

Activity Ideas from EAC and Their Senior Centers

- ◆ Have **Theme ideas for each month** (Easter Egg Hunt, Valentine Cards for Homebound, Holiday Decorating Days, Safety Week, National Dance Day, Western Day, etc.)
- ◆ **Field Trip Ideas**
 - Have a library day once a week or once every 2 weeks because books can be due after 2 weeks (Jacksonville is going to the Library periodically)
 - Farmers Market (Oak Grove, Rockford, etc.)
 - Christmas Shopping (Wedowee)
 - Out-to-eat for supper (Gadsden)
 - Cookout in the park (Oxford)
 - Visit Blue Bell Ice Cream (Rockford)
 - Visit other Senior Centers (Wall Street)
 - Visit the State Capital and your State Legislature
- ◆ **Craft ideas**
 - Basket weaving (Ohatchee)
 - Sewing aprons (West Coosa)
 - Making jewelry
 - Making ornaments (Ohatchee)
 - Making wreaths (Ohatchee, Anniston)
 - Knitting
 - Quilting (Fruithurst, Munford, West Coosa, Talladega Springs)
- ◆ **Activity Ideas:** games, Wii, puzzles, Clothing swap/ or Recycle day (all leftovers go to goodwill or Homebound Clients that might want them), painting classes (Childersburg, Talladega Springs), Movie and Popcorn day (Rockford & Ohatchee), Rook Tournament (Fruithurst) or Dominoes Tournament, Toss the little ball into different size buckets, etc.
 - **Bingo** – New ways to play
 - Play until everyone wins. Then play until the first person fills up their card.
 - Centers use different things to mark their cards: pennies, small rocks, etc.
 - **West Alabama Senior Center:** When someone wins, they play music for everyone to enjoy while they come up to collect their prize. Many like to dance their way to the front.
 - **Munford:** Comfort Care does “Food Bingo” where they select pictures of food from their box to match the food on people’s Bingo cards. There are no numbers or letters. Food pictures only.
 - **Glencoe:** They have an admission fee of 1 canned good for a local church’s food bank. For Bingo prizes, each Client brings an inexpensive gift. It could be scented soap, a pretty box of Kleenexes, toothpaste, etc. The Manager hides each prize in its own bag so that participants don’t know what the prizes are. If it is a gender specific gift, the Manager labels the bag as needed. For example, if the gift is lipstick, the Manager marks it as “Female”.



- **Penny Auction:**
 - **Ashland** – “We buy prizes such as shampoo, body wash, cookies, etc. We give each person playing 10 to 15 pennies. They bid against each other on whatever prize we hold up. We don’t let them see every prize at the same time so they won’t know if there is something better to bid on.”
 - **Glencoe** – A Healthcare Provider brings the prizes. 10 small, smooth, glossy rocks are given to each Participant to bid with. They use rocks because they are easier to pick up than pennies.
 - **Jacksonville** – They use pennies to bid with but they show some prizes and hide the rest in bags so participants do not know what they are bidding on.
 - **Munford** – Hospice Complete comes and gives each participant a numbered fan to raise for the silent bid. They give each person 10 pennies for the bids. They show what they are auctioning.
- **Photography:**
 - Invite someone to come **teach your clients** how to...
 - Use their cameras and the cameras on their phones.
 - Edit their pictures on a computer.
 - Download their pictures on a computer and send them to Wal-Mart or Walgreens to be printed.
 - Have 1 **picture bulletin board** to show pictures that clients have taken. You could give them a topic for a short period of time and post their pictures on it. Topics could be rotated and could include “Things in Bloom”, “Snow Pictures”, “Lake/River/Ocean Pictures”, “Animals”, “People”, “Old Buildings/Houses”, “Antiques”, “Farm Equipment”, “Gardens”, “Fall Foliage”, “Christmas Decorations”, etc.
- **Recreation Center (working with them):**
 - **Valley** - All masters games participants can use the community center FREE year round on Monday/Wednesday morning from 9-10 am. This is their opportunity to practice for the games. We take all of our senior center clients that ride our bus to the community center . Other center clients that drive meet us at the community center on these 2 days. It is a great incentive for seniors to join our senior center program.
 - **Roanoke and Jacksonville** are also using their Recreation Centers.
- **Recycled Card Makers:** (Jacksonville) We have Recycled Card Makers that make the cards for our Card Ministry Team. They cut-out the pictures and messages from used cards and glue them to Cardstock paper to make new cards. They stamp “Jacksonville Senior Center” on the back. The fact that they are handmade makes them more special to the people that receive them. It is a great Community Service, a creative outlet, and a fun activity. They enjoy making others happy with what they have made. We have boxes for each occasion to store our recycled cards: Birthday, Sympathy, Christmas, Anniversary, etc.

