

# CONNECTION

Sharing the day-to-day learning experience

at

Community Homes & Services

PO Box 744, Novato CA 94948

415-408-3604

[www.communityhomesandservices.com](http://www.communityhomesandservices.com)

## Welcome to 2025!

As we turn the page to 2025, we are filled with immense gratitude for the community, connections and achievements of the past year. We have a deep sense of excitement for the opportunities ahead. Each day, we are impressed and appreciative of the resilience, creativity, and joy that our students bring to our program. Our students inspire us to dream bigger, reach higher, and build a community where everyone's abilities shine.

In 2025, we are delighted to continue offering engaging programs and activities that promote personal growth, exploration of individual interests and ideas, skill development, and meaningful relationships. With our art, learning, building, and music classes to continuing our job readiness training, we are committed to providing a space where every individual can explore their passions and reach their goals.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the families, caregivers, and staff who make this program possible. Your dedication, love, and support create an environment where everyone can thrive. And to our students: Thank you for being the heart of everything we do. Your achievements inspire us, and we are so proud to walk alongside you on this journey!



# January is National Oatmeal Month

January is a time to promote the health benefits of oatmeal and the possibility of making healthy changes with it.

Some health benefits of eating oatmeal include: heart health, digestive health, lowers blood sugar, helps manage weight, provides antioxidants, and is rich in vitamins and minerals.

Here are some things you can do to celebrate National Oatmeal Month:

- Share or follow a recipe
- Prepare oatmeal
- Look up ideas on how to make your own beauty products by using oatmeal.
- Take your own oatmeal survey like we did.

## Do you like oatmeal?

James - Yes

Jason - Yes

Donald - No

Amber - Yes

Darnell - Yes

Nino - Yes

Carolyn - Yes

Daniel - Yes

Jennifer - Yes

Pam - I love oatmeal! I like it when it's kind of cold



## If you had a choice between oatmeal and cream of wheat which would you choose?

Amber - Oatmeal

James - Oatmeal

Jennifer - Oatmeal

Donald - Cream of Wheat

Nino - Cream of wheat

Daniel - Hasn't had Cream of Wheat, so oatmeal!

Joe - Oatmeal

Darnell - Hard to answer which I prefer but oatmeal

Jason - Oatmeal, because I feel like it's creamier than Cream of Wheat

Pam - Cream of Wheat for a cold morning, oatmeal at night

Carolyn- also finds it difficult to decide which she likes best (but today she chose cream of wheat)





# Oatmeal – Yum!

## What ingredients do you add to your oatmeal?

Amber - Almond butter, banana, honey

James - Cinnamon

Jennifer - Sautéed mushrooms and celery

Nino - Milk

Jason - Brown sugar, water, butter

Pam - Bananas and brown sugar

Rose - Walnuts and cinnamon

Donald - Brown sugar, honey, and bananas

Daniel - Milk, raisins (or cranberries), and brown sugar. I've never had it with chopped apples and cinnamon, but I would like to

Joe - brown sugar, butter, walnuts/pecans

Darnell - If it's oatmeal it is water, brown sugar, butter, walnuts and raisins, dash of cinnamon. If it is cream of wheat butter and white sugar.

Nino - Sugar and milk

Carolyn - Milk, brown sugar, butter and maple syrup



## What other foods do you use oatmeal in?

Amber - Smoothies

Jason - Cookies and trail mix

Jennifer - Meatballs and meatloaf

Rose - Oatmilk

Daniel - oatmeal cookies

Joe - Granola and pancakes

Pam - Bread, cookies, meatloaf, and sometimes I put vegetables in it

Darnell and Carolyn had the same answer - We use oatmeal in our meatloaf as a binder  
Nino would make an oatmeal scone.

When Amber sat down to discuss what to cook this month using the National days of January with Jason, James, Pam, Rose, and Donald they felt that with their budget and schedule, oatmeal chocolate chip cookie was a good choice.



