

CONNECTION

Sharing the day-to-day learning experience

at

Community Homes & Services

PO Box 744, Novato CA 94948

415-408-3604

www.communityhomesandservices.com

Why We Eat Turkey on Thanksgiving (And Why Making Turkey Art Matters!)

Eating turkey on Thanksgiving is a tradition that goes back almost 400 years!

When the Pilgrims and Wampanoag people shared a harvest celebration in 1621, they feasted for three days. Historical letters mention wildfowl (likely including wild turkey), five deer, and plenty of other food. Turkeys were plentiful in North America and big enough to feed many people.

But turkey didn't become the official Thanksgiving bird right away. It wasn't until the 1800s that turkey became most popular, thanks

partly to writer Sarah Josepha Hale, who campaigned for Thanksgiving to become a national holiday and wrote about turkey dinners in her stories.

By the time President Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863, turkey had become the star of the show.

Today, Americans eat about 46 million turkeys every Thanksgiving!



Making Turkey Art Is Important

Creating turkey paintings isn't just about making decorations—it's about much more for adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

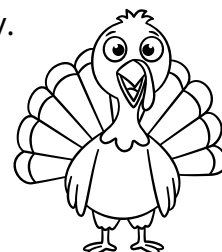
- Art lets everyone express themselves in their own way. There's no "wrong" way to paint a turkey! Each creation is special, giving people a voice even when words may be hard.



- When adults choose their own colors and how to arrange them, they're making decisions and taking control. This builds confidence and independence.
- Creating art together brings people together. We share supplies, admire each other's work, and celebrate our creativity as a group. Everyone has something to contribute.
- Art activities engage our brains, hands, and senses. Mixing colors, feeling textures, and problem-solving keep our minds working and learning—all while having fun.

The Big Picture

Whether we're eating turkey or painting one, Thanksgiving is about gratitude, community, and participation. When adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities create art, we're practicing skills, expressing ourselves, making choices, and being valued members of our community.



And that's worth celebrating!



NOVEMBER 2025 NATIONAL DAYS



**Native American Heritage Month,
Career Development Month, Gratitude Month**

- 11/1 - Autism Speaking Day, **Cinnamon Day**, Calzone Day
- 11/2 - Daylight Savings Time Ends, Deviled Egg Day, Bison Day
- 11/3 - World Jellyfish Day, National Sandwich Day
- 11/4 - Candy Day
- 11/5 - Stress Awareness Day, Donut Day
- 11/6 - Nachos Day, Saxophone Day
- 11/7 - National Jersey Friday
- 11/9 - World Adoption Day, Scrapple Day
- 11/11 - Veterans Day, Sundae Day
- 11/12 - Pizza With the Works Except Anchovies Day, French Dip Day
- 11/13 - **World Kindness Day**
- 11/14 - World Diabetes Day, Pickle Day, Spicy Guacamole Day
- 11/15 - America Recycles Day, Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day, Bundt Day
- 11/16 - **Button Day**
- 11/17 - Butter Day, Homemade Bread Day, Take a Hike Day, Baklava Day
- 11/18 - Mickey Mouse's Birthday
- 11/19 - Play Monopoly Day, **World Toilet Day**
- 11/20 - Great American Smokeout, World Philosophy Day, Absurdity Day
- 11/21 - Stuffing Day, Television Day, Gingerbread Cookie Day
- 11/22 - Cranberry Relish Day
- 11/23 - Espresso Day, Cashew Day, Fibonacci Day
- 11/24 - Sardines Day
- 11/26 - Cake Day
- 11/27 - THANKSGIVING DAY-HOLIDAY**
- 11/28 - HOLIDAY**, Native American Heritage Day, Black Friday, Buy Nothing Day
- 11/30 - Mason Jar Day, Mousse Day



TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

“Teamwork makes the dream work” is a fun way to say that working together helps make big ideas work. One person can do a lot, but a team can do amazing things. When people share ideas, help each other, and listen, hard work feels easier—and even more fun!

Why does teamwork/collaboration work?

- Everyone brings their own strengths.
- People can solve problems faster together.
- Teams can cheer each other on when things get tough.

What else do people say about teamwork?

- “Many hands make light work.” → When everyone helps, the job gets done quickly.
 - *Can you think of a job that is easier when everyone helps out?*
- “We’re all in this together.” → No one has to do it alone.
- “None of us is as smart as all of us.” → A group can think of more ideas than one person.
 - One brain is smart, but three or five brains working together are even smarter!

