's certainly not the case today. Today's Activity Professional has expanded the choices available to the resident's. NCCAP, encourages Activity Professionals to continually seek current skills and tools to augment the best program possible for the residents/clients that we serve in the various facilities, according to the areas of interest that the resident's life style has indicated as their meaningful quality of life. We are encouraged to continue to engage the residents in meaningful activity programs of their choosing; remembering to look at the residents past but to also respect any new interest they may like to try. As we all know, it is never too late to take up a new hobby. The days seem to go by a little faster when we are busy. So, our goal is to enhance the lives of the resident's that we serve at our facilities, through the programs that we schedule.

We are all aware of the wars that unfortunately are going on in the world and if you are working in a Long Term Care facility you may feel that some days you yourself are at "war" with other departments. The resident's have 24 hours in their day, just as we do. How much of their time is spent with pursuing leisure activities or spent being involved in a group setting for socialization with others? For most of our residents much of their time is taken with their ADL care, treatments, meals, as well as physical, occupational, and/or speech therapies.

We all know what our Nursing department's goals are, to ensure that the residents receive medical treatment as ordered, get the residents up and dressed, and to make sure that they are clean, dry and comfortable. Our Dietary department's goal is to provide nutritional meals within their dietary restrictions, while providing meals that are pleasurable to the palate, as well as attempts to make special foods for those that have weight loss issues.

The department that seems to be in the biggest "war" with the Activity department is our Therapy department. It seems as if the Activity department and the Therapy department are in a "battle" over the resident's time. We all know that our Administrators are looking to get reimbursement any way that they can. You guessed it, Activities is not a reimbursable treatment in your facility (only through the daily PPD rates), and sometimes it seems as if our efforts go unnoticed. The burnout rate for Activity Professional is very high. The average length of time, it has been estimated for an individual to work as an Activity Professional at any one job is eighteen months. The reason for this I believe is simple. Some people become frustrated, feeling that they are expected to act as "baby sitters" when the nursing staff becomes weary of caring for the more difficult residents, coupled with being told that therapy treatments, receiving the higher rug rates, are what bring in the revenue. So, is one department more important than the other? No! Both the Activities department and the Therapy department should look at the whole picture of each resident. There is a need for our Activity Professionals as much as there is a need for the Therapist for the overall well being of the resident.

Are you aware that you can capture your activity programs on the MDS? Evaluate your existing activities program, take a look at the activities your residents already participate in and see which of those fall under the umbrella of restorative nursing. Maybe your resident dismisses the Activity staff upon invitations to recreational activities. Some of the individuals that we serve seem to have a loss of interest in some activity programs and they may tend to withdraw with non-involvement during an anticipated short stay at your facility. The goal is to regain their physical endurance and return home. I think that I would have the same thought process. We all want to be at home, especially at the holidays. Yet, our residents need respectful encouragement to retain social contacts and recreational involvement. We all know that our residents need opportunities to participate in life long leisure activities, which both relax and hopefully energize the residents. So why not work with our Therapy department to augment the residents rehabilitation goals? Offer programs of interest to the residents between therapy sessions. Educate the residents to the program goals that may be similar to the goal of our therapies. If the resident has a goal to walk 50-100 feet, why not walk down to the activity room? Promote gradual exposure to alternate activities to assist with their comfort level.

The bottom line is, "What does the resident want to do?" Can the residents refuse a therapy treatment? Yes, they can however after (3) three refusals the resident is discharged from therapy treatment. We as Activity professionals can never give up on the resident regardless of their participation or refusal of activities. Discuss with your Therapy department the resident's interest that they have shown with regard to recreational activities. This is when our Therapy department could, and should offer their treatment at a different time. The resident should not have to choose between socialization and receiving their therapy session. Why not both?