# Oatmeal Cookies!

*Special thanks to Darnell, Nino, Joe and Daniel for your assistance and input.*

Check out the oatmeal chocolate chip recipe:

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/oat-chocolate-chip-cookies/>



## ***Happy January Birthday!***

- 1/8 - Meredith
- 1/11 - Jason
- 1/12 - Randall & Jennifer
- 1/14 - Jian
- 1/17 - Tyrone
- 1/25 - Carolyn
- 1/30 - Suzie
- 1/31 - Mike R.





# Iris Linssen

Iris is the kind of woman anyone would want for a friend. She is a great listener who really cares and understands. She is fun and funny, witty and wise, and generous with information and insight.

Iris truly knows how to tell a story. As a writer, as a conversationalist, and as a humorist, she is the genuine article. A zoologist since birth, Iris has lived among the cobras, black mambas, kudus, boomslangs, monkeys, bats, hippos, and crocodiles, oh my! She is, among many other things, absolutely fearless.

And on top of all that, Iris is an exemplary professional. She is honest and responsible, and her integrity is a strong compass that always points her in the right direction. She is a hard worker, too, usually just the right woman for the job. She is active and energetic, always eager to help others, and she makes a mean salad.



Iris is:

- A world traveler
- Kind and considerate
- Devoted to her family
- A wonderful friend
- A remarkable cat mom
- A natural leader
- Charming and charismatic
- Fascinating!
- Delightful!

Watch Iris' PPP video on our Instagram account <https://www.instagram.com/p/C3GU6tFP1ys/>

# Daniel Learns Photography

## Happy New Year!

Well 2024 is over, and we had a great time here at the project center. We made a working radio, a number of flutes, a solar system diorama, who knows how many knowledge classes, and a whole lot more! The plan for 2025 is: see how much we can learn, apply what we've learned, then show off how we applied what we've learned. Daniel is interested in photography, so we've been spending some time learning the finer points. "Street photography" is different from nature photography or portraiture because you're acting as a sort of "fly on the wall". We learned some special tips and tricks to use when taking photos out in the world among people, and we thought it would be interesting to share them here:

### Unexpected Moments

Sometimes the best opportunity for a photo comes at an unexpected time, so make sure you always have your camera ready.

### Composition

Experiment with tilting the camera, holding it low, and holding it high. Changes in composition can drastically affect a photo.

### The 'Fly on the Wall'

Try to blend in when you're shooting photos in public. If you want to take someone's picture, make sure you ask first.

### Light

Early morning and early evening are two times of day when the natural light is at its most dramatic. Utilize it!





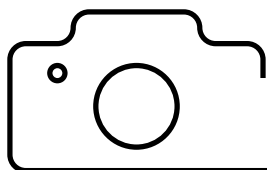
# Daniel's Photographic Eye



## Backdrop

Choose your backdrop, then wait for something interesting to happen in front of it. A bird might fly into the frame, a leaf could fall - everything has the potential to make your photo great.

Daniel (right) captured the photo on the previous page as well as the photo (above) after our class.



Can you tell what tips he used?



