

CONNECTION

Sharing the day-to-day learning experience

at

Community Homes & Services

PO Box 744, Novato CA 94948

415-408-3604

www.communityhomesandservices.com

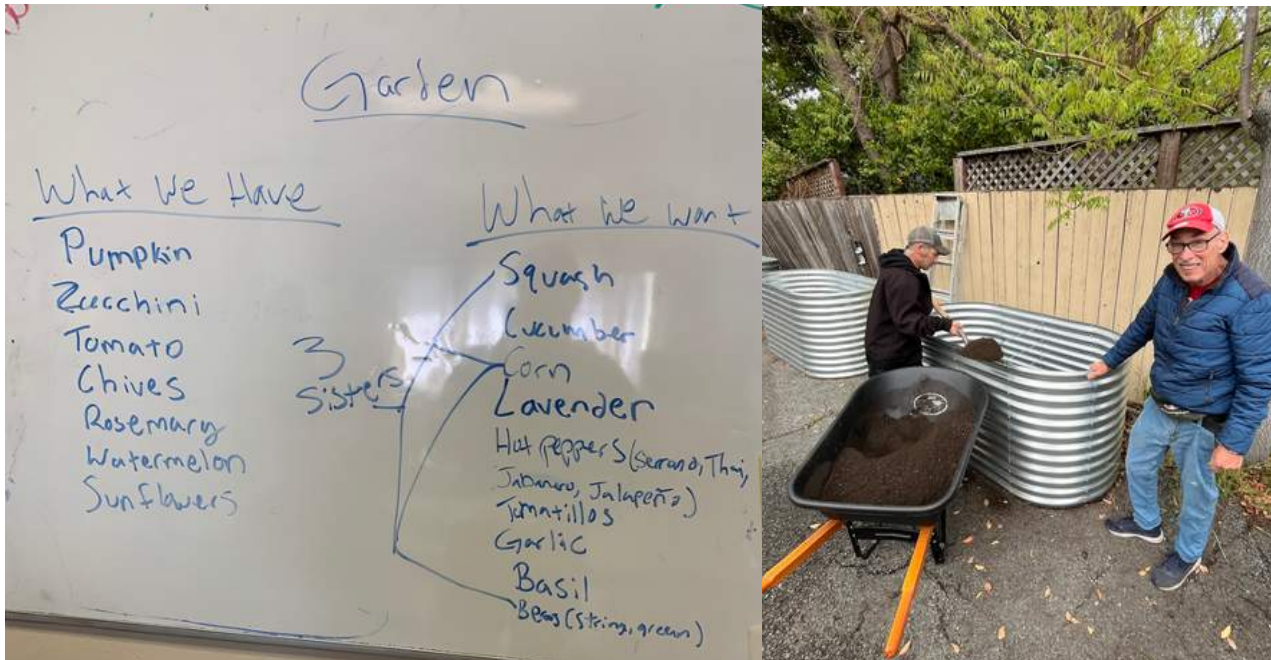
Spring Planting



Springtime is here in Marin County, and at CH&S we're taking the opportunity to plant some vegetables in our backyard. We started off with four massive planter boxes. Carolyn ordered them, and Jason, Pat, and Joe put them together. We learned a lot (mostly about the dangers of sharp corrugated metal), and in the end we had some fine looking containers.

But the containers needed dirt. Lots of dirt. 1.5 yards of dirt, to be exact. That's about 3,000 lbs of material, lovingly transported from the front of the building to the back by hand. Donald, Daniel, Jason, Joe, and Pat loaded the wheelbarrow time and time again, and somehow it eventually all ended up in the planter boxes! Phew.

How Does Our Garden Grow?



Then the fun part—choosing vegetables. After taking a census we settled on cucumbers, bell peppers, hot peppers, tomatoes, and squash. Pat led the group on a health and nutrition class about vegetables and *the three sisters* agricultural technique. If you're not familiar with it, the three sisters are squash, corn, and climbing beans, which work together in what's called "companion planting": the corn and beans are planted together in mounds formed by hilling soil around the base of the plants each year, and squash is typically planted between the mounds.