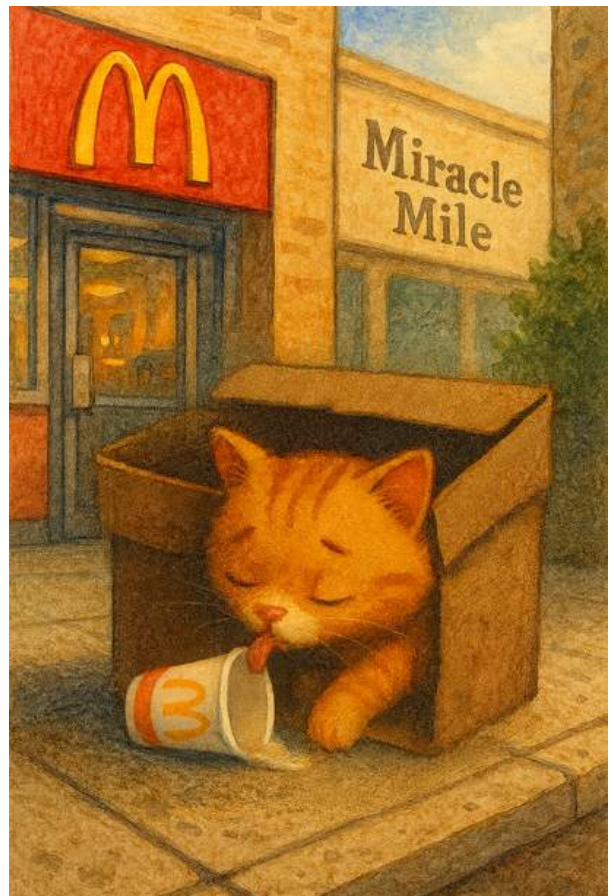
Think of building a giant puzzle: one person can’t finish it alone (unless that person is our puzzle king David F!) But when everyone finds the right pieces, the picture comes together.

Teamwork turns “I can’t” into “We did it!”

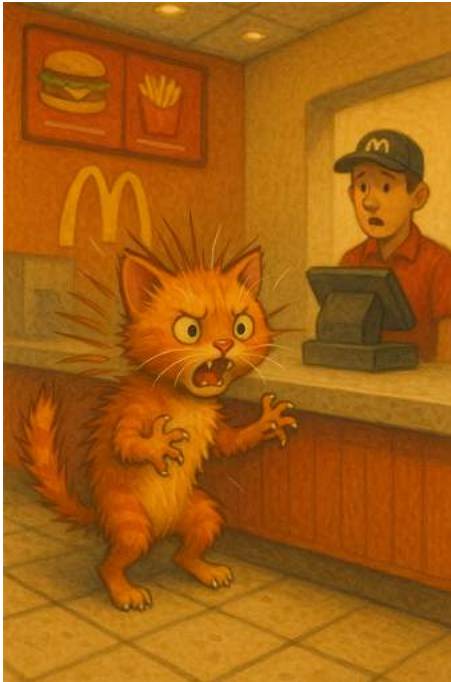
Check out this story we worked together to write:

Once upon a time there was a talking cat. But he was really afraid to talk to people. So he hid in a box by the McDonald's on Miracle Mile. He hid inside an old box, and licked an old milkshake cup and tried to figure out how to start a conversation.

He walked into McDonald's and wants to buy a cheeseburger but he has to talk in order to ask for one. He was very afraid and his hair was standing on end with his claws out and his tail twitching...



STORYBOARDING AS A TEAM



but he does it anyway.

The shocked cashier looks down at the talking cat, pauses, gulps, and asks "would you like fries with that?"

The cat says "meow." The cashier doesn't

understand. The cat says "buy food... yes, fries please."



Then the cat decides to be even more brave and he gives the cashier a compliment. He says "Your fries are better than

Jack-in-the-Box fries, *Meow*."

Then the cashier says "thank you" and hands the cat his order.



We loved this story! And who would say no to fries with that? Not us!

Thank you to story boarders Jonas, Andrew , Valerie, Linda, Tyrone, Billy, Mike, Burt, Phoebe, Frank, Steve F., Josh, Jian, Andrew M. and instructor Chris!

Thanksgiving Jokes

Why did the turkey cross the road?
To prove he wasn't chicken!

What do you call a running turkey?
Fast food!

What's the best thing to put into pumpkin pie?
Your teeth!



Knock knock.
Who's there?
Norma Lee. Norma Lee who?
Norma Lee I don't eat this much!



