

Anything but Routine

In 1984, Alan Caruba got fed up with movies that had no plot, celebrities who talked too much without having anything to say, and all the stale routines of life that left us bored out of our minds. Caruba's solution to this boredom epidemic was to create the Boredom Institute, a one-man effort to identify sources of the oppressively mundane and snuff them out. July, Caruba declared, was Anti-Boredom Month.



Sociology professors, public-relations experts, and journalists gave Caruba kudos for his social commentary. What Caruba calls boredom is actually a more sinister social phenomenon. Overexposure to formulaic entertainment, 24-hour news cycles, or uninspiring 9-to-5 jobs have caused people to become numb and apathetic. Caruba has even blamed this extreme boredom and apathy for high school dropout rates, incarceration, and low voter turnout.

While some applauded Caruba's crusade against boredom as effective social satire, others criticized him for attempting to grab his own 15 minutes of fame. But most admit that Caruba hit a sensitive national nerve. Many people do admit that they are bored with their lives. When the human brain falls into predictable, monotonous patterns, it releases lower levels of dopamine, the feel-good chemical. While it is important for the brain to rest and recharge, it is just as important for the brain to feel challenged and engaged. A small amount of boredom is healthy and can lead to those "Eureka!" and "Aha!" moments. But too much boredom might lead to apathy and, at worst, depression.

So how do we fight excessive boredom? Change. Change the regular routine. Find a new hobby or pursuit. Best of all, try something new with a group of friends. Social interaction is often the best way to get out of a funk and find inspiration. Games, sports, gardening, art, volunteering, music, exercise—all of these are more fun and engaging when you do them with a friend. Before you know it, anti-boredom will become routine.

July Birthdays

In astrology, those born from July 1–22 are Crabs of Cancer. Crabs are very intuitive and sensitive to their environment. Their home is their sanctuary, and they are emotionally committed to family and loved ones. Those born from July 23–31 are Leo's Lions. As lions are kings of the animals, Leos are strong and charismatic leaders. Proud and confident, Leos enjoy performing and the attention it brings.

- Carl Lewis (Olympian) – July 1, 1961
- Richard Petty (racing driver) – July 2, 1937
- Bill Withers (singer) – July 4, 1938
- Anjelica Huston (actress) – July 8, 1951
- Mavis Staples (singer) – July 10, 1939
- Richard Simmons (fitness guru) – July 12, 1948
- Clive Cussler (author) – July 15, 1931
- Nelson Mandela (political leader) – July 18, 1918
- Carlos Santana (musician) – July 20, 1947
- Robin Williams (actor) – July 21, 1952
- Sandra Bullock (actress) – July 26, 1964
- Laurence Fishburne (actor) – July 30, 1961

Congratulations to our Activity Director Milly Soisson . She has completed the first phase of her PAC Training and is now on her way to become licensed to teach the Personal Approach to Care Dementia practices to staff and families.

"I started studying with this program created by Teepa Snow in 2014 but the facility I was training in pulled the classes. I never had the time to complete until now. I'm very excited."

Positive Approach to Care' (PAC) offers practical approaches to dementia care (Snow 2016a). It is a philosophy incorporating education and training conceived by Teepa Snow, a US educator and occupational therapist with more than 30 years' experience of working with people who have dementia.



The Willow Tree

Willow Lane 30-32 Heckel Rd. McKees Rocks, Pa 15136



Your Management Team

Executive Director
Dana Wittman

Director of Resident Care
Britney Wilson RN

Asst. Director Resident Care
Danielle Marko LPN

Business Office Manager
Beverly Bozicevich

Staff Recruitment
Klay Scott

Marketing Liaison
Lisa Unis

Maint/Housekeeping
Aaron Jennings

Activities Director
Milly Soisson ADC

Dining Services Manager
Samantha "Sami" Steenbeke

Director of Willow Heights
John Desiderato

Celebrating July

Deli Sandwich Month
World Watercolor Month
Parks & Recreation Month
Independence Day (U.S.)

July 4

Ice Cream Day

July 17

Hemingway Lookalike Days

July 21–23

Day of the Cowboy

July 23

International Day of Friendship

July 30

Bombs Bursting in Air

It is common on July summer nights to hear the far-off crackle and boom of fireworks, but no holiday boasts a more grandiose display of fireworks than America's Independence Day celebrations on July 4.

