



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER:

December 2024

A Note from Haven's Dementia Care Manager

Greetings!

December is full of festivities celebrated around the world. According to an article written for Time Magazine by Sanya Mansoor, there are eleven cultural and religious holidays including Christmas, Bodhi Day, Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe, Hanukkah, Kwanza, and Yule to name a few. To help make this month more memorable and dementia friendly, our East Coast Activities Coordinator, Kyla Hartman, has put together some tips for celebrating holidays and making themed busy boxes. We hope that you find this information useful and that you have a blessed December.

If there is a topic related to dementia that you would like more information on, please email me at anita.howard@havenhospice.com.

Sincerely,

Anita Howard

Dementia Care Program Manager

***“Sometimes you will never
know the value of a moment
until it becomes a memory.”***

– Dr. Seuss



Learn more at
HavenHospice.com/Dementia

Practical Tips for a Dementia-Friendly Holiday Celebration by Kyla Hartman

Preparing the Environment

- **Create a Safe Space:** Ensure the environment is safe and comfortable. Remove hazards and create quiet areas where the person with dementia can retreat if they feel overwhelmed. The Alzheimer's Foundation of America recommends avoiding fragile decorations that can shatter and create sharp fragments, and decorations that could be mistaken for edible treats. Reduce clutter to avoid tripping hazards, securely hook Christmas trees to the wall, and use electric candles for menorahs or kinaras to reduce fire hazards.
- **Familiar Decorations:** Use familiar and non-overly stimulating decorations. Avoid blinking lights or loud musical ornaments that could cause confusion or agitation.
- **Visual Cues:** Use photographs and familiar items to help the person with dementia navigate the holiday period. These can also spark conversations and reminiscence.
- **Daily Routine:** Stick to your loved one's normal routine as much as possible, even during family gatherings and holiday activities. Maintain regular meal and nap times to ensure comfort and stability.

Managing Activities and Gatherings

- **Plan Small, Intimate Gatherings:** Large groups can be overwhelming. Smaller gatherings with close family and friends in a familiar environment are more manageable and less disorienting. Schedule these gatherings at the dementia patient's best time of day.
- **Incorporate Familiar Rituals:** Maintain long-standing holiday traditions and familiar favorites to provide a sense of continuity and comfort.
- **Engage in Simple Activities:** Involve them in simple holiday preparations within their abilities, such as wrapping gifts, decorating cookies, or setting the table.

- **Schedule Rest Periods:** Plan time for rest. The excitement and activity of the holidays can be exhausting, particularly for someone with dementia.

Communication and Interaction

- **Use Simple, Clear Communication:** Speak slowly, clearly, and use familiar phrases. Avoid complex conversations or questions that could lead to frustration.
- **Be Inclusive but Respect Limits:** Include the person with dementia in activities and conversations as much as possible but be aware of their limits and signs of fatigue or confusion.
- **Foster Connections:** Encourage guests to interact one-on-one with the person with dementia. Quality time with an individual can be less overwhelming than group interactions.

Dealing with Changes and Challenges

- **Realistic Expectations:** Arrange for a group discussion via telephone, video call, messaging app, or email to discuss holiday celebrations in advance. Discuss any changes in your loved one's dementia status and what you can and cannot do to keep family traditions.
- **Stay Flexible:** Be prepared to modify plans if the person with dementia is having a difficult day. Flexibility is key to managing unexpected situations.
- **Handle Confusion with Care:** If the person with dementia becomes confused, gently guide the conversation or activity back to familiar ground or something comforting.
- **Seek Support:** Don't hesitate to ask for help from other family members or professional caregivers. Caregiving during the holidays can be especially challenging.

Emotional Well-Being

- **Maintain a Positive Atmosphere:** Focus on creating a joyful and loving environment, even if things don't go as planned.
- **Self-Care for Caregivers:** Remember to take breaks and care for your own well-being. Managing your stress is essential to being an effective caregiver.

- **Celebrate Small Moments:** Focus on positive moments, no matter how small, and celebrate them.

These practical tips can help create a dementia-friendly holiday celebration, ensuring a joyful and comfortable experience for everyone involved.

