

April 2024

The Rewards of Gratitude

In the golden years of life, we often reflect on things we have experienced and achieved. Now, more than ever, we understand the importance of physical and spiritual well-being and ways to best care for ourselves. Through challenges and joys, one simple practice can make a surprising difference: gratitude. Did you know gratitude is key to unlocking a treasure trove of physical benefits?

Countless studies have shown that practicing gratitude can lead to improved physical health, especially as we age. From reduced symptoms of illness to enhanced immune function, the effects of gratitude are truly remarkable. Physiologically, the act of giving thanks has been shown to lower blood pressure, reduce inflammation, and promote better sleep—all essential components of a strong and healthy body.¹

While King David may not have understood the physical benefits of gratefulness, he certainly encouraged this practice. For example, Psalm 107:1 tells us to "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." Surely David understood that gratitude fosters the kind of resilience that helps us navigate life's ups and downs – and do so with grace and strength.

This verse also reminds us of God's enduring goodness, even amidst challenges or difficult circumstances. When we cultivate a heart of gratitude, despite what is facing us, we not only honor God but also nurture our own well-being.

Let us embrace the practice of wholeheartedly giving thanks for the blessings that surround us. Whether it's through appreciating the freshness of springtime, greeting a neighbor or thanking someone for their kindness, we can cultivate a spirit of gratitude each day.

In this season of life, we are thankful that you are a vital part of this community, as we journey together. May you, too, find a blessing today and reap the rewards of gratitude.

1. Source: Mayo Clinic, 2022



The Ridge Reporter

April's National Food Days: a culinary adventure

As we said good-bye to the chilly winter weather, it was with great joy that we welcomed the arrival of spring! With that came warmer days, blossoming flowers and the gentle embrace of sunshine.

With the promise of spring in the air, it's time to turn our attention to garden season. Let's dust off our gardening tools and start planning the beautiful display of flowers and plants that will soon surround us. There's something truly special about watching our gardens come to life, and I encourage all of you to take advantage of this opportunity to connect with nature.

I hope you're all feeling as excited as I am about spring. Let's make the most of this season by welcoming the beauty that surrounds us and cherishing the simple joys that come with it.

As spring unfolds, I can't help but reflect on the fun surprises that the month of April brings. Did you know that each day of the month celebrates a different type of food? From National Grilled Cheese Day to National Pretzel Day, there's no shortage of culinary delights to indulge. To share the excitement, I'll be posting these fun food days on the bulletin board by the kitchen.

Let's come together and celebrate these delicious occasions with good food and even better company.

Here are a few national food days celebrated in April:

National Sourdough Bread Day - April 1

National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day - April 2

National Coffee Cake Day - April 7

National Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day - April 12

National Banana Day - April 20

National Pretzel Day - April 26

September Sackett

Nutrition & Culinary Director



Ingredients:

- 1 and 3/4 C. all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Directions:

- In a bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda.
- In a large bowl, beat the eggs and sugar together until light and fluffy.
- Add the vegetable oil and vanilla extract to the egg mixture and beat until combined.
- Gradually mix in the dry ingredients and the buttermilk, alternating between the two and mixing until just combined.
- Fold in the chocolate chips.
- Using a spoon or cookie scoop, divide the batter evenly among the muffin cups, filling each about 2/3 full.
- Bake for 18-20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean.

April showers bring May flowers

As the familiar saying goes, “April showers bring May flowers.” This is a reminder that even unpleasant situations can bring positive outcomes.

The Beauty in Every Raindrop

In life, just like nature, not every day is filled with sunshine. We've all faced our own share of storms, but it's during these times that we've seen the true beauty of Highland Ridge shine through. Your kindness and compassion are the raindrops that make Highland Ridge flourish, and each challenge is an opportunity for growth.

So the saying “April showers bring May flowers” does have a deeper meaning. It is a reminder that difficult times can lead to growth and success. Just as the rain showers of April prepare the ground for the blooming of flowers in May, challenges can nourish our minds and spirits and prepare us for growth and success in the future.

In April, we're also reminded of the beauty and fragility of our planet as we celebrate Earth Day on April 22. This day serves as a reminder of our responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.

Here are some ways you can celebrate and take action this Earth Day:

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Practice the three Rs in your daily life. Reduce waste by avoiding single-use plastics, reuse items when possible, and recycle materials like paper, glass, and plastic.