The cornstalk serves as a trellis for climbing beans, the beans fix nitrogen in their root nodules and stabilize the maize in high winds, and the wide leaves of the squash plant shade the ground, keeping the soil moist and helping prevent the establishment of weeds. Amazing!



Prepping for Planting

This season, Mike, Bert, Phoebe, Tyrone, and Mary helped with our garden by shopping for seeds and starts including pumpkin, watermelon, tomato (for Ricky and David M), and zucchini!

Pumpkins need space and a longer growing period. Seeds planted now are usually ready in the fall. In addition to carving, pumpkins can be roasted for soups, and the seeds can be cleaned and toasted for eating. Yum!

Tomatoes typically grow well in Novato, especially in full-sun locations. They need about 6–8 hours of light per day and consistent watering at the base. Marin's cooler evenings can help improve flavor as the fruit ripens.

Watermelon requires more space and does best in warmer, sunnier parts of Marin County. Regular watering is important early on, with reduced watering later to concentrate sweetness.

And a single zucchini plant can produce continuously through the season which eventually leads to *National Sneak Some Zucchini onto Your Neighbor's Porch Day* on August 8th. One can only eat so much ratatouille, right?



Andrew's Corner

Theater Around the World



Bio: Andrew Newson is a student at Life College and is 28 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.

In Japan, there is a genre of theater called Kabuki, which is known for elaborate makeup, flamboyant costumes, and special effects. Chinese opera is a theater genre combining music, mime, vocal performance, and acrobatics. Mask theater is a traditional ceremonial performance in African countries used to represent ancestors and spirits. Puppet theater is a Russian genre that uses wooden and metal puppets to give diverse performances to all ages. Ancient Greek theater was a ceremony that combined music, dancing, and masked actors to play out stories. Commedia dell'arte is an Italian form of theater using stock characters and distinctive masks. The original purpose of theater was to honor gods and celebrate community. Theater has been used to teach biblical stories to the public. The latin word for actors is histriones. The term "theatre" is derived from the ancient Greek word "theatron", meaning "a place of seeing". Actors are often called thespians because of a man named Thespis, who is believed to be the first celebrity actor. We have a drama class at Life College, which is why I chose to write about theater around the world. Right now we are working on monologues. A monologue is a long, uninterrupted speech delivered by one person, like an actor in a play, a comedian, or a character in a movie, either addressing others, the audience, or themselves. The word "monologue" is derived from the Greek word for "speaking alone". Monologues serve to reveal inner thoughts, advance a thought, or dominate a conversation. Devlin is memorizing a monologue from the tv show "The West Wing", in an episode called "Two Cathedrals". Devlin is a big fan of the actor Martin Sheen, who plays the president of the United States in "The West Wing". Matthew was especially excited about translating the lines in Latin!



National Parrot Day-May 31

The Legend of Parrots Guiding Christopher Columbus to America

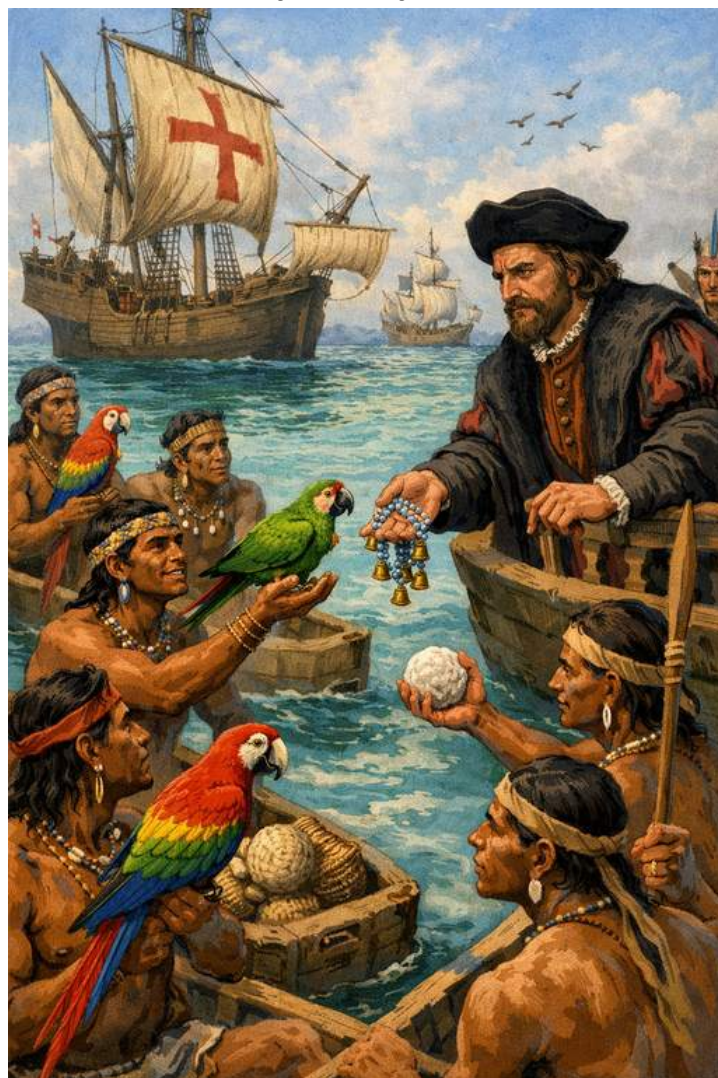
The legend goes that a flock of parrots led Columbus off course in 1492, accidentally delivering him to the Americas. It's a good story — but not exactly the whole truth. Columbus didn't "discover" America, of course. He was a navigator hired to find a trade route, and he found a continent that he never acknowledged as new. Plus there were lots of people who had already been living on this land for millennia.