# JANUARY 2024 NATIONAL DAYS

**Hobby Month, Hot Tea Month, Soup Month,  
Slow Cooking Month**

- **1/1 - New Years Day-HOLIDAY, CLOSED**, Polar Bear Plunge Day
- 1/2 - Science Fiction Day, World Introvert Day, Buffet Day
- 1/3 - Chocolate Covered Cherry Day
- 1/4 - Fruitcake Toss Day, Trivia Day, Spaghetti Day
- 1/5 - National Bird Day, Whipped Cream Day
- 1/6 - Technology Day, Bean Day
- 1/7 - Bobblehead Day, Tempura Day
- 1/8 - World Typing Day, Bubblebath Day
- 1/9 - Apricot Day, Static Electricity Day
- 1/10 - Houseplant Appreciation Day, Save the Eagles Day
- 1/11 - Step in a Puddle and Splash Your Friend Day, Milk Day
- 1/12 - Sunday Supper Day
- 1/13 - Sticker Day, Rubber Ducky Day
- 1/14 - Dress up Your Pet Day
- 1/15 - Bagel Day, Hat Day
- 1/16 - Fig Newton Day, Religious Freedom Day
- 1/17 - Classy Day, Popeye the Sailor Man Day
- 1/18 - Thesaurus Day, Winnie the Pooh Day
- 1/19 - Imagination Day, Popcorn Day
- **1/20 - Martin Luther King Jr Day-HOLIDAY CLOSED** Inauguration Day
- 1/21 - Squirrel Appreciation Day, Granola Bar Day
- 1/22 - Library Shelfie Day, Polka Dot Day
- 1/23 - Handwriting Day, Pie Day
- 1/24 - Peanut Butter Day, Compliment Day
- 1/25 - Opposite Day, Seed Swap Day
- 1/26 - Green Juice Day
- 1/27 - Holocaust Remembrance Day, Bubble Wrap Day
- 1/28 - Kazoo Day, Blueberry Pancake Day
- 1/29 - Corn Chip Day
- 1/30 - Croissant Day
- 1/31 - Inspire Your Heart With Art Day, Fun at Work Day, Hot Chocolate Day





# January 6 is National Bean Day

It's a day to celebrate beans, the little seeds packed with big benefits! Beans are full of protein, fiber, and vitamins. They keep your body strong, your stomach happy, and give you energy to do the things you love.

## Fun Bean Facts

- There are over 40,000 types of beans! Some popular ones are black beans, kidney beans, and chickpeas.
- Beans are one of the oldest foods. People ate them more than 7,000 years ago!
- In the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, Jack climbs a magic bean plant that reaches the sky. While we don't have magic beans, we do have tasty ones!



## Easy Recipe: Bean Salad

Start with:

- 1 can of black beans (drained and rinsed)
- 1 can of corn (drained)
- 1 chopped tomato
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- Juice from 1 lime
- A pinch of salt



Mix everything in a bowl. Enjoy as a side dish or a snack!

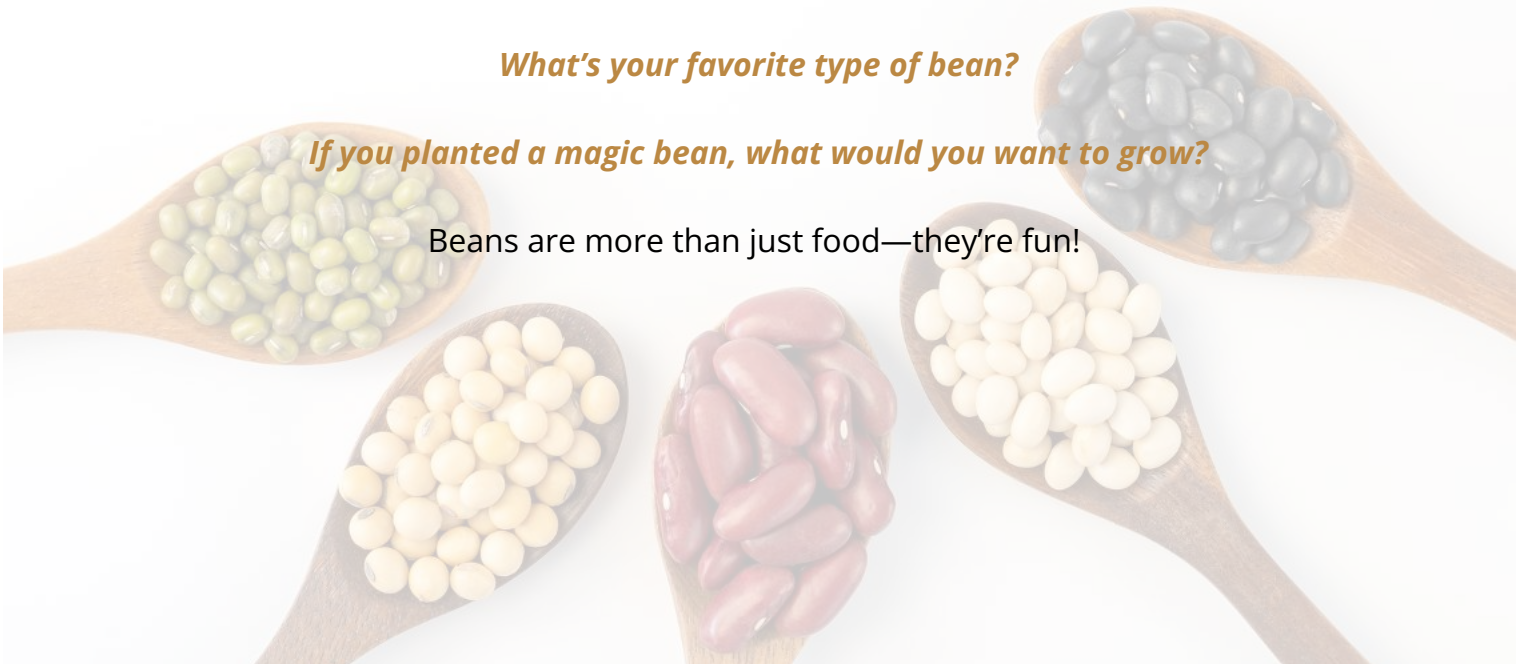
## Why Celebrate Beans?