2. Conserve Energy: Save energy in your apartment by turning off lights and appliances when not in use.

3. Conserve Water: Here a few simple tips on how to conserve water: Only run the dishwasher or washing machine when you have a full load, taking shorter showers and turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth when you are not actively using the water.

Another day recognized in April is April Fools' Day. It's true that "Laughter is the best medicine," and what better day to embrace that sentiment than on April Fools' Day? This tradition, celebrated on April 1, is an occasion that encourages us to let loose and have some fun with harmless pranks and jokes. So, on the first day of April, let's all share a moment of laughter and joy with those around us. After all, a little bit of humor can go a long way to brighten someone's day.

As we face the joys and challenges of April, let's embrace all that this month brings. Whether it's taking action to protect our planet, sharing moments of laughter with loved ones, or enjoying the time outside during the beautiful weather. May we blossom together here at Highland Ridge!

Ashley Kasal,
Administrative Receptionist



The Ridge Reporter

Fitness class spotlights

Thank you to everyone who completed the fitness participant survey back in February. After reviewing the feedback from those surveys, we thought we would take a moment to highlight some of the fitness classes offered in the Kinze Wellness Center. Many people who completed the survey noted that they were looking for fitness classes that offered balance and endurance. Below we will highlight the Tai Chi classes for those looking to improve balance; and the circuit training class for those looking to improve their endurance.

Tai Chi

A Tai Chi class offers a meditative and graceful practice rooted in ancient Chinese martial arts. Participants engage in slow flowing movements, emphasizing balance, flexibility, and relaxation. This class combines mindfulness with gentle, deliberate motions, promoting physical and mental well-being. Suitable for all fitness levels, Tai Chi enhances coordination, reduces stress, and cultivates a sense of inner calm. It's an ideal practice for those seeking a low-impact exercise that integrates mind-body connection, fostering improved posture, flexibility, and tranquil state of mind.

Circuit class

A circuit training class is a dynamic and time-efficient workout that combines various exercises targeting different muscle groups. Participants move through a series of stations, each focusing on a specific exercise or activity, with minimal

rest in between. This class incorporates elements of strength training, cardiovascular exercises, and often includes bodyweight movements.

Suitable for all fitness levels, circuit training provides a full-body workout while promoting endurance, strength, and overall fitness. It is a versatile and engaging class that can be adapted to different fitness goals, making it an effective option for those looking to maximize their workout in a structured and energetic environment.

Utilize on-site equipment

Utilizing our fitness center, swimming pool, and other amenities are a great way to improve strength and endurance. Take advantage of these facilities to incorporate exercise into your daily routine.

If you are curious about other classes, please stop by the wellness center and pick up a sheet with the class descriptions. As always, please feel free to contact me at 319-668-3841 with any questions regarding the classes offered here at Highland Ridge.

I look forward to assisting you in achieving your fitness goals.

Shelia Schlabach
Fitness Director



Fun at Highland Ridge....



Highland Ridge has the following openings:

Vista (assisted living)

One bedroom "Jasmine" 595 sq. ft.

Terrace (Independent Living)

One bedroom "Bluebell" 1080 sq. ft.

To view available floor plans, please visit www.highlandridge.org
or call Kimberly Maxwell at 319-668-3840

Highland Ridge
100 Village View Circle
Williamsburg IA 52361

319-668-3800 | www.highlandridge.org

Postmaster: address correction requested

Presbyterian Homes & Services is a nonprofit organization and an equal opportunity employer serving older adults through community services, housing, and health care.

Thank you, volunteers for making a difference every day

St. Francis of Assisi famously said, “Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing you have received – only what you have given.” At Presbyterian Homes & Services (PHS), our vital corps of volunteers understands this better than most.

Although National Volunteer week is celebrated in the third week of April, PHS community recognition events are held from early April through May. Each of our campuses hosts tea, luncheon or other events to give a gracious thanks to those who serve year-round.

Volunteerism is one of the hallmarks of PHS. From the very beginning, local church members, children, service clubs, neighbors, resident family

members and staff have volunteered in every one of our communities. We are blessed to have a wide diversity of volunteers, some who are here once a year, and some who are with us every day, including our own residents.

These volunteers complete a variety of tasks — reading to residents, assisting with activities, tending gardens, delivering mail, running errands and helping with office projects. Our volunteers lighten the work of the staff and brighten the days of our residents.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact volunteering@preshomes.org.

Please take time to thank a volunteer today!