Working in the Activity field has its own rewards and its own unique chal-
Adaptive Equipment
Validation
Reality Orientation
Parallel Programming
Milieu Therapy
1x1 Programming
Motivating Residents
Culture Change
Working with Other Departments
Cognitive Activities
Creative Activities
Physical Activities
Resident Committees
Resident Volunteers
Working with Volunteers
Sensory Stimulation
Spirituality vs. Religion
Educational Activities
Cultural Diversity
Special Populations
Regulatory Agencies
Calendar Development
Leadership Guidelines
Diagnostic Information
Role/benefits of Activities
Van and Outings
Policies and Procedures
Time Management
Equipment Use
Computer Skills
Professionalism
Standards of Practice
Activity Organizations
Certification Councils
Sensitivity Training

The successful trainer utilizes various training methods such as audiovisual equipment, lecture, discussion, brainstorming, icebreakers, team exercises, games, and so on. Individuals learn differently so educators must utilize many techniques to engage the staff. For a variety of team building games, icebreakers, trust activities, and more, visit http://www.wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html. The Recreation Director may also provide department-specific games such as Medical Abbreviation Bingo, Documentation Jeopardy, Recreation Jeopardy and Leisure Bingo. These types of activities make learning fun and are available through Re-Creative Resources Inc.

Trainees should also provide support and guidance outside the walls of the classroom setting. Working one on one with an employee in the actual work setting is one of the best ways in which the Recreation staff will learn. Facilitate group and one to one activities with the employee to demonstrate a variety of facilitation techniques. Utilize designated guidelines and evaluation tools such as Activity Leadership Guidelines. Attend several care plan meetings with the employee to show him/her how to interact with the IDCP team and how to report the resident’s activity status and responses to activities. Encourage the Recreation staff to ask questions in order to gain knowledge pertaining to various diagnoses. This will help the Recreation staff to perform more accurate assessments and individualized care plans.

Another great way to offer training to the Recreation staff is through a Skill Share Program. Recreation staff is given the opportunity to learn new techniques and styles of therapeutic recreation services by observing and assisting each other in a variety of activities. Since not everyone is great at everything, it is a wonderful way of training, sharing skills, and idea swapping.

Training should not be confined to the Recreation staff. It is equally important to provide regular training to the facility staff such as nurses, CNAs, food and nutrition employees, social workers, rehabilitation therapists, housekeeping staff, etc. With the implementation of the 2006 CMS revised Activity Guidance to Surveyors, it has become increasingly important for all staff to provide meaningful activity to the residents. The Recreation Director must offer interdisciplinary quality of life training sessions to meet the individual needs and interests of the residents and to ensure federal regulatory compliance. An in-service entitled, “Breaking Down the Silos: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Quality of Life”, is available through Re-Creative Resources Inc.

As the Recreation Director develops various training session such as sensory programs, documentation, activities for the cognitively impaired, and so on, it is recommended that these in-services be kept in a binder for future use. It is also imperative to maintain a record of training provided to each employee. Providing the employee with a certificate of attendance and placing a copy in the employee’s file, is not only a good way to maintain records but is also a motivating factor. A free “Individual Education Record” is available through Re-Creative Resources Inc. and is another way to track training and in-services provided to an employee.

In summary, training employees is an essential responsibility of the Recreation Director. It requires knowledge, confidence, preparation, dedication, commitment, and follow-through. The time spent in training employees is one of great value. Not only will the employees provide higher quality services to the residents, but they will find greater job satisfaction as well. So spring into training and let the learning begin!

References;
Employee Training and Development: Reasons and Benefits.
Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD.
http://www.managementhelp.org/trng_dev/basics/reasons.htm

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Monthly Observances
For activity idea nuggets visit us at:
http://www.theactivitydirectorsoffice.com/ActPlannerIntro.html

Monthly Events
- American Bike Month
- Asian/Pacific
- Better Hearing and Speech Month
- Better Sleep Month
- Correct Posture Month
- Date Your Mate Month
- Family Support Month
- Flower Month
- Foot Health Month
- Freedom Shrine Month
- Fungal Infection Awareness Month
- Good Car Keeping Month
- Mental Health Month
- National Allergy/Asthma Month
- National Arthritis Month
- National Asparagus Month
- National Barbecue Month
- National Egg Month
- National High Blood Pressure Month
- National Hamburger Month
- National High Blood Pressure Month
- National Melanoma and Skin Cancer Prevention Month
- National Osteoporosis Prevention Month
- National Photo Month
- National Physical Fitness & Sports Month
- National Radio Month
- National Salad Month
- National Salsa Month
- National Senior Travel Month
- National Sight Month
- National Strawberry Month
- Older Americans Month
- Personal History Awareness Month
- Project Safe Baby Month
- React Month
- Revise Your Work
- Schedule Month
- Senior Citizens Month
- Stroke Awareness Month
- Touring Theatre Month