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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.



Martha, Zachary, and Cat made button turkeys for Button Day on Nov. 16!



Suzie Shell

CH&S STUDENT PPP

Suzie is a remarkable woman in many ways.

People love talking with her because she is an
insightful and compassionate listener.



She is an expert on many, many subjects and she shares
her wisdom and knowledge with others.

Suzie is admired for her extraordinary capacity to care and to appreciate.

She sets an important example with her kindness, patience, professionalism, and
healthy lifestyle.



Suzie

is devoted to her family

goes many places and does many things

is a fascinating conversationalist



is very intelligent

is very charming

is very beautiful

is all about elegance and class!

*Watch Suzie's PPP video on our
Instagram account*

https://www.instagram.com/reel/DK_h5ql3yjpM/utm_source=ig_web_copy_lnk&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==



Staff CPR training

CPR training is mandated for employees at California adult day programs. So we had our all staff CPR and first aid training and...



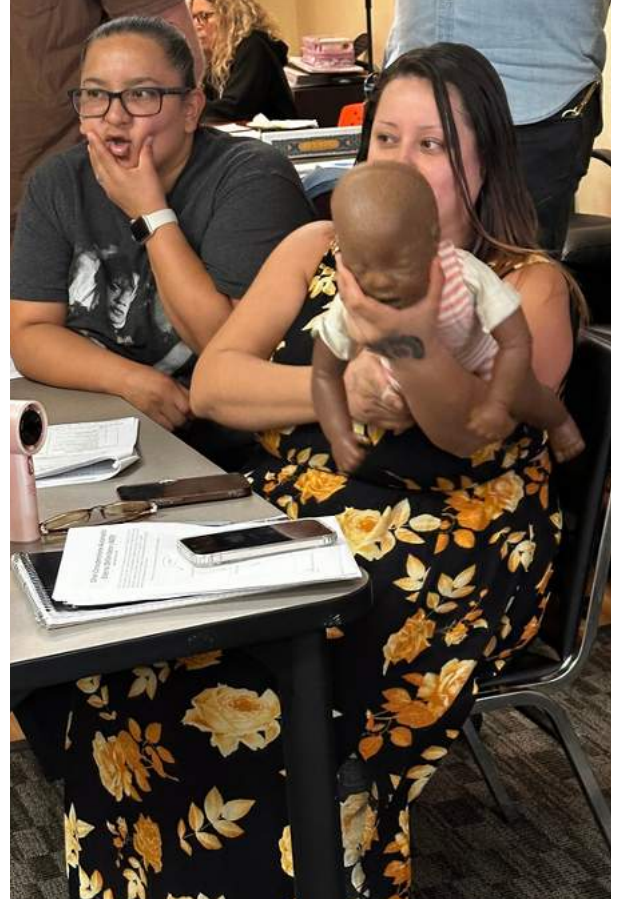
What is CPR?

CPR stands for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation. It's a life-saving technique used when someone's heart stops beating or they stop breathing. CPR involves pressing down on the person's chest in a rhythmic way (called *chest compressions*) and sometimes giving rescue breaths to help keep blood and oxygen flowing to their brain and vital organs until professional medical help arrives.

CPR as we know it today was developed in the 1960s. Before then, doctors and researchers tried various methods to restart people's hearts, but none worked very well. In 1960, three doctors combined chest compressions with rescue breathing and showed it could save lives. The American Heart Association began teaching CPR to the public in the early 1960s, and it has been improved and simplified over the years to make it easier for anyone to learn and perform.



We Completed CPR Training



Why CPR Matters

When someone's heart stops, every second counts. Brain damage can begin within just 4-6 minutes without oxygen. CPR keeps oxygen-rich blood flowing to the brain and other organs, buying precious time until paramedics arrive with advanced equipment.

Learning CPR means you have the power to save a life—whether it's a coworker, a family member, or a stranger. Most cardiac arrests happen at home, so the person you save is likely to be someone you love. Studies show that immediate CPR can double or even triple a person's chance of survival.

The bottom line: CPR is simple to learn, takes only minutes to perform, and can mean the difference between life and death.



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Turkeys in Marin

Ready to Read READING COMPREHENSION

In Marin County, wild turkeys walk down streets, hop on fences, and peck in yards. These big birds weren't always here. They were brought to Marin in 1988 to give hunters more places to hunt. But the turkeys loved it here—and they stayed! Now, there are many wild turkeys all over the county. They live in grassy fields and near oak trees, where they eat bugs, seeds, and fruit.