Beans are good for your health and easy to cook. Plus, they help the planet by putting nutrients back into the soil. They're small but mighty!

*What's your favorite type of bean?*

*If you planted a magic bean, what would you want to grow?*

Beans are more than just food—they're fun!



# The Puzzle King

Puzzle Day (January 29) recognizes the benefits of puzzles for mental development, social skills, and the brain function. National Puzzle Day was started in 2002 by Jodi Jill to share her love of puzzles, and it has grown in popularity each year.

Here at CH&S, we have our very own Puzzle King, Dave Friedlander. Dave loves puzzles almost as much as he loves the music of Guy Lombardo or watching reruns of the 1970s TV show *Charlie's Angels*.

On any given day, you can find Dave happily working on one of his many 1000-piece jigsaw puzzles. Here's a picture of Dave with his latest puzzle challenge—can he finish it before lunch? Stay tuned to find out!



Jigsaw puzzles are more than just a fun (or frustrating) pastime—they have a rich history and offer many benefits

## A Brief History of Jigsaw Puzzles

Jigsaw puzzles first appeared in 1767, thanks to John Spilsbury, a British mapmaker. Spilsbury glued a map of the world onto a piece of wood and cut it into pieces to help children learn geography. This was the beginning of the jigsaw puzzle as we know it today!

Originally made from wood, jigsaw puzzles became more affordable with the invention of cardboard puzzles in the 19th century.

## How Jigsaw Puzzles Have Evolved

Puzzles have come a long way. Today, they are made from various materials like cardboard, wood, and plastic, and feature a wide range of images and themes.



# January 29th is National Puzzle Day

Technological advances have brought digital printing into puzzle-making, allowing for high-quality images and intricate designs.

## Benefits of Jigsaw Puzzles

- Puzzles keep your mind sharp and help improve memory and thinking skills.
- Working on puzzles can be very calming and reduce stress.
- Solving puzzles makes you better at figuring out other kinds of problems.
- Doing puzzles with friends or family can bring you closer together.
- Puzzles teach you to be patient.

## Interesting Facts About Jigsaw Puzzles

- The biggest jigsaw puzzle in the world has 551,232 pieces and was put together in Vietnam in 2011.
- The fastest time to finish a 500-piece puzzle is 54 minutes and 10 seconds.
- Puzzles are used in therapy to help people with mental health issues and memory problems.
- Not all puzzles are rectangles. Some are circles, hearts, and other shapes.
- Doing puzzles regularly might help delay dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Jigsaw puzzles are great for everyone, from kids to adults. They help keep your brain healthy, reduce stress, and are a fun way to spend time with family and friends. Whether you're looking to improve your thinking skills or just want to relax, jigsaw puzzles are a fantastic choice.