After 29 days out of sight of land, the crew spotted "immense flocks of birds," which sailors trapped and determined to be "field" birds — probably Eskimo curlews and American golden plovers. Two days later, they made landfall.

When the Taíno people paddled out to meet the ships, parrots were among the first things they offered. They swam out and traded parrots, balls of cotton, and javelins for European glass beads and bells — this was the first, relatively friendly encounter recorded by Columbus in his *Diario*. Parrots were used as money.



To prove he had found new land, Columbus brought back native people (he kidnapped between 10-25 Taíno people to take back to Spain — only 8 survived the voyage), some gold, and some parrots. These things were proof he had been somewhere extraordinary. And proof that maybe Columbus was not the let's-have-a-friendly-Thanksgiving-dinner-with-the-Natives guy we once thought he was.



CH&S Reading Comprehension

Wild Parrots in San Francisco

Ready to Read READING COMPREHENSION

Wild parrots live in San Francisco and many people are surprised to see them flying over streets and parks. These bright green and red birds are called *cherry-headed conures*. They are not native to California, but they have made the city their home.

Some people think they are a flock of escaped or released exotic pets that live mainly around Telegraph Hill. These vibrant green birds, which became the city's official animal in 2023. The parrots are known for their loud calls and for feeding on local berries and fruit. Over time, they formed a flock and learned how to survive in the wild. These parrots have adjusted to living in new places.

The parrots became famous from the movie *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*. The film tells the story of a man named Mark Bittner, who cared for the birds and studied their behavior. The movie helped people see how intelligent and social these parrots are. They form strong bonds and even seem to have friendships and conflicts.

One unusual fact is that the parrots can recognize faces and voices. They also communicate with loud calls that echo through the city. Baby parrot chicks are born without feathers and depend completely on their parents. As they grow, they learn to fly and join the flock.

Even though city life can be hard, the parrots continue to thrive. They find food in trees and gardens and build nests in hidden places. Their story is a reminder that nature can exist in busy urban spaces. For many residents, seeing these colorful birds brings joy and a sense of wonder in everyday life.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Wild Parrots in San Francisco review questions:

1. Where do the wild parrots live?
 - a. Novato
 - b. San Diego
 - c. San Francisco
 - d. Chicago
2. True or False: The parrots are native to California.
3. How might the parrots have first arrived in the city?

4. What is the name of the movie about the parrots?
 - A. Bird City
 - B. The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill
 - C. Flying Friends
5. True or False: The parrots cannot recognize people.
6. What does adaptability mean in the article?

7. What are baby parrots called?
 - a. Puppies
 - b. Parritos
 - c. Chicks
 - d. PeeWees

8. True or False: The parrots live alone and do not form groups.
9. Where do parrots find food in the city?

10. Why do people enjoy seeing these parrots?



The Bird Club



Club Members: Bert, Frank, Mike R, Linda, Phoebe, Steve, Tyrone, Val, with Audrey and Mary



We love getting out and exploring our community, and our Bird Club has been doing just that in local parks around Novato. Lately, a lot of attention has gone to one bird in particular, the *mute swan*.