Some people enjoy seeing them. Others don't like the mess they leave. Turkeys can dig up gardens, block traffic, and even chase people! If a turkey gets too close, waving your arms, clapping, or spraying water can help. It's best not to feed them or leave out bird food.

Even with the trouble they cause, wild turkeys have become part of life in Marin. They strut with pride, showing off their shiny feathers. Love them or not—they're here to stay!



Name: _____

Date: _____

Turkeys in Marin review questions:

1. Where do wild turkeys live in Marin County?
 - A. At the beach
 - B. On boats
 - C. In big cities
 - D. In oak woodlands and grassy areas
2. Why were turkeys brought to Marin County?
 - A. To clean streets
 - B. For hunting
 - C. To be pets
 - D. To pull carts
3. True or False: Wild turkeys eat bugs and fruit.
4. What is one way to keep turkeys away?
 - A. Give them candy
 - B. Feed them seeds
 - C. Spray them with water
 - D. Pet them
5. Do all people like having turkeys around?
6. What do turkeys sometimes do in yards?
 - A. Paint fences
 - B. Dance
 - C. Scratch the ground
 - D. Sing songs
7. True or False: Feeding wild turkeys is a good idea.

Nino Surveys the Situation

National Candy Day is November 4th. That got us thinking about leftover Halloween candy. What's your favorite and LEAST favorite kind of candy?

Devlin: I like M&Ms, Skittles, and Mike & Ikes.
I don't like black licorice.

Nino: I don't really like candy, it's not good for me—too much sugar.

Hayley: I like a good Twix! I'm not into coconut, so Almond Joy is my least fav.

Zachary: I like Milky Way and Kit Kat. I don't really like cotton candy.

Cat: I like gummy bears and candy corn. I don't like ones that are hard to chew.

Martha: Milky Way. I don't like Hershey Kisses.

Martha: Milky Way. I don't like Hershey Kisses.

Justin: I like Hershey's chocolates. Sometimes I like black licorice.

Colliene: I like Sour Patch Watermelons the best! I don't like hard candies.

Iris: Reese's are my favorite. I don't like black licorice.

Aidan: I like coconut. I don't like black licorice—no thank you!

Andrew: I like sour rainbows the best. Least favorite would be candy corn.



Mickey Mouse's birthday is November 18th. Who is your favorite Disney character? How 'bout your favorite villain?



Zachary channels his inner Captain Hook

Aidan: Donald Duck—I can laugh like him! Captain Hook is my favorite bad guy.

Iris: I love Pluto. My favorite villain is Cruella deVille, the puppy coat lady.

Hayley: I love Simba. I like Snape as a bad guy.

Nino: I like Aladdin. Gaston is my favorite bad guy. I like his song.

Colliene: I love ALL the princesses! And I love Maleficent.

Devlin: Aladdin. Scar and the hyenas are the best bad guys!

Andrew: I like the experiments from Lilo & Stitch. Hades is my favorite villain.

Zachary: Aladdin and Jaffar.

Candy, Disney, and Muppets

Who is your favorite Muppet?

Iris: I like Gonzo

Aidan: Kermit's my favorite

Colliene: Miss Piggy!

Andrew: Swedish Chef

Martha: Kermit the Frog

Cat: Big Bird!

Hayley: Rowlf the Dog

Zachary: Kermit the Frog

Matthew: Super Grover and Rowlf



***Happy
November
Birthday!***

11/4 - Darnell

11/9 - Valerie

11/26 - Mike M.



Andrew's Corner

The Muppets

The Muppets were created by Jim Henson. The term "muppets" is a portmanteau, or fusion, of puppets and marionettes. Kermit was made from Jim Henson's mother's old coat, and his eyes were made from ping pong balls.

Kermit the Frog first appeared in a local television series in Washington, D.C. called Sam and Friends. Rowlf the Dog was first made for a commercial for Purina Dog Chow. Rowlf the Dog first appeared as a cast member on the Jimmy Dean Show. The voice of Sam the American Eagle, Frank Oz, is actually British! Frank Oz voiced Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear, Grover, Bert, and Cookie Monster. He also voiced Yoda in the Star Wars series. Miss Piggy's full name is Miss Piggy Lee.