○ **Show and Tell:**

- Choose a month and assign each Client a Day that month to share pictures of their family (if you limit to showing pictures of Grandchildren, some clients may not have grandchildren). Assign the days and tell them “that is your day if you want to show pictures”, but you do not have to share pictures if you don’t want to.
- **Rockford:** “We have started a Show and Tell day for every month. February, we had a lady bring her grandchild in to see us. She babysits her grandchild. She doesn't get to come like she wants. So I thought everyone would want to see the baby. She brought the baby and we called it Show and Tell. Some bring a DVD about History to show. Others bring in items they made. Also, we had a few ladies show us how to crochet. She brought one of her blankets and let us see it. It is like *crafts* and *show and tell* at the same time.”
- **Valley:** They set up a table for Seniors if they choose to bring something to display. There is no set day or month. They just set it up when a Senior brings something.



- **Silent Auction:** Info below is from West Coosa and other agencies. West Coosa does this for fundraising.
- Items for Auction are **displayed on tables** around the room.
 - A **Bid paper** is put in front of each item with the name of the item at the top.
 - **Bidding:** Participants walk around the room and bid on the items they want to buy by writing their name on the list and the price they will pay for it. If someone’s name is already on the list, a participant would have to put a higher bid on the paper if they want to win it.
 - **Times:** You should have a set amount of time that bids can be made (like from 9 am to 11 am). Then you should have a set time for winners to be announced. You can make the announcements a lot of fun by choosing an energetic person that is a good public speaker to announce the winners.
 - **Winners:** The last name on each list should be the winner for each item, because you can only write your name on it if you outbid the previous person. There are 2 ways the winners can be announced: take the microphone around the room and announce the winner in front of each auctioned item OR tape the sheet to the auctioned items and bring them to the front for the Master of Ceremonies to announce.
 - **Money:**
 - Money should be **collected from the winners** when they come up to collect their prize. You may want to have several people to help

collect the money because the line to pay can get long very fast. 1 or 2 people should handle the money box giving change to the staff that are collecting (if you choose to have this extra staff). Collection staff will also immediately give the money to those handling the money box. The Bid papers should also be turned in to the money box staff.

- The **grand total** of the money raised could be announced as soon as the winners are announced or immediately before winners announced. You can calculate this by adding the winners bid amounts from the Bid papers.

- **Items that could be auctioned:** You can auction anything that would be valuable to others: jewelry, expensive bags/purses, handmade quilts, Gift Certificates to local businesses, Alabama/Auburn items, homemade desserts (cakes, cupcakes, pies, cookies, etc.), luggage, nice lawn chairs, decorations for homes, etc.

○ **Writing Activities:**

- **Create an Activity sheet:** “Finish the Lyrics”, “Finish the Saying”, Treasure Hunt/ Scavenger Hunt, “Finish this Sentence” (You give them the first half of a sentence and let them be creative to finish it. You could do 20 different sentences on a handout for them to do.)
- **Creative Writing:** you give the topics and they write a fictional story.
- **Poetry:** you could give them a topic
- **Short Stories:** you could give them a topic or give them the 1st sentence and have them make a short story starting with that sentence.
- **Journaling:** you give them a topic, like “what is the best advice your parent(s) ever gave you”, and they write about it.

◆ **Theme Days:**

○ **50s and/or 60s Day:**

- **Wear** poodle skirts, capris, or other things from this time. You could come as characters from the movie “Grease”.
- Listen to **music** from this time.
- Do **dances** from this time like the Bop, the Hand Jive, the Stroll, the Calypso, Swing, the Cha Cha, the Alligator, or the twist. Below is a list of Dances that you could teach.