They're hard to miss. Bright white, long curved necks, gliding across the water. They really are captivating and very beautiful to watch.



The “Ugly” Duckling

Despite their name, *mute swans* aren't quiet—they hiss loudly to defend their territory. Their young, called *cygnets*, are born gray and turn white as they mature.

Do you remember the tale, *The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Andersen, where an ugly cygnet grows into a swan? That story reminded us that change takes time and that we should not judge by appearances.



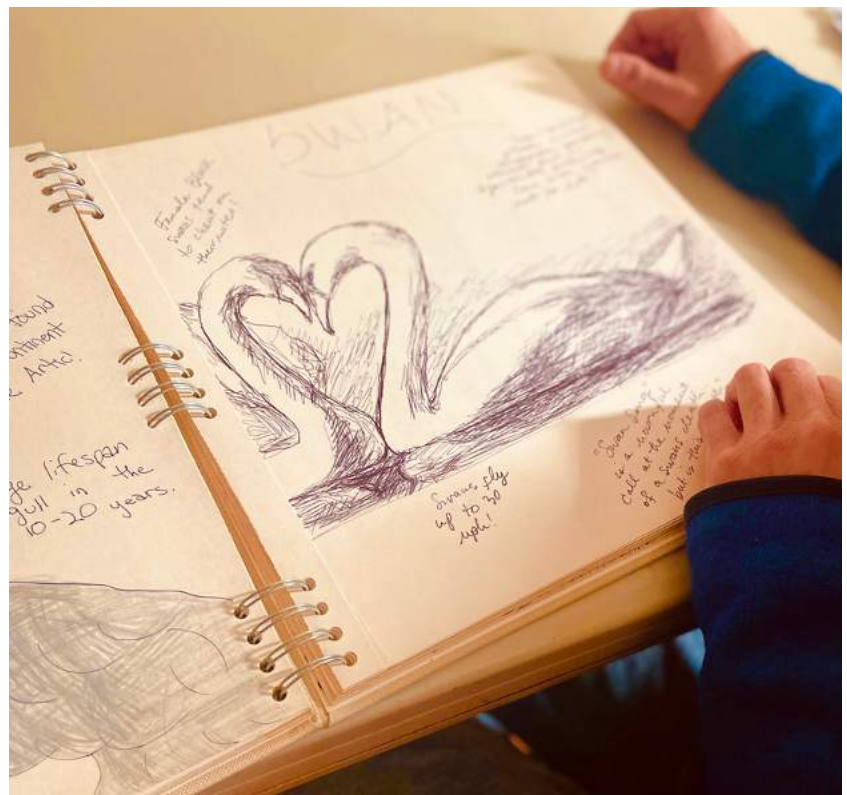
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On our birdwatching outings, we head out into nature, take our time, and really look to see what's out there. The swans are graceful, strong and a little territorial. Mute swans are native to northern and central Eurasia and have been domesticated in Western Europe since the 12th century. They were intentionally brought to the United States by private breeders for display at zoos, parks, and private estates. A small number of these swans escaped or were released. By eating large amounts of submerged aquatic vegetation, mute swans can negatively impact the aquatic habitats that native species depend upon. Additionally, mute swans are aggressive towards other birds and people, but so far we have not seen that happen.

One of the best parts of the Bird Club is that we've started keeping a book of what we see. It's filled with photos, notes and observations from each walk. We write about moments we don't want to forget. Someone spots something new, we write it down, and our bird book is filling up.

It's a good excuse to get outside, but it's more than that. We are connecting, learning as we go, and noticing the world around us. There's something about bird watching in a group that is more fun!

If you've been thinking about getting out more or trying something different, bird watching is an easy place to start!



Mental Health Month

The Basics — and Why They Matter Here

A quick-read guide for staff at Community Homes & Services

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Every May, Mental Health Awareness Month puts a spotlight on something straightforward: mental health matters — for everyone. In our work, that message has a particular urgency. The adults we support are significantly more likely to experience mental health challenges than the general population — and significantly less likely to receive the help they need.