When Grover was first made, he was green instead of blue. Oscar the Grouch was originally orange. The Muppets first aired on January 30, 1974. Other Muppet series include The Jim Henson Hour, Muppet Babies, Little Muppet Monsters,



Bio: Andrew Newson is a student at Life College and is 25 years old. He likes comic books, video games, hiking, exploring new places with his mom.... and babies. He is an authority in all things Star Wars, Star Trek and great places to go in the Bay Area. He is currently learning Mandarin and loves to research and learn new things.



Muppets Tonight, Muppets TV, Muppets Mayhem, and Muppets Now. The Muppet Show has won four Emmy Awards. Jim Henson also created The Dark Crystal, Fraggle Rock, and Labyrinth. My favorite Muppet is The Swedish Chef because he talks really funny. My favorite Muppet movie is the Great Muppet Caper because it takes place in my dad's home country of England. I also love Muppets From Space, because it finally reveals Gonzo's origin.

Spoilers: Gonzo's an alien!



NATIONAL ABSURDITY DAY November 20

National Absurdity Day – what's that?!

Let's start by finding out what "absurd" means: Absurd means something so silly, strange, or weird that it doesn't make sense at all. Like wearing shoes on your hands. Or eating soup with a fork. It's not wrong—it's just... totally odd!

Have you ever done something silly? What was it?

National Absurdity Day is on November 20. It's a day to laugh at nonsense and have fun with things that are a little off-the-wall. It reminds us that life doesn't always have to be serious. Being goofy is okay!

Some silly examples to try or imagine:

- Wearing your shirt backwards and calling it a new style.
- Saying "Goodnight!" in the middle of the day.
- Walking around with a banana and pretending it's a phone.
- Naming your socks and talking to them.
- Putting sunglasses on a watermelon and giving it a cool name like "DJ Melon."



Why celebrate National Absurdity Day? Because being silly can make people smile. It's a way to break the rules—in a fun, safe way. It helps us use our imagination and feel free.

So on National Absurdity Day, do something ridiculous—and enjoy every minute of it!

Be safe.

Be kind.

Be absurd!



Cruise Ships and Cruising

With Expert Tips from Darren

Darren is a cruising pro. He's taken many trips on cruise ships with his dad, and he knows all the ins and outs. So if you're curious about cruises or thinking about taking one, Darren is the guy to listen to.

Darren and Thea recently sat down to talk all about cruising and they are making a knowledge class to help others learn all about cruise ships and cruising.

What is a Cruise Ship Like?

Thea said she read that a cruise ship is like a hotel on water. "More like a floating *city*," Darren said.

He explained that cruise ships take care of everything themselves. There are different pools, many activity areas, a theater, entertainment, and of course the buffets! They grind up food waste and treat it before releasing it into the ocean. There's Wi-Fi all over the ship, and even adults-only areas if you want peace and quiet.

Where Do Cruises Go?

Darren's last cruise was to Alaska. He started in Ketchikan, then visited Skagway, Glacier Bay, Victoria, and ended in San Francisco. On some cruises, people can tour the bridge (where the captain steers the ship), but Darren said Princess Cruises now only offers a virtual tour in the ship's theater.

Life Onboard

Your room on the ship is called a cabin. According to Darren, it's about the size of a large bedroom.

What Do You Wear?

Evening dress codes can be "smart casual" or fancy. Darren said he's worn a suit, a black shirt and slacks, and even a tuxedo.

Will You Get Seasick?

Not likely, Darren says. "The ship has stabilizers. They stop about 80% of the rocking. I don't get seasick."



Cruising Tips with Darren

Could You Live on a Cruise Ship?

Darren said some people actually live on cruise ships. "It can be cheaper than living on land—and they do everything for you!"

What About the Food?

"There are tons of choices," said Darren. "Crab legs, roast beef... Sometimes the buffet opens at 6 AM!"

A Bit of Cruise History

The first real cruise ship was called the Prinzessin Luise. It set sail more than 100 years ago.

If you ever wondered what cruising is all about, now you know—straight from Darren. It's fun, relaxing, and full of surprises.



(Left) The ship's bridge, (Center) Cruise ship bathrooms can be pretty small, (Right) A view from Darren's room –you can see into other people's balconies!



Daniel's Gaming Guantlet:

The Ghost of Yōtei

with Daniel and Joe

The Ghost of Yōtei is a third person open world action/adventure/stealth game for the Playstation 5. It was developed by Sucker Punch Studios and released in 2025.