- **The Stroll** may be a fun way to incorporate your non-dancers into moving to the music.

This is an easy group dance, the stroll was a direct descendant of more formal line dances, and was often a chance for individuals to show off their clothes, their dance moves, or both. Two lines of dancers would face each other, creating a pathway down which individuals or couples would "stroll" to the beat of the music and the encouragement



of fellow dancers.

This info can be found at...

http://dance.lovetoknow.com/50s_Style_Dance .

- **The Hand Jive:** Immortalized in the movie "Grease", the hand jive was a dance that was a big hit not only because of the song associated with it ("Willy and the Hand Jive"), but also because of the simplicity of the dance. It is one of the few group dances that can be done sitting down, standing up, with the whole body or just with the hands.

Basically, it consists of four movements:

1. Slap your thighs twice with the flats of your hands.
2. Clap your hands together twice.
3. Turning your palms parallel to the floor, move one hand over the other, then apart, then over again, keeping about three inches between your hands. Then reverse, putting the other hand on top, again with two beats back and forth.
4. Finally, make a fist with one hand leaving your thumb sticking out, and rotate your hand out twice, as if motioning with your thumb for someone to "Get outta here!". Do the same thing with your other hand, and you've completed one full iteration of the "hand jive."

Repeat as long as the song continues.

This info can be found at...

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- **Broach and Button day:** People wear a Broach or Campaign Buttons or other kinds of big buttons that you pin on your shirt.
- **Beach Party or Luau:** (Talladega Springs gave us most of these ideas.)

- **Wear Tropical clothes** (Hawaiian shirts, straw hats, shorts, flower necklaces, flip flops, grass skirts, etc.).
- Play beach **music** like the Beach Boys.
- Have a **bean bag toss** game into buckets.
- Have a **hula hoop** contest and a **hula** contest.
- **Decorate tables** with seashells, flowers, etc.
- Give them **drink umbrellas** to put in their tea that day.
- Have fresh fruit for **snacks**.
- Do a **Hawaiian Clothes Relay** (Manager created 2 teams. The team that completed first won. The relay was done by the 1st participants going to the other side of the room and putting on a straw hat to wear back to the starting line. They give that to the 2nd person in line, who then goes to the other side of the room to put on a Hawaiian shirt. They return to the starting line and hand over the hat and shirt for the 3rd person in line to put on. You continue this way until all of the clothing items have made it back to the starting line. You could do a lei and grass skirt in this relay too.)



○ **Christmas:**

- **Dress up days:** could do a red day, green day, Christmas Sweater day, Christmas Hat and Headband day (Santa Hat, Reindeer Antlers, hats with bells).
- **Santa Visits:** Have Santa and Mrs. Claus visit to give out candy canes.
- **Caroling:** (Oxford: “We had about 15 or so carolers on the bus. We went to a few homebound people and stood in the yard, to some of our biscuit sponsors, and to city hall. They enjoyed going so much they want to go again. So we are going Thursday the 20th. I had a great time with them. They enjoyed Rudolph the Rednosed Raindeer best and Jingle Bells. We are thinking up homebound clients we can sing to next week. Then we had hot choc. when we came back. It was brisk and chilly that day and felt like December.”)
- **Local Parade:** Take your clients to the parade or ride in the parade and throw out candy.



- **Crazy Socks Day:** wear decorative socks or mismatched socks.
- **Dr. Seuss Day:** wear Dr. Seuss hats, eat green foods, do Dr. Seuss trivia and crossword.
- **Fishing Day:** Take Seniors fishing. Those that don't want to fish can just enjoy being outdoors.
- **Easter Activities:**
 - **Easter Hat Parade**
 - **Easter Egg Hunting**
 - Put **candy in plastic eggs** for participants to find or just give each participant a plastic egg with candy. Most Homebound Clients would also love to receive a plastic egg filled with candy.
 - You could hide the eggs **outside** during good weather.
 - If your clients are frail and fall easy (or if the weather is bad):
 - You could hide the eggs **inside** the building in places you don't have to bend over.
 - You could hide them around the room within site of the lunch tables and give each participant a **paper and pen** to write where they see eggs. The people that wrote down the most hiding places could receive prizes.