Here is what the research says, what makes it complicated, and what our roles look like in practice.

BY THE NUMBERS

>9x

more likely to have anxiety or depression than adults without disabilities

~1/3

of adults with IDD has a co-occurring mental health condition

49%

less likely to be depressed when part of structured community programs like the Special Olympics

A major study published in JAMA Network Open in 2026 analyzed data from more than 44,000 American adults. It found that adults with IDD reported anxiety and depression at rates more than nine times higher than their peers — and that nearly half experienced anxiety symptoms every single day.

This is not rare. It is something we encounter every day in our work.

WHAT IS A DUAL DIAGNOSIS?

This simply means a person has both an intellectual or developmental disability AND a mental health condition at the same time.

Dual Diagnosis: A person has IDD plus a separate mental health condition. The two things coexist. Neither causes the other. Both need attention.

Some common examples:

- IDD + anxiety disorder
- IDD + depression
- IDD + bipolar disorder
- IDD + ADHD

Nothing complicated — just more than one thing going on at once, each with its own needs.

THE TRICKY PART: IT OFTEN LOOKS DIFFERENT THAN WE EXPECT

Here is the central challenge: mental health conditions in adults with IDD often do not present the way we expect. That makes them easier to miss — and easier to misattribute to the disability itself.

Diagnostic Overshadowing: When a behavior or symptom is attributed to a person's disability rather than recognized as a sign of a separate, treatable mental health condition. It is one of the most common reasons mental health needs go unaddressed in this population.

In the general population, depression may look like:

- Saying "I feel sad" or "I feel hopeless"
- Crying frequently
- Withdrawing from friends
- Sleeping too much or too little

In adults with IDD, depression may look like:

- Increased irritability or agitation
- Stomachaches or headaches with no clear cause
- Refusing familiar, previously enjoyed activities
- Increased repetitive behaviors or loss of prior skills

When symptoms look different, they are easier to miss — and more likely to be dismissed as "just how that person is."

WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF CARE

Even when a concern is noticed, accessing mental health support is rarely simple. The barriers are well-documented.

COMMON BARRIERS TO CARE

- Not enough providers trained in IDD and mental health together
- Long waitlists at specialty clinics
- Cost and insurance gaps — roughly 1 in 5 adults with IDD report cost as a barrier to counseling
- Systems that do not communicate with each other
- IDD-specific training remains limited in many medical schools and residency programs (Frazier et al., 2025)

High need. Hard-to-access care. That gap is real — and it is why what happens inside our day program matters.

WHY OUR ROLES MATTERS

Staff who see participants every day — across different activities, moods, and social situations — are often the first to notice when something changes. That is not a small thing.

Your/our observations are clinically valuable. They can help catch problems early, before they escalate.

When you notice a change, you do not need to diagnose anything. You need to ask three questions:

- Is this different from their usual baseline?
- Has it lasted more than a few days?
- Are others noticing it too?

SIGNS WORTH NOTICING AND DOCUMENTING

- Less engaged or interested in activities they usually enjoy
- More irritable, agitated, or upset than usual
- Changes in energy — either low and flat, or unusually restless
- New physical complaints: headaches, stomachaches, without a clear cause
- Sleep or appetite changes (reported by residential staff or family)
- Loss of skills they previously had
- New or increased repetitive behaviors

When you notice something:

- Write it down — date, behavior, context
- Share it at the next team meeting
- Tell the support team, family member, or provider

THE GOOD NEWS: COMMUNITY HELPS

The same research that documents how serious this gap is also points to what helps. The JAMA study found that structured activity, routine, physical movement, and — most importantly — **a genuine sense of belonging are protective against depression and anxiety.**

A 2024 cohort study found that adults with IDD who participate in structured community programs like Special Olympics are 49% less likely to be diagnosed with depression. Researchers credited the combination of physical activity, social connection, and consistent community.

Day programs like CH&S are not just schedules. They are environments that actively support mental health — whether or not that word is ever used.

"How are you really doing?"

The people we support live with these challenges all year long. The goal is not just awareness — it is noticing, paying attention, and acting even when it is not spoken.