Weekly Events

Week 1
- Be Kind To Animals Week
- Carpet Care Improvement Week
- Cartoon Art Appreciation Week
- Childcare Awareness Week
- Heritage Week (Utah)
- National Bathroom Reading Week
- National Bread Pudding Exchange Day
- National Family Week
- National Music Week
- National Photo Week
- National Self-Help Book Week
- Pen Friends Week
- International Public Service Recognition Week

Week 2
- Astronomy Week
- Be Kind to Animals Week
- Conserve Water/Detect-A-Leak Day
- Deaf Awareness Week
- Flexible Work
- Arrangements Week
- Golf Week
- Goodwill Industries Week
- International Online Romance Week
- National Herb Week
- National Hospital Week
- National Nurses Week
- National Pet Week
- National Postcard Week
- National Tourism Week

Week 3
- Alcohol & Other Drug-Related Birth Defects Week
- Art Week
- Emergency Medical Service Week
- Girls Incorporated Week
- Kiwanis Prayer Week
- National Bike Week
- National Educational Bosses Week
- National Historic Preservation Week
- National Nursing Home Week
- National Police Week
- National Salvation Army Week
- Public Relations Week
- Public Transportation Week
- Raisin Week
- World Trade Week

Week 4
- American Beer Week
- International Pickle Week
- Memorial Day
- Observation
- National Design Drafting Week
- National Frozen Yogurt Week
- National New Friends, Old Friends Week
- National Safe Boating Week
- National Surgical Technologists Week
- Poetry Week
- Poppy Week
NAAP MEMBERSHIP...WHY NOT JOIN NAAP TODAY?

There are so many benefits when you belong to NAAP! Each member will receive a newsletter which will give the updated reports on Government Relations, Special Interests, International Updates, Professional Development, Nominations, Standards of Practice, Financial Updates and a Membership Report. Along with this comes an update from our President, Diane Mockbee, and our Executive Director, Charles Taylor.

Members will also receive a discounted rate at the Annual Conference which is held in March/April of each year.

Membership dues are only $70.00 per year. If you are a student in the 90 Hour Basic or Advanced Courses, your dues are only $50.00 for the first year.

Email us for more information at membership@thenaap.com.

Join Now! You can download and mail in this application with your payment or use our new online registration.

Do you “walk the talk?” If you want teamwork, do you work well with others? Do you lead by example? If you recommend continuing education, do you attend workshops and conferences? Managers and supervisors who fail to practice what they preach lack credibility. Are you willing to “pitch in” when needed? Good supervisors have a positive attitude and sees success before it arrives. Think “outside the box” by looking for new and fresh ideas. Be enthusiastic and excite staff. Encourage your staff, be a mentor, help staff to rise to their full potential. Set and maintain high standards for your department. Be trustworthy; don’t be afraid to admit mistakes. Tell your staff everything...this builds loyalty and trust. Be loyal, if staff knows you are loyal to them, they’ll be loyal in return. Remember that fairness establishes credibility.

Communication is a learned behavior. It comes out of attitudes as well as through specific methods and techniques. Improving your communication skills and confidence is possible through a concerted, conscientious effort. Set goals for yourself. Evaluate your skills. If you need help, reach out to your professional community. Choose a role model. NAAP and your state associations are full of successful activity professionals that would love to help you.

It never occurred to me that engaging in wholesome activities could be so controversial. Yet it also showed me that a segment of the population see no need for what activity directors do on a daily basis. Perhaps some of you have encountered resistance from people who don’t want to attend to your programs. So here’s my advice: keep encouraging those reluctant participants to at least give your events a try. You may just win them over. At least you can work with them without television cameras recording your every move!

In 2007 envision the gift that you are, to the individuals that you serve. Sometimes the most difficult times that we face are our very best teachers in life. There is good to be found in all situations. Embrace your Therapist; they have so much to offer to our residents. NN - END

To add further support for the top of the chest, stand a few large gold coins under the lid. With the "hinged" end at the back, place the top of the chest on the bottom and frost. Wrap the fruit leather straps around the chest to look like the material holding it together and press jelly bean "nails" into the frosting alongside the straps. Fill the chest and the surrounding area with edible treasures and jewels.