# National Bobblehead Day – January 7

As Katie and Thea went through the national days for January, one day stood out to Katie: National Bobblehead Day. Katie has been a bobblehead fan so we did some research into the wobblers.

Bobbleheads, also known as nodders or wobblers, have captivated collectors for over a century. These figurines, characterized by oversized, spring-mounted heads that "bobble," have an irresistible charm that blends nostalgia and whimsy.



The origins of bobbleheads date back to 17th-century China, where nodding-head figurines were crafted from ceramics. However, their popularity soared in the mid-20th century with sports-themed bobbleheads featuring baseball players like Willie Mays. They now sell for \$50 on eBay!



When we mentioned this to Carolyn, she said that she attended the one Giant's game where the bobbleheads were passed out. In May 1999, a promotion by the San Francisco Giants brought the bobblehead back to the public eye. The Giants offered a Willie Mays bobblehead to the first 20,000 visitors on May 9th to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Candlestick Park, which was the last year of the Giants playing at that stadium. The promotion went very well, and more teams began to offer bobbleheads as a promotional item for their fans.

No she does not still have the Willie Mays bobblehead, she gave it to her son's girlfriend's father. Yes, he still has it!



# Wobbler Day

Collectors love bobbleheads for their diversity and rarity. Did you know the most expensive bobblehead ever sold is a 1961 Yankees team figurine that fetched over \$60,000 at auction?

Modern editions, often released as limited runs at sports games or comic conventions, create a frenzy among fans eager to snag these tiny treasures. An astronaut bobblehead that made its way to space in 2008, orbiting Earth with the crew of the Discovery shuttle.

Beyond sports, bobbleheads capture pop culture icons, from superheroes to political figures. The National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum in Milwaukee even hosts a Guinness World Record-holding collection of over 10,000 bobbleheads. Whether you're a serious collector or an occasional admirer, these playful figures embody history, artistry, and fun.



*Here are just a couple hundred bobbleheads in The National Bobblehead Hall of Fame*

# Chair Exercises and Stretches for Adults of all Abilities

with Amy and Darnell

Chair exercises and stretches are a simple way to stay active, improve flexibility, and feel good. You can do these exercises while sitting down, so they're great for people who may have trouble standing for long periods. Let's explore some easy moves you can try!

## Benefits of Chair Exercises

- Improves flexibility: Keeps your joints and muscles moving.
- Boosts circulation: Helps blood flow better through your body.
- Reduces stiffness: Keeps your body loose and comfortable.
- Lifts your mood: Exercise can make you feel happier.

**Darnell:** Does exercise make YOU "happier"?


**Amy:** I am not sure it makes me feel happier, but it makes me feel *better*. When I used to go to the YMCA with DeeDee (*remember Miss DeeDee?*) and I did aerobics, I enjoyed that. Then I moved on to swimming, then water aerobics.

**Darnell:** Exercise makes me feel better, almost like I'm helping myself. It boosts your self-esteem because when you're just sitting and watching TV, you can feel stuck or sluggish. But when you use your body and stay active, you feel energized and more positive.

## Simple Chair Exercises

Here are some easy exercises you can do:

### Leg and Foot Stretch

- Straighten one leg out in front of you. 
- Flex foot so your toes point to ceiling, hold for 10 sec.
- Point toes keeping leg straight for 10 seconds.
- Put foot back on the floor and repeat with other leg.

### Upper Body Stretch

- Reach both arms up toward the ceiling.
- Hold for a few seconds, then slowly lower them.



### Seated Side Bends

- Raise one arm over your head.
- Slowly lean to the side, reaching with your arm.
- Hold for a few seconds, then return to the middle.
- Switch sides.