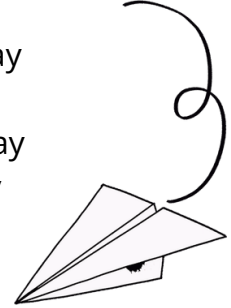
SOURCES

Osuna AR et al., JAMA Network Open, 2026 | Nguyen HM et al., European Psychiatry, 2025 | Mazza MG et al., Journal of Applied Research in IDD, 2020 | Pinals DA et al., Psychiatric Services, 2022 | Frazier JA et al., Medical Care, 2025

MAY 2026 NATIONAL DAYS

ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH, JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH, WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH, MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH, MINIATURE GARDEN MONTH

- 5/1 - May Day, Mother Goose Day, Global Love Day
- 5/2 - World Tuna Day, Space Day
- 5/3 - Kentucky Derby, Free Comic Book Day, Paranormal Day
- 5/4 - Star Wars Day, Bird Day, Lemonade Day, Orange Juice Day
- 5/5 - Cinco de Mayo, Astronaut Day
- 5/6 - Nurses Day, Teacher Appreciation Day
- 5/7 - Tourism Day
- 5/8 - World Red Cross Day, Coconut Cream Pie Day
- 5/9- Lost Sock Memorial Day, Sleepover Day, Alphabet Magnet Day
- 5/10 - Mini Golf Day, Clean Up Your Room Day, Archery Day
- 5/11 - Mothers Day, Twilight Zone Day, Train Day
- 5/12 - International Nurses Day, Limerick Day
- 5/13 - Apple Pie Day, Crouton Day, Fruit Cocktail Day, Frog Jumping Day
- 5/14 - Dance Like a Chicken Day, Buttermilk Biscuit Day
- 5/15 - Bring Flowers to Someone Day, Chocolate Chip Day
- 5/16 - Do Something Good for your Neighbor Day, Classic Movie Day, BBQ Day
- 5/17 - Learn to Swim Day, Pack Rat Day, Cherry Cobbler Day, Walnut Day
- 5/18 - International Museum Day, No Dirty Dishes Day, Visit Your Relatives Day
- 5/20 - Rescue Dog Day, World Bee Day, Pick Strawberries Day, Streaming Day
- 5/21 - American Red Cross Founder's Day
- 5/22 - World Goth Day, Maritime Day, Buy a Musical Instrument Day
- 5/23 - Taffy Day, Lucky Penny Day, Cooler Day, Road Trip Day
- 5/24 - Scavenger Hunt Day, Escargot Day, Brother's Day
- 5/25 - **Memorial Day - HOLIDAY**, Geek Pride Day, Towel Day
- 5/26 - Paper Airplane Day
- 5/28 - Flip Flop Day, Hamburger Day, Brisket Day
- 5/29 - Paper Clip Day
- 5/30 - Creativity Day, Water a Flower Day
- 5/31 - Smile Day, World No Tobacco Day, Autonomous Vehicle Day



We Tried It—Driverless Cars!

With Zachary, Hayley, Michelle and Jennifer

May 31st is National Autonomous Vehicle Day, and we took a field trip to San Francisco to try out the driverless Waymo taxis.

We parked in a lot right across the Golden Gate Bridge, in the Presidio, and called a Waymo ride from an app on Jennifer's phone.



Check out the picture (left) of the fancy driverless Jaguar that picked us up by our van two minutes later! The first challenge was how to open the doors—the handles were flush with the doors until we unlocked them from the app. Inside, we found two screens and zero drivers. You can't sit in the driver's seat, so as not to mess with the controls, and it is pretty bizarre to see an empty seat with a spinning steering wheel!