If you would like your chest to be on the beach, cover the platter it stands on with graham cracker "sand."

In 2007 envision the gift that you are, to the individuals that you serve. Sometimes the most difficult times that we face are our very best teachers in life. There is good to be found in all situations. Embrace your Therapist; they have so much to offer to our residents. NN - END

In 2007 envision the gift that you are, to the individuals that you serve. Sometimes the most difficult times that we face are our very best teachers in life. There is good to be found in all situations. Embrace your Therapist; they have so much to offer to our residents. NN - END
Following is Your Free Facility Newsletter

The following four pages contain a pre-written facility newsletter which you may use as your own. It is intended to help make your departmental responsibilities time saving and cost effective. All you need to do is put your title on the front and your address on the back.

Suggestions for the Effective Use of Your Newsletter

This newsletter concept is the result of several years of preparation and the generous support of the sponsors whose advertisements are contained within its pages. Because all of the material in the newsletter is copyright free, you may feel assured that the publishing and distributing of your free newsletter is legal.

PREPRINT

After you have downloaded your newsletter you have several choices to make before printing it.

- First type or paste the title of your newsletter into the blank area of the front page mast.
- On the mailing page insert your facility’s name and address in the upper left corner where it says “From:”.
- Prepare any printed material you may have for insertion into the newsletter. At a minimum we suggest you prepare your monthly activity calendar on one side of an 8.5”x11” sheet or paper. On the other side you may enter residents facts and figures (new admissions, birthdays, residents who went home, deaths). Also, on the back of the calendar page you may want to advertise upcoming activities and events, a management roster and other items of interest specific to your facility.

PRINTING

- If you decide to print your newsletter on your facility copier you may print the newsletter on 8.5”x11” sheets of paper. However, it is far more professional looking to use 17” x 11” sheets (this size is larger than legal size paper, but can be hand fed into most modern printers).
- If you use a print shop have them print your newsletter on 17”x11” paper. They will have a variety of colors for both your paper and ink. You can expect to pay more for color ink. If you decide to print your newsletter on color paper, avoid using dark colors and extremely bright colors (e.g. fluorescents), they are too difficult to read.
- If you take it to the print shop they will also print and insert your extra material and fold your newsletter for you. One fold makes your newsletter ready for hand outs. Two folds prepares the newsletter for mailing.

MAILING

(An excellent activity for your residents)

- To prepare your newsletter for mailing, it must be folded twice so the mailing face is showing on the outside.
- Each piece you plan to mail must be sealed twice on the loose page edge. Use 1/2” pieces of transparent tape (you can purchase seals at most office supply stores if you wish).
- Write or stick your address labels where it says “To:”.
- Place postage in the upper right hand corner. First class postage will pay for your newsletter and at least two 8.5”x11” insertions.
- Your newsletter is now ready to mail. The Post Office appreciates it if you pre-sort your zip codes and bundle the newsletters with rubber bands.

BULK MAILING

With bulk mail you can save a bundle on postage. However, you must set up an account with the post office, mail at least 200 newsletters at a time, pre-sort your mail, prepare a billing form and deliver the newsletters to the post office. Although it sounds complicated, it becomes routine after you have done it a couple of times.

DISTRIBUTION

For the most effective marketing of your facility, we recommend that you make an extensive mailing list including these listed below. The more newsletters you circulate, the more successful your marketing will be.

- All responsible parties
- Seniors at home
- Banks
- Hospital discharge planners
- Nursing homes
- Adult day care centers
- Churches
- Home health agencies
- Federal, State and local social service agencies
- Social organizations and clubs
- Business organizations
- Corporate headquarters
- Area schools
- Area radio stations
- Area television stations
- Area newspapers
- Area businesses

TIMING

For timely distribution, your newsletter will always be available to you at the first of the preceding month. It should be published by the last week of the month and mailed prior to the first of the month the newsletter is dated.
Honoring Mothers, Grandmothers, and the Women of the Future

(ARA) - Every three minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. In fact, one in eight women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year according to the Komen for the Cure Foundation. Each diagnosis affects everyone in that person's life.