Setting off fireworks to celebrate Independence Day is a tradition that dates all the way back to America's Declaration of Independence in 1776. On July 1 of that year, the Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia to debate whether the colonies should declare independence from Britain. In the midst of their debate, news suddenly arrived that British ships had entered New York Harbor. The delegates' sense of urgency increased, and on July 2 they voted in favor of independence.

John Adams, representative of Massachusetts, sensed the significance of the decision. He wrote to his wife, Abigail: "The Second Day of July 1776, will be the most memorable Epocha, in the History of America... It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other." Adams may have been off by two days, but his vision of future Independence Day celebrations was spot on. Cities would commemorate the day just as Adams had predicted. In Philadelphia on July 4, 1777, a cannon was fired 13 times to honor the 13 original colonies, and 13 fireworks were shot into the air.

Those early fireworks looked very different from those we enjoy today. Many offered nothing more than a fountain of monochromatic sparks or a loud explosion. It wasn't until the 1830s that Italian inventors added metal salts like strontium and barium to the incendiary mixtures, finally giving fireworks a palette of color. At last, crowds could "Ooh!" and "Ahh!" as the night sky was lit up in glittering shades of red, white, and blue. Other innovations in fireworks are on the way. Quiet fireworks, those without the loud explosions, have been tested in Europe. There are even daytime fireworks with vivid colors that stand out against a sunlit sky.

Helen receives her monthly Wellness check from Debbie of Advanced Home health and Hospice



WILLOWS WELLNESS

One of the most distinctive traits of a good healthcare community is its senior wellness program.

Wellness programs for seniors have increased in popularity over the past decade. **Research shows that those who embrace wellness as part of their everyday lives can see significant benefits in longevity and quality of life.** Senior wellness programs aid in overall well-being and dealing with issues like depression, reduced mobility, lack of independence, safety concerns, and age-specific health.

Quality programs also offer opportunities to be more active and social and promote a healthy lifestyle for a better quality of life.

Why Are Wellness Programs Important?

A wellness program is a good way for a senior care community to support residents' health, happiness, and engagement. There are many tangible benefits that seniors can expect from a wellness program, such as:

- Improved cognition
- **Learning new skills**
- **Improved self-esteem**
- **More confidence**
- **Encourages independence**
- **Promotes emotional health**
- **A better quality of life**

For seniors, wellness is critical. It means preventing chronic health conditions and lessening the effects of other conditions. The healthy habits of a quality wellness program for seniors can lower the risk of diabetes, cancer, obesity, arthritis, Alzheimer's Disease, high blood pressure, and mood disorders like depression and anxiety.

A wellness program's most significant benefit might be its holistic approach to health. Seniors are encouraged to work on many aspects of living better, including adopting a healthy diet, regular exercise, maintaining an active and social life, and coping with stress.

Regular exercise among seniors can lower blood pressure, better control of blood sugar, and reduce cholesterol levels (all factors that increase stroke and heart attack risks). In addition, exercise is known to enhance blood flow to the brain, nurture brain cells, and lower the risk of dementia.

The focus of any good wellness program is a complete sense of well-being. **One of the benefits of participating in a senior wellness program is the variety of activities and resources offered.** Most wellness programs try to include a wide range of activities, exercises, and topics in their programs. People with all varying interests will find something that catches their attention.

It allows you to participate in something you are familiar with or try something completely new. Here's a closer look at what should be included in any good wellness program for seniors:

Mental Stimulation

Some degree of cognitive decline is common with age. Many of the classes and activities offered through these wellness programs force you to engage your brain, helping to improve cognitive function.

For example, educational courses, such as computer seminars, language lessons, or book clubs, put your mind to work and help you exercise different parts of your brain.

Physical Activity

Being physically active is essential for your overall health and vital to healthy aging.

Many of the exercises are designed around the needs of seniors, like improving balance, increasing core strength, and improving range of motion. Exercise isn't the only place where wellness centers excel, though. They also offer nutrition advice and regularly provide education on nutrition for seniors. Wellness programs often have nurses and dietitians develop a menu plan for seniors.