- **Easter Egg Decorating and Contests**
 - **Decorate at the center.** Supplies could include dye, markers, crayons, small stickers, or the new dying method of putting dye in shaving cream.
 - **Valley** - Participants brought their own eggs that they decorated at home for a Decorated Egg Contest.
- **Rabbit or Easter Bunny Drawing Contest**
- **Paper Eggs:** You could have participants paint or color paper eggs for a contest then cut out the decorated paper eggs and use them as decoration on a bulletin board.
- **Elvis Day:** Play Elvis music. Do Elvis trivia. Bring Elvis Memorabilia. Wear an Elvis shirt. Dress like Elvis: wear scarves, BLING (jewelry), or sunglasses.
- **Fall Harvest:** Clients could come dressed as a scarecrow or bring pictures of their scarecrows. You could have a “Best Table Decoration” Contest where participants decorate their table. You could have a prettiest leaf contest.
- **Halloween:**
 - Pumpkin Decorating (can use markers or carve)
 - Costume Contest
 - Wear orange, black, or Halloween shirts.
 - Play Halloween Music.
- **Independence Day:** wear red, white, blue, and or stars. Take a field trip together to see local Fireworks show or to a local 4th of July Celebration. Have an Independence Day party with red, white, and blue snacks.
- **Masters Games Post-party (Jacksonville)** – It is to celebrate those that participated in Masters Games and look at pictures of participants at the event. Have participants wear their Masters Games shirt and medals. Invite family, friends, and local paper to come. Let each participant tell the group what they will remember most from this year.
- **Mardi Gras:** Have clients dress up and wear masks. Have a Mask Decorating Contest. Give out Mardi Gras beads and Moon Pies. Play Mardi Gras music. Have an indoor Mardi Gras parade (Alex City).
- **Michael Jackson Day:** Play his music. Do trivia about him. Wear a Michael Jackson shirt. Dress like him: black shirt or jacket, red socks, 1 white glove, etc.
- **Saint Patrick’s Day:**
 - **Wear** green clothes, green beads, or dress like a Leprechaun.



- Look for **4-leaf clovers** in the grass or cut out a few 4-leaf clovers from green paper and hide them around the center. Each one could have a prize listed on them for them to redeem when they bring it to the manager.
 - Do a Scavenger Hunt or Treasure Hunt for Chocolate Coins (You can do the kind where clients have to go all over building to find the clues or you can do a seated Scavenger Hunt where you list several clues on a piece of paper. If they write all the answers correctly, they receive their prize when they turn it in. You could do trivia about your center, your town, your clients, your center activities, etc.
 - Have a Crazy Hat Contest
- **Thanksgiving:** Create a Thanksgiving Tree. Ohatchee did something similar to this. Make a tree on your wall out of brown paper bags or brown construction paper. Clients write what they are thankful for on pre-cut paper leaves and put them on the tree. You could be specific and have them write what they are thankful for regarding your center, your town, etc.
- **Valentines Day:**
- **Wear** red or hats/clothes with hearts.
 - **Decorate** Valentine Boxes.
 - Make homemade **Valentine Cards for Homebound** and attach candy to them.
 - King & Queen Fundraiser (Ohatchee's idea used for Prom in May: Congregate Clients run for "King" and "Queen" by raising money for the center. They decorate their own cans to collect money in. Votes cost 1 cent each. People can vote as much as they want. The Man and Woman that raise the most money are the "King" and "Queen" for the Dance. Look to the right for a picture.)
 - Valley also does a King and Queen
- **Western Day:** (some ideas came from Talladega Springs and Oxford)
- Wear **western clothes** like cowboy boots, cowboy hats, chaps, sheriff's badge, cowboy shirts, cowboy vests, spurs, etc.
 - Do a **lasso** contest.
 - **Pin the tail** on the buffalo/donkey.
 - **Bean bag toss** (some called it a cow patty toss), **Horseshoes** toss, etc.
 - Play campfire **music** or Gene Autry music.
 - Do "Old West **Trivia**". You can find some on the internet.