Early detection is of vital importance to survival in the fight against breast cancer. Three simple steps can help with early detection:

* Regular mammograms
* A breast exam by your doctor
* Breast self-exams

Friends and family members provide much needed support for their loved one's fight against breast cancer. Now is the opportunity to recognize survivors for their strength and courage.

Celebrating outstanding moms that have survived breast cancer and continue to fight for a cure for the women of tomorrow, Bright Starts is looking for eight inspirational mothers who have overcome the extraordinary adversity of the fight against breast cancer and used the opportunity to model positive lessons to all, especially their children.

Bright Starts, an infant and toddler toy and baby gear brand, is celebrating the "Power of Pink Moms" by conducting a search for eight outstanding moms that have survived breast cancer and exemplify the courage to fight for a cure for the women of tomorrow.

Nominations for these inspiring women will take place April 1 through June 15, 2007 at www.brightstarts.com/pink. Eight moms will be selected as "Pink Power Moms" and given the opportunity to share their inspirational stories. These moms will be flown to Atlanta in October for a weekend of wellness where they will be recognized at the Susan G. Komen Pink Tie Ball and a donation will be given in their name to the breast cancer charity of their choice.

To support the breast cancer awareness cause, Bright Starts has launched a comprehensive Pink Ribbon Campaign to benefit breast cancer research and provide today's babies a bright start for tomorrow. Beginning with sales from January 1, 2007, a portion of the proceeds from the top selling Bright Starts Pretty In Pink Bouncer and other Pink Collection items launching throughout the year will be donated through the Kids II Foundation to support breast cancer research, with a minimum donation of $100,000.

"Partnering our Bright Starts Pink Collection with a Pink Ribbon Campaign is a natural partnership, with power to make a difference," says Ryan Gunnigle, president and CEO of Kids II, Inc. "We are excited for this opportunity to support a cause so important to our employees, our consumers and especially to today's baby girls."

For additional information, please visit www.brightstarts.com/pink.

Courtesy of ARAcontent
Ease the Stress of Providing Care for an Elderly Parent

(ARA) - There are over 22 million households in the U.S. that care for someone over the age of 50. Caring for an aging loved one can be a real challenge and doesn't always come with a "How-to" guide.

Yet, the majority of long-term care tends to be provided informally and privately. People simply don't know where to turn for advice or help, compounding the difficulty of the situation. Doctor Marion (aka Doctor Marion Somers, Ph. D), author and expert in elder care topics, trends and solutions, has partnered with BoomerTowne.com, an informational Web site for baby boomers. As a member of the BoomerTowne.com Council, Doctor Marion has provided ten simple steps to make caring for an aging loved one more enriching and less stressful for everyone involved.

"It is important for everyone to understand that they are not alone and that many people are dealing with similar situations," says Doctor Marion. "There are simple steps that you can take to make the care-giving experience a pleasant and manageable journey."

Following are some of Doctor Marion's tips for dealing with the challenge of caring for an elderly loved one. Additional information and tips can be found at BoomerTowne.com.

1. Communicate openly: It is difficult to care for someone if you don't know his or her needs. Discuss his or her thoughts and talk about special memories and values.

2. Put safety first: Similar to baby-proofing a house, certain things can be done to make a home safer for elderly people who may not be as capable as they once were. Stick non-slip strips on the bathtub floor and remove throw rugs to prevent falls.

3. Improve the lifestyle: While elderly people may experience changes in their lives, they still need to have one. Help keep your loved ones active to improve their happiness. Encourage them to participate in creative outlets they enjoy, such as woodworking or knitting.

4. Make life easier with adapted equipment: Add amplifiers to phones and doorbells to help those with hearing problems. Replace hard to fasten zippers or shoestrings with Velcro to aid people who have trouble with detailed hand movements.

5. Manage financial issues: One of the more challenging aspects of caring for loved ones is taking over their financial matters. At times, it's best to hire a skilled professional, especially if you are uncomfortable with numbers.

6. Take care of legal issues: This important aspect is often left until the last minute. To make things easier, be sure loved ones have a will with a clearly stated beneficiary of their estate. If this is not finished, the estate will be left to the state causing legal difficulties for surviving family members.

7. Find mobility in disability: Travel may be difficult for the elderly, but it's not impossible. Check ahead to determine if destinations are handicap-accessible to make moving around easier.