Gameplay

In the Ghost of Yōtei you play as Atsu - a female samurai mercenary/bounty hunter. Atsu's objective is to get revenge on the Yōtei Six - a group of bandit samurais that murdered Atsu's family and left her for dead. The game involves a lot of roaming the map and spotting important locations using your spyglass. Atsu begins the game with one katana, and as she progresses through Ezo (the Japanese island where the game

takes place) she acquires new weapons such as: the yari (spear), the kusarigama (chain sickle), the ōdachi (two-handed great sword), and the tanegashima (matchlock rifle). Though The Ghost of Yōtei is a fictional story, there are connections to the real life work of Miyamoto Musashi. Musashi was a master of many weapons, and able to adapt and overcome other opponents - much like the character Atsu. As you advance through the story searching for information on the Yōtei Six, you'll encounter various bad guys that you'll have to defeat to move forward. There are lots of side quests as well, such as bounty hunting, tales, and myths, as well as mini games - such as the coin toss and painting.



Graphics

The graphics are really good. The lighting and movement looks like a modern samurai movie or TV show. I'm reminded of a movie called Lone Wolf and Cub, as well as the Shogun reboot that I've seen on Hulu. The flower fields that Atsu travels through by horse are quite beautiful, as well.

(Right) By Hayakawa Kyuukei - Tanki Yoriaku: Hi Ko Ben (Japanese book on samurai armor published in 1735),
Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15762679>



Daniel's Gaming Gauntlet:

The Ghost of Yōtei

Story

The game alternates between Atsu's past, and the present. Going back to Atsu at age 12, we see her family murdered by the Yōtei Six and her left for dead. Then throughout the story the player can switch to flashbacks from Atsu's childhood that contain information that's relevant to the present. The main objective of the game is to gain information about the Yōtei Six and hunt them down. Atsu can be compared to an onryō - a vengeful spirit

Pros

- The combat is very well done, especially the duels. This is a big improvement over the first game, Ghost of Tsushima



- I like a good revenge plot and a good wandering warrior plot. The Ghost of Yōtei has both! Like Kill Bill.



Cons

- Sometimes the search for charms can be a bit daunting
- The open world setting can be overwhelming

GAME
OVER

Native Habitat

with Jennifer

In May, we partnered with Home Ground Habitats, a non-profit organization in Indian Valley that is working toward getting Novato certified as a Habitat City by the World Wildlife Federation. They helped us plan a pollinator garden in the space Bruce and Judy cleared around our Little Free Library. First, we laid down layers of cardboard, and topped it with wood chips. This process, called sheet mulching, helps suppress weeds, and enriches the soil as the cardboard decomposes. Another name for this method of preparing a garden bed is “lasagna gardening”! It has to stay wet for it to work, so the garden crew diligently watered the lasagna everyday for two months.

We took a tour of Home Ground Habitat’s demonstration garden, which features California native plants and drought tolerant Mediterranean species, pathways around a pond, wildflower meadows, a fruit orchard, and a greenhouse. It was a delightful day! Here is a link to a virtual tour: [Garden Tour of Home Ground Habitats Nursery Novato, CA](#)

In September, it was finally planting day!



Why Celebrate Día de los Muertos?

Día de los Muertos — or Day of the Dead — is a traditional Mexican holiday celebrated on November 1st and 2nd. It's a time to honor and remember family and friends who have passed away. But it's not a sad occasion. Instead, it's filled with color, music, food, and joy — a celebration of life and memory.

The holiday blends Indigenous Aztec beliefs with Catholic traditions brought by Spanish colonizers. November 1st (All Saints' Day) honors children who have died, and November 2nd (All Souls' Day) is for remembering adults.

Families create ofrendas, or home altars, decorated with photos, candles, marigolds (cempasúchil), food, sugar skulls, and personal items that their loved ones enjoyed in life. These offerings are believed to help guide the spirits back home for a short visit. It's a way of saying: we still remember you, and we still love you.

You might've seen the movie *Coco* — it beautifully captures the heart of the holiday: the importance of family, memory, and never forgetting those who came before us. Is it the same as Halloween? Not really. While both holidays happen around the same time and use skull imagery, Halloween is rooted in European traditions and focuses on fear, costumes, and candy. Día de los Muertos is about connection, remembrance, and celebration, not fright.

So, is Día de los Muertos just Mexican? Mostly, yes — it began in Mexico and is deeply rooted in Mexican Indigenous culture, especially among the Nahua people (like the Aztecs). But it's also celebrated in other parts of Latin America, and by people of Mexican heritage all around the world.

In short:

We celebrate Día de los Muertos to keep our loved ones close — not just in memory, but in spirit. It's not “goodbye.” It's “welcome back.”



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