Getting Social

One of the most incredible benefits of a senior wellness program is that it creates an environment for seniors to make new friends and engage in conversation and interact with others. **Our Activities Department does just that with social gatherings, Entertainment, Bingo, Special luncheons and more.**

This helps to reduce isolation and bring seniors together. Many wellness programs offer social activities, such as dance lessons, book clubs, and crafting. These types of social interactions help prevent depression.

Some wellness programs highly encourage seniors to volunteer their time and give back to the community.

Independence

No one wants to feel like they are dependent on someone else or being a burden.

Senior wellness centers allow you to become independent and proactive in your health and well-being. Regular exercise and fitness are encouraged to help seniors maintain and improve mobility, range of motion, balance, stability, and strength and endurance, leading to a more remarkable ability to function daily without help.

Lower Medical Costs

One of the main benefits of joining a senior wellness program is that it has the potential to lower your overall medical and healthcare expenses.

Studies have shown that individuals who participate in wellness programs have lower healthcare costs. As an example, they experience fewer visits to the emergency room, fewer hospital admissions, and fewer falls. This all equates to less money you must spend out-of-pocket.

Safety

A significant focus of senior wellness is home safety.

By joining a wellness program, participants get information on making their homes safer. From tips on reducing clutter to ideas about ensuring every space is more accessible, these programs can help keep seniors safe in their homes for longer.

Some even offer easy installation help for improved lighting and grab bars in the bathroom.

Prevention

Another objective of any senior wellness program is to keep seniors advised of preventive care and health maintenance.

This can include everything from yearly flu shots to taking medications directed by a physician. It can also involve handling adverse weather, like dressing warmly during the cold weather, keeping their room cool during the summer heat, and avoiding potential slips and falls.. Thanks to our DON Britney and her assistant Danielle our residents receive on the spot care and support should issues arrive.

Weight Loss And Nutrition

Physical health and a reduced risk of chronic disease are related to maintaining a healthy weight and eating nutritious foods.

Many wellness programs focus on these components with the biggest loser competitions in the community to encourage participants to lose weight through group support and rewards. Programs typically meet weekly and host a weigh-in. At the end of the program, the person with the highest weight loss percentage wins! Our Dietary manager Sami makes sure all meals are fresh and healthy, but especially tasty!!

Find A Senior Wellness Program Near You

The benefits of a senior wellness program are endless and can do so much for you. They improve your health, but they help you enjoy a better quality of life.

The best way to find a senior wellness center near you is by talking to friends and other people your age. You can also search online programs. Try contacting your health insurance company for assistance.

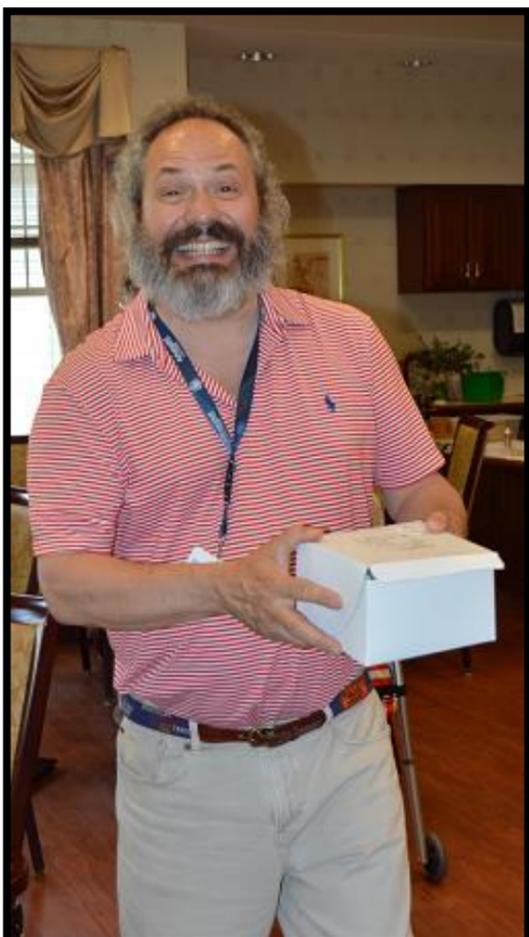
Life at heritage Valley Senior Living is meant to enhance the lives of our seniors by providing a cozy, home-like atmosphere with all the advantages of living in an active community. From concerts, holiday celebrations, and parties to trips to local restaurants and Bingo tournaments, our senior communities' residents are constantly stimulated with activities of their choosing. We encourage participation in as many activities as possible in a relaxed environment.