# More Chair Exercises and Stretches

## Seated Hip Stretch

- Sit on a chair with your back straight and both feet flat on the floor.
- Lift your right leg and place your right ankle over your left knee. →
- Keep your right foot flexed to protect your knee and hold this position for 20–30 seconds.
- Return to the starting position and repeat the stretch on the opposite side.



## Leg Stretch

- Straighten one leg out in front of you.
- Reach toward your toes while keeping your back straight.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then switch legs.

## Seated Side Bends

- Raise one arm over your head.
- Slowly lean to the side, reaching with your arm.
- Hold for a few seconds, then return to the middle.
- Switch sides.

The YouTube video we have been using lately is “Seated Chair STRETCHES for Seniors/Older Adults/Beginners (10 minutes - to increase flexibility)” <https://youtu.be/HpPtnDbGBVg?si=REpCQCcOEZqxwAb3>

## Arm Circles

 →

- Stretch your arms out to the sides.
- Make small circles with your arms.
- Do this for 10 seconds, then switch directions.



Seated Chair STRETCHES for Seniors/Older Adults/Beginners (10 minutes - to increase flexibility)

# Even More Chair Exercises and Stretches

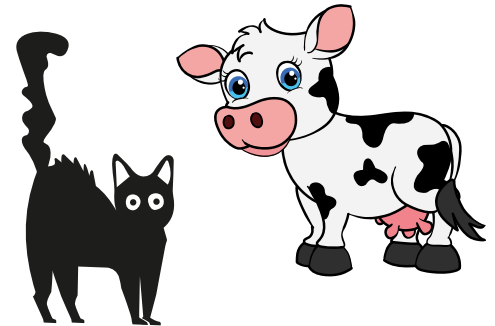
## Seated Cat Cow Stretch

- Sit on a chair with your feet flat on the floor, hands resting on your thighs.
- Round your back, tucking your chin toward your chest, hold for 5-10 seconds. →
- Arch your back, lifting your chest and looking slightly upward, hold for 5-10 seconds.



## Tips for Safe Exercise

- Go slow and listen to your body.
- Stop if something hurts.
- Drink water to stay hydrated.
- Talk to a doctor if you're unsure about trying new exercises.



Staying active is important for everyone. Chair exercises are a great way to move your body and stay healthy, no matter your ability level.

For more info, check out Cleveland Clinic's "11 Chair Exercises for Seniors, Older Adults and People With Limited Mobility" <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/chair-exercises-for-seniors>

Give these exercises a try today and enjoy the benefits of moving your body! 💪



[@Communityhomesandservices](https://www.instagram.com/Communityhomesandservices)

We accept and appreciate donations of any size or kind.  
All donations to CH&S are tax-deductible.  
CH&S is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



# Helping Others is Awesome!

We spoke with student Pam who helps Jake to eat his lunch. Pam's a mom and also helped feed and care for her mother when she got older. Pam is a helper!

When we pitch in and support each other, everybody wins. Pam gets paid to help Jake during lunch by feeding him. But her work is so much more than just a job. By helping Jake, she makes sure he gets to enjoy his meal and feel included. Jake benefits from her patience and care, and Pam gets to feel great knowing she's making a difference in Jake's life.

When we see someone helping out, it reminds us how important it is to look after one another. Helping others—whether it's a paid job or not—teaches patience, kindness, and the power of being there for someone.

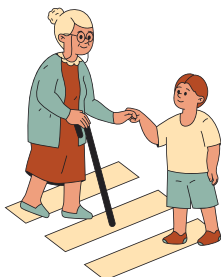
And guess what? Helping others is fun and rewarding!



Jake is happy to have Pam's support, and Pam feels proud knowing she's doing something meaningful. It's a win-win situation!

Being of service doesn't just help the person you're assisting—it feels great for you too!

Whether you're helping a friend, a fellow student, or even doing a small job like Pam, you're spreading kindness and making the world a better, happier place for everyone.



Community Homes & Services  
PO Box 744 Novato CA 94945  
415-897-8676

January 2025  
Connection Magazine

HAPPY  
NEW YEAR