8. Find the right housing option: Moving can be a big transition, but many people aren't capable of caring for loved ones in their own homes. Research different facilities to find the right fit for a loved one. Assisted living can be a nice middle step from independent living to a nursing home.

9. Hire help when needed: Asking for help is nothing to be ashamed about. Be sure to check references and outline a contract that specifically details what will be required of each party.

10. Learn to let go: Losing a loved one is a part of life. Preparing yourself and your loved one is the easiest way to deal with this situation. Plan for the future together and discuss what loved ones want at their funerals and what they would like in their obituaries.

Courtesy of ARAcontent
TWENTY NINE LINES TO MAKE YOU SMILE

1. My husband and I divorced over religious differences. He thought he was God and I didn't.
2. I don't suffer from insanity; I enjoy every minute of it.
3. Some people are alive only because it's illegal to kill them.
4. I used to have a handle on life, but it broke.
5. Don't take life too seriously; No one gets out alive.
6. You're just jealous because the voices only talk to me.
7. Beauty is in the eye of the beer holder.
8. Earth is the insane asylum for the universe.
9. I'm not a complete idiot -- Some parts are just missing.
11. NyQuil, the stuffy, sneezy, why-the-heck-is-the-room-spinning medicine.
12. God must love stupid people; He made so many.
13. The gene pool could use a little chlorine.
15. Ever stop to think, and forget to start again?
16. Being "over the hill" is much better than being under it!
17. Wrinkled Was Not One of the Things I Wanted to Be When I Grew up.
18. Procrastinate Now!
19. I Have a Degree in Liberal Arts; Do You Want Fries With That?
20. A hangover is the wrath of grapes.
22. Stupidity is not a handicap.
23. They call it PMS because Mad Cow Disease was already taken.
24. He who dies with the most toys is nonetheless DEAD.
25. A picture is worth a thousand words, but it uses up three thousand times the memory.
26. Ham and eggs...A day's work for a chicken, a lifetime commitment for a pig.
27. The trouble with life is there's no background music.
28. The original point and click interface was a Smith & Wesson.
29. I smile because I don't know what the hell is going on.

Appreciate every single thing you have, especially your friends! Life is too short and friends are too few.

DARNED PECULIAR FACTS

- Many years ago, in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled "Gentlemen Only...Ladies Forbidden"... and thus the word GOLF entered into the English language.
- The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV were Fred and Wilma Flintstone.
- Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than the US Treasury.
- Men can read smaller print than women can; women can hear better.
- Coca-Cola was originally green.
- It is impossible to lick your elbow.
- The State with the highest percentage of people who walk to work: Alaska.
- The percentage of Africa that is wilderness: 28% (now get this...)
- The percentage of North America that is wilderness: 38%.
- The cost of raising a medium-size dog to the age of eleven: $6,400.
- The average number of people airborne over the US any given hour: 61,000.
- Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.
- The first novel ever written on a typewriter: Tom Sawyer.
- The San Francisco Cable cars are the only mobile National Monuments.
- Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history:
  - Spades - King David, Hearts – Charlemagne, Clubs – Alexander the Great, Diamonds - Julius Caesar.
- \[111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321\]
- If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the statue is of a woman.

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(Peculiar Facts - Continued from page 19)

legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air the person died as a result of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

• Only two people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, John Hancock and Charles Thomson. Most of the rest signed on August 2, but the last signature wasn't added until 5 years later.
• Q. Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what? A. Their birthplace
• Q. Most boat owners name their boats. What is the most popular boat name requested? A. Obsession
• Q. If you were to spell out numbers, how far would you have to go until you would find the letter "A"? A. One thousand
• Q. What do bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers all have in common? A. All invented by women.
• Q. What is the only food that doesn't spoil? A. Honey
• Q. Which day are there more collect calls than any other day of the year? A. Father's Day
• In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes.
  When you pulled on the ropes the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Hence the phrase "goodnight, sleep tight."
• It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month which we know today as the honeymoon.
• In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts... So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them "Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down." It's where we get the phrase "mind your P's and Q's"
• Many years ago in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim, or handle, of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. "Wet your whistle" is the phrase inspired by this practice.

AND FINALLY: 75% of people who read this will try to lick their elbow!!!!!!!!!