Shirley B's family donated most of Shirley's house plants when she moved in so we decided to decorate the front porch for the summer! As we all know there are many health and mood benefits of Indoor Plants for Seniors.

Plants recycle carbon dioxide into fresh air and remove common air toxins and indoor pollutants. Houseplants can absorb harmful air toxins associated with tobacco, cleaning products, and furnishings. Good air quality is important to maintain optimum health.

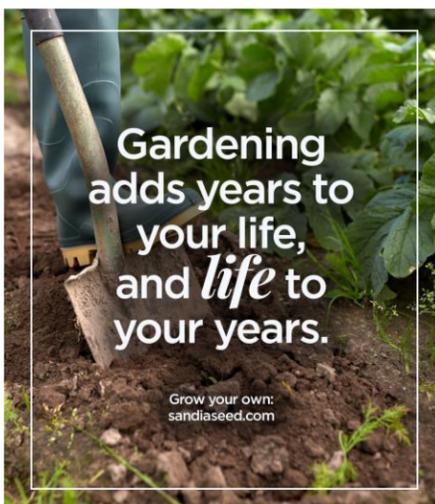
So, Not only do indoor plants enhance the overall appearance of a space, but they **boost moods, increase creativity, reduce stress, and eliminate air pollutants**—making for a healthier, happier you. Indoor plants don't just look good—they can make us feel good, too.



John Conte , our traveling poet from Advanced Health always brings cookies for the ladies on Poetry Day



Look at Irene raking in her "doubloons" after a Poker win!





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The music from the accordion lifted through the air and into the inside of the Building, arousing Dottie's dancing spirit!

As she danced her way down the walkway to the seating area, the ladies clapped and cheered for her and the Activity Director and Dottie danced the polka til the song was over! (almost)



Our new friend Joe Marotta entertained us with a lively hour show filled with visual and musical memories!



Is there anything better than the sun shining on your face and a cool breeze tickling your skin on a warm day? There's no denying the endorphin rush that often comes with time spent in the great outdoors. In fact, a 2019 study found that those who spend 2 to 3 hours a week in nature are about 20% more likely to report high overall satisfaction in their lives when compared to those who spent no time at all outdoors.

As we age, we often spend less and less time outside. Though the mental and physical benefits of time spent outdoors remain just as—if not more—important to our overall health and happiness. For seniors, a decrease in mobility and independence can lead to a sharp decline in outdoor time during a stage in their life when they need it the most. One of the biggest benefits of fresh air for older adults is the exposure to Vitamin D from sunlight. Sunlight plays a huge role in mental health, as it can cause a significant mood boost, lift spirits, and ward off seasonal depression. For physical health, the bone strengthening effects of Vitamin D can help reduce fractures and other injuries from falls. In addition, research has shown a link between low levels of Vitamin D and individuals with Alzheimer's Disease. On the bright side (no pun intended), it only takes 30 minutes a day to benefit from the effects.

For seniors already experiencing memory loss, sunshine and fresh air can improve certain behavioral symptoms of dementia including agitation, aggression, and wandering. Multi-sensory activities like listening to birds chirp, touching plants, and smelling flowers can improve verbal expressions, memory, and attention.

Other health benefits of time spent outside include reduced stress, the opportunity for exercise, and better sleep patterns. Nature has a calming effect on all age groups, from infants to the elderly, but the comforting sound of water flowing or the beauty of a butterfly fluttering by can be especially impactful for elderly adults. Taking a walk outside also provides an excellent opportunity for exercise. Incorporating a daily walk, no matter how short or slow, can have a massive effect on improving a senior's muscular and cardiovascular health.

Outdoor time isn't just helpful during waking hours—it can also improve sleep. Fresh air and sunlight cue your body and brain that it's time to be active. With a sustained period of this active state, your body naturally produces melatonin, which causes deeply restful nighttime sleep. For seniors, many of whom are predisposed to diminished deep sleep and more time in the lighter stages of sleep, this can be a huge benefit.