How to Create a Themed Busy Box/Memory Box by Kyla Hartman

Creating a memory box is a wonderful way to help your loved one with dementia revisit cherished memories. Here's a step-by-step guide to making a themed memory box:

Step 1: Choose a Suitable Container

- **Select a Box:** Find a sturdy container such as a basket, plastic bin, drawer, or shoebox. It should be robust, easy to store, and ideally around 12 inches by 9 inches.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure the box is easy to access, lift, and open. Compartments should suit the senior's dexterity.
- **Decoration:** Consider decorating the box with the help of grandchildren or other family members to make it more personal and festive.



Step 2: Gather Items to Include

- **Personal Items:** Include items that hold personal significance, such as a baby's toy or a favorite book.
- **Sensory Items:** Incorporate items with different textures, scents, and sounds to stimulate memories. Examples include a piece of satin, a lavender sachet, or a metal pocket tape measure.
- **Memorabilia:** Add diaries, letters, newspaper articles, and other keepsakes that evoke positive memories.

Step 3: Considerations for Choosing Keepsakes

- **Safety:** Avoid items that are dangerous, precious, heavy, or sharp.
- **Uniqueness:** Exclude rare or irreplaceable items.
- **Dexterity:** Ensure items are easy to handle and not too heavy.
- **Significance:** Focus on items linked to positive memories.
- **Labeling:** Label items with names and descriptions to help the senior recognize and understand their significance.

Step 4: Suggested Keepsake Ideas

- **Photos:** Copies of family photos, labeled with names and dates.
- **Books:** Favorite books or sheet music.
- **Sports Items:** Baseball glove, hockey puck, or sports cards.
- **Fabrics:** Different types of comforting fabrics.
- **Nature Items:** Dried flowers, pinecones, or seashells.
- **Fragrances:** Favorite perfume, lotion, or a bar of soap.
- **Artwork:** Children or grandchildren's artwork.
- **Gardening Tools:** Gardening gloves or a safe tool.
- **Heirlooms:** Non-irreplaceable family heirlooms.
- **Souvenirs:** Vacation souvenirs or a favorite recipe.
- **Music:** Favorite CDs or an old record.
- **Miscellaneous:** Keychains, postcards, baby toys, newspaper clippings, jewelry, old coins, wedding trinkets, stuffed animals, hairbrush, favorite clothing, Christmas ornaments, or craft items.

Step 5: Creating and Using the Memory Box

- **Multiple Themes:** Consider creating multiple memory boxes for different themes, such as family memories or hobbies.
- **Engagement:** Encourage your loved one to handle each item and share the memories associated with them.
- **Conversation:** Use the items to inspire conversations and create new memories together.

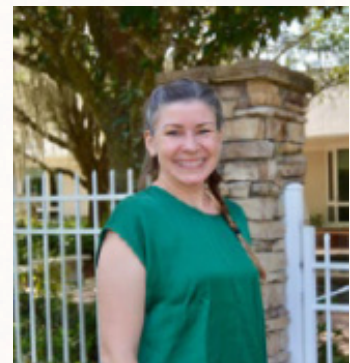
Additional Activities

- **Share Some Love:** Bring crafts or blankets to a nursing home or shelter, or volunteer at a homeless or pet shelter.
- **Go Shopping:** Visit decorated malls or town centers during off hours to avoid overstimulation.
- **Make a Raffle Basket:** Create a raffle basket to auction off at a local charity.
- **Stay Connected:** Use technology to stay in touch with friends and family through video chats.
- **Set a Special Table:** Create a festive table setting for holiday dinners.
- **Board Games:** Play simple board games that your loved one can enjoy.
- **Dress Up:** Dress up in themed outfits for holiday dinners.

Creating a memory box is a thoughtful and engaging way to help your loved one with dementia enjoy the holiday season. It provides a tangible connection to their past and an opportunity to create new, joyful memories together.

