

AKPH celebrates National Activity Professionals' Week

National Activity Professionals Week is an annual event sponsored by the National Association of Activity Professionals as a time to honor and recognize the dedicated individuals who help bring life, laughter, joy and stimulation to their facilities. This year's Activity Professionals week took place January 20 – 26, 2019. The Alaska Pioneer Homes utilized this opportunity to shine the spotlight on our own wonderful activities staff and all of the hard work and love they pour into the Homes.

The Alaska Pioneer Homes takes great pride in the amazing work that our activity staff provides to our beloved residents, and more often than not, the communities at large. An integral part of the Pioneer Homes philosophy is the belief that activities are central to creating the best quality of life possible for any person, from the mental and physical stimulation they provide to the relationships that they foster, which are crucial to emotional health. Activities are also an integral part of how the Alaska Pioneer Homes carries out its mission of "Providing elder Alaskans a home and community, celebrating life through its final breath" – as nothing fosters a sense of community quite like activities done together.

Each of the six Pioneer Homes has its own activity staff dedicated to bringing meaningful activities to our residents tailored to meet the needs and capabilities of each participant. The activities staff also works closely with volunteers, businesses, organizations and local communities to bring pieces of the world at large into the Homes for those residents who cannot as easily venture out into world on their own anymore. Below is a tiny sampling of events organized by our amazing activity staff – if these look like something you'd like to be a part of then we encourage you to stop your local Pioneer Home today for more information as we are always thankful for volunteers!

This month the Sitka Pioneer Home is throwing a beautiful "Sweetheart Special Dinner" in celebration of Valentine's Day that will feature live music, gorgeous decorations and a scrumptious rib eye and shrimp dinner. Also on the docket are the hilarious "Minute to Win It" games. These fun events let elders challenge themselves and each other to see who can last a minute without breaking composure in the "Don't Crack Up" games, or who can "Sort Your Cents" the fastest or become the "Catch of the Day!". Partnering in children events is something the Alaska Pioneer Homes is particularly fond of and at the Sitka Pioneer Home the newest collaboration has been with the local 4H club. Elders and 4H kids joined forces in October for the "Wild Edibles" lesson where they harvested rose hips from the Home's rose hedges and learned various ways to cook them – including in sourdough pancakes, a sweet rose hip sauce and a delicious rose hip tea. Other 4H and Sitka Pioneer Home events have included a Wild Foods Potluck, and various nature themed baking sessions (such as pumpkin pie making below).

Sitka Pioneer Home elders Jennie work with 4H kids to some delicious pumpkin pies.



The Ketchikan Pioneer Home has enjoyed a multitude of musicians in their staff, elder and volunteer ranks over the last year. As such, their activity staff organized weekly ukulele practice sessions in the Sun Room at the Home and invited interested community members to come join. The sessions proved so popular and enjoyable that the Home worked with the city to secure the musicians a spot in the Ketchikan summer dock concert series where they got to jam together to an audience on Ketchikan’s downtown dock.

Members of the Ketchikan Pioneer Home and community music group rock out during their set of the summer dock concert series and enjoy weekly ukulele practice in the Home’s sun room.



At the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home in Palmer music, puppies and happy hours are some of the Elders favorite things (because who really needs raindrops on roses or whiskers on kittens anyway?). A passionate volunteer has been regularly bringing in her dog’s latest litter of 12 golden retriever puppies much to the delight of the elders – and nothing seems to soften our veterans’ hearts quite like puppy snuggles....For the benefit of the particularly large male resident population at the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home, the activities staff has worked hard to arrange many activities that can be easily be enjoyed by all. One of the hugely popular events has been the Home’s monthly “Happy Hours” – where the Home converts into a local “pub” where all residents can come out to relax and listen to live music. A volunteer professional bartender stops by to make a wide selection of fancy non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks for the residents much to their delight and enjoyment (limit of 2 alcoholic drinks for residents medically okay for alcoholic consumption).

Wiggly golden retriever puppies provide snuggles to Alaska Veteran and Pioneers Home residents.



A popular hit at the Fairbanks Pioneer Home is Ben “The Balloon Guy” whenever he stops by to help add new hats, swords and flowers to the elders’ attire. Paint nights, baby goats and Clydesdale horses also make regular visits to the Home and are much loved by all. At the Anchorage Pioneer Home, annual

trips to the state fair are always a big hit along with joint fishing and lake visits with the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home elders to places like Beech Lake and Hatcher's Pass. The most talked about event at the Juneau Pioneer Home is the annual "Senior Ball" which features live music, formal attire, dances and the best decorations you could find anywhere.



Above Left: FPH residents Pete Bostic and Dick Lord enjoy time with a visiting Clydesdale horse
Above Right: FPH resident Doris Poland shows off her balloon flower from Ben, "The Balloon Guy"
Left: FPH resident Donna Messina works on a beautiful water color painting during a Paint Nite class at FPH



Left: An APH resident enjoying much deserved nap in the sunshine during a Hatcher's Pass outing.
Middle: APH & AVPH residents enjoy a little summer fishing.
Right: Resident Lenore Hosinger and her son Shawn enjoy JPH's Senior Prom

These are just a small sampling of the many wonderful activities that the Alaska Pioneer Homes activity staffs work hard to put on weekly, monthly and yearly. If you, your family or your organization are interested in ways to serve and have fun with some of our state's pioneers and veterans, stop by any of the Alaska Pioneer Homes in Anchorage, Palmer, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan or Sitka today!