There were two touch screens, one in front and one in back, so we could watch our progress and see what all the cameras on

eras on the car see. If we had been braver about pushing buttons, which we were not, we could have played our own music on their stereo, but we were ok with the

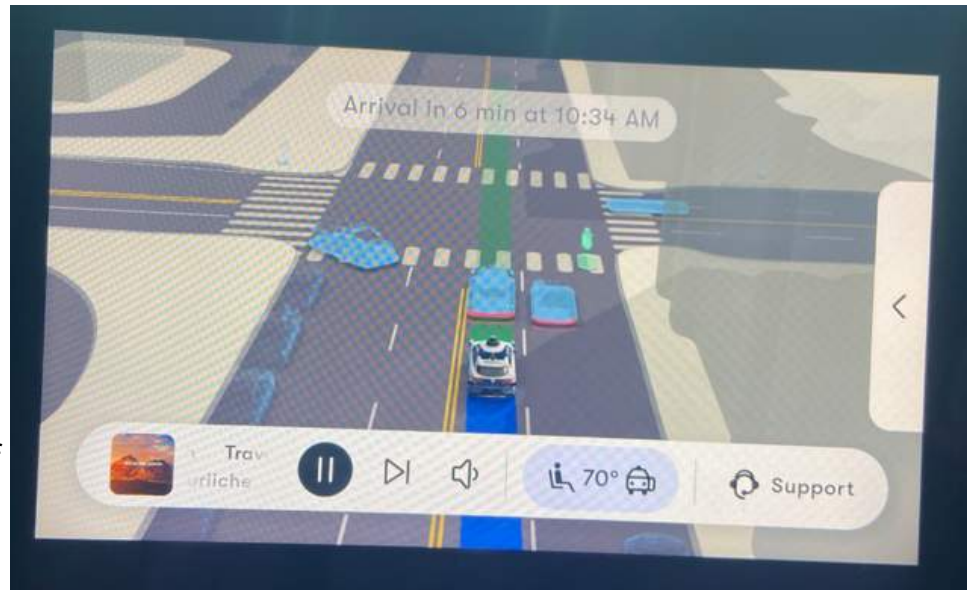
soothing sounds of elevator jazz turned down low. It was interesting to see the details of our surroundings on the screen: the cameras could tell the difference between pedestrians and bicycles, and got surprisingly specific, too. There was a two-seater bicycle, and both riders showed up on the screen.



Watch Out for Pedestrians!

One pedestrian was holding a shopping bag, and the shape of the bag was clearly visible! (We're pretty sure she was taking a picture of our driverless car going by!)

Check out the picture of the screen—you can see the difference between vehicles in motion, that are bright blue, and parked cars, that are darker blue. Look at the little green pedestrian in the crossing walk!



(Below) We snapped a shot of a cable car crossing in front of our autonomous car—cool to see two drastically different types of transportation on the same road!



Our drive to Pier 39 wasn't much different than a conventional taxi ride, other than the total absence of a driver. Once we got dropped off, we shopped at some fun specialty stores, including a seashell store (where Zachary received an important business call), a Christmas store, a sock store, and a store that sold exclusively rubber duckies.

Robot Taxi Ride

Then we noticed the robots... robots were everywhere we looked! There was a Zoltar fortune telling machine, where Michelle got her fortune told. Then there was a coffee shop with robot baristas and not a human in sight, and a whole store of robotics, where a man riding on electric luggage tried to get us to buy a robot dog. We politely declined, although we later agreed a robot dog might be cuter and more approachable with googly eyes.



Our robot taxi ride back to the van was a little more eventful. The driverless vehicle pulled up to pick us up in the middle of a busy street, with a full lane of traffic between us. Since we remembered how long it had taken us to unlock the secret hidden door handles, not to mention squeeze three grown adults into the back seat, we stayed on the sidewalk, and the car took a left turn and left us there. We'd hoped it would circle back and pull over to the sidewalk, but it parked a full two blocks away. We had to try to find it on Jennifer's phone, from a little blue tracking beacon, while watching our 6 minute time limit tick away to zero! Once back to our original starting point and our trusty minivan, the taxi pulled off to

the side of the road rather than into the parking lot. We had to make a mad dash across a busy street with blind corners! But we agreed it was very exhilarating, and we would definitely have something to write about in our magazine article about autonomous taxis!