Meet Kyla Hartman, Dementia Activities Coordinator, East Coast

Many of you on the East Coast have had the opportunity to meet Kyla Hartman, Activities Coordinator, but we want everyone in Haven's service area to benefit from her knowledge and compassionate care. Kyla recently became certified as an Independent Trainer through Positive Approach to Care and plans to share more of her expertise in upcoming newsletters.





Dementia Caregiver Support Groups: December 2024

If you are caring for a loved one with a dementia-related diagnosis and need some additional education and support, please join us. *Refreshments will be provided.*

Tuesday, December 3, 2024 | 3 - 4 p.m.

Haven Hospice Tri-Counties Care Center
311 N.E. 9th St. Chiefland, FL 32626

Thursday, December 5, 2024 | 4 - 5 p.m.

Online: Email anita.howard@havenhospice.com for a link to join on Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, December 10, 2024 | 3 - 4 p.m.

Haven Hospice, E.T. York Hospice Care Center
4200 NW 90th Blvd, Gainesville, FL 32606 | Conference Room 6

Wednesday, December 11, 2024 | 3 - 4 p.m.

Senior Recreation Center, Eldercare of Alachua County
5701 NW 34th Blvd, Gainesville FL, 32653

Thursday, December 12, 2024 | 4 - 5 p.m.

Starling at Nocatee Assisted Living and Memory Care
999 Crosswater Pkwy, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32081

Tuesday, December 17, 2024 | 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

The Windsor at Ortega
5939 Roosevelt Blvd Jacksonville, FL 32244

Thursday, December 19, 2024 | 3 - 4 p.m.

Vintage Care of Palatka
203 S Moody Rd, Palatka, FL 32177

Tuesday, December 24, 2024 | 4 - 5 p.m.

Tri-County Nursing Home
7280 FL-26, Trenton, FL 32693

Thursday, December 26, 2024 | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Allegro Senior Living at Fleming Island
3651 US Hwy 17, Fleming Island, FL 32003

RSVP to Anita Howard at 352.215.7465 or anita.howard@havenhospice.com

Learn more about our program at HavenHospice.com/Dementia

800.HOSPICE | HavenHospice.com

Resources for Support

Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Education and Referral Center

Email: adear@nia.nih.gov

Phone: 1-800-438-4380

www.alzheimers.gov

The ADEAR Center can provide information on diagnosis, treatment, patient care, caregiver needs, long-term care, research and clinical trials. Staff can refer you to local and national resources.

Alzheimer's Association

Phone: 1-800-272-3900

www.alz.org

Offers information, a help line and support services for those living with dementia and their caregivers.

Eldercare Locator

Phone: 1-800-677-1116

<https://eldercare.acl.gov>

Provides information about local resources such as home care, Meals on Wheels, adult day care and nursing facilities.

National Adult Day Services Association

www.nadsa.org/consumers/choosing-a-center

Phone: 1-877-745-1440

Provides a safe environment, activities and staff that pay attention to the needs of the person while under their supervision. Adult Day Care Services typically charge an hourly rate.

National Institute on Aging

Email: niaic@nia.nih.gov

Phone: 1-800-222-2225

Offers free publications about aging that can be viewed, printed or ordered online.

References

11 Holidays the World Celebrates in December | TIME. <https://time.com/6242283/december-global-holidays-christmas-hanukkah-yule/>. Accessed November 26, 2024.

<https://seniorsafetyadvice.com/planning-for-the-holidays-with-dementia/#:~:text=Engage%20in%20Simple%20Activities%3A%20Involve%20them%20in%20simple,table.%20Schedule%20Rest%20Periods%3A%20Plan%20time%20for%20rest.> Accessed November 26, 2024.

Alzheimer's Foundation of America | Making the Holiday Season Dementia-Friendly: The DOs and DON'T's. Accessed November 26, 2024.

Christmas Activities For Seniors With Dementia (Joyful Holiday Ideas). Accessed November 26, 2024.

74+ Christmas Activities for Loved Ones with Dementia - This Insidious Dementia. Accessed November 26, 2024.

www.alzheimers.net/2014-02-06/memory-boxes-for-patients. Accessed November 26, 2024.

http://mpqhf.com/QIO/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/508_Creating-a-Memory-Box.pdf. Accessed November 26, 2024.