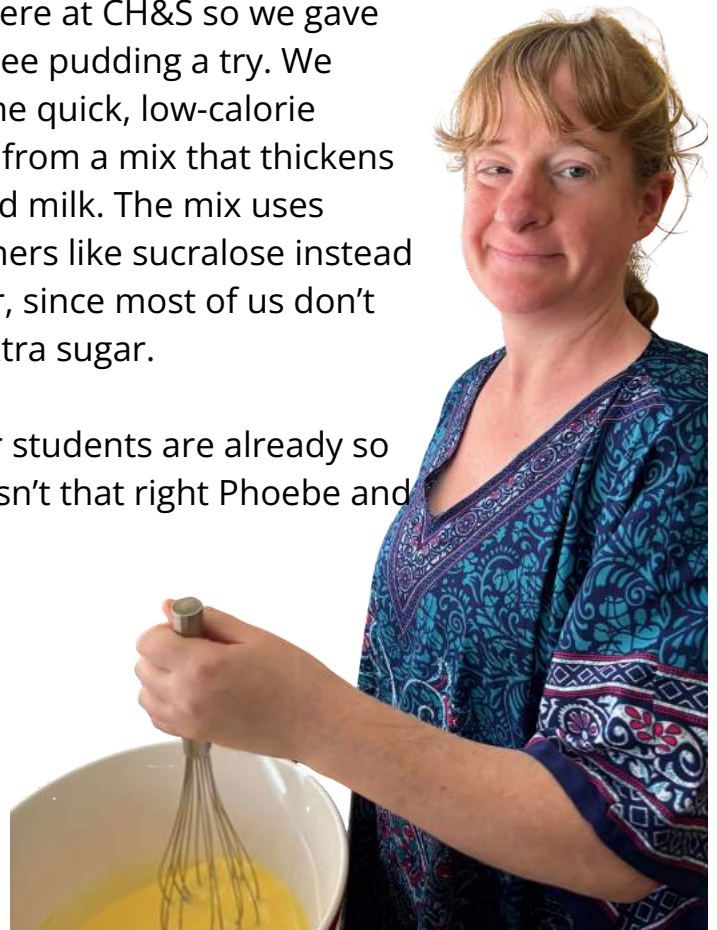
We Made Sugar-free Pudding!



We are big fans of sugar-free candy here at CH&S so we gave sugar-free pudding a try. We made the quick, low-calorie dessert from a mix that thickens with cold milk. The mix uses sweeteners like sucralose instead of sugar, since most of us don't need extra sugar.

And our students are already so sweet, isn't that right Phoebe and Tess?

Here is a make-it-from-scratch version: Mix 2 cups milk, 2 tablespoons cornstarch, sweetener to taste, a little vanilla, and a pinch of salt. Heat while stirring until it thickens, then chill.



WE LEARNED ABOUT OUTER SPACE!

Exploring Outer Space

Outer Space - is the vast, dark, and mostly empty area that starts just above Earth's atmosphere, filled with stars, planets, and galaxies.

Galaxy - is a huge group of stars, planets, dust, and gas.

Milky Way - our home; the galaxy we live in.

Black hole - a region in space where gravity is so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape.

Supernova - is a very big explosion of a star in space.

Asteroids - small, rocky objects that orbit the sun.

Comets - large objects made of dust and ice that orbit the sun.

Meteoroid - small, rocky or metallic chunk of debris floating in space.

Meteor - a bright light in the sky that happens when a small space rock enters the Earth's atmosphere.

Meteorite - a space rock that lands on Earth.



Jehann used her beautiful penmanship to outline our Exploring Outer Space class. We learned that outer space is the vast, dark, and mostly empty area that starts just above Earth's atmosphere. Even though it looks empty, it is filled with stars, planets, and galaxies.

A galaxy is a huge group of stars, planets, dust, and gas. Our home galaxy is called the *Milky Way*. When you look up at the night sky, you are seeing part of the Milky Way.



METEORIDS, METEORS, AND METEORITES

A *black hole* is a region in space where gravity is so strong that nothing—not even light—can escape. A *supernova* is a very big explosion of a star. It is one of the brightest and most powerful events in space.

There are also smaller objects moving around in space. *Asteroids* are small, rocky objects that orbit the sun. *Comets* are larger objects, often with a glowing tail, made of dust and ice that also orbit the sun.

Meteoroids (see pic below) are a small piece of rock or metal floating in space. When a meteoroid enters Earth's atmosphere and burns, it becomes a *meteor*, which looks like a bright streak of light in the sky.

If part of it lands on Earth, it is called a *meteorite*.



As it turns out, outer space may seem quiet, but it is full of motion, light, and amazing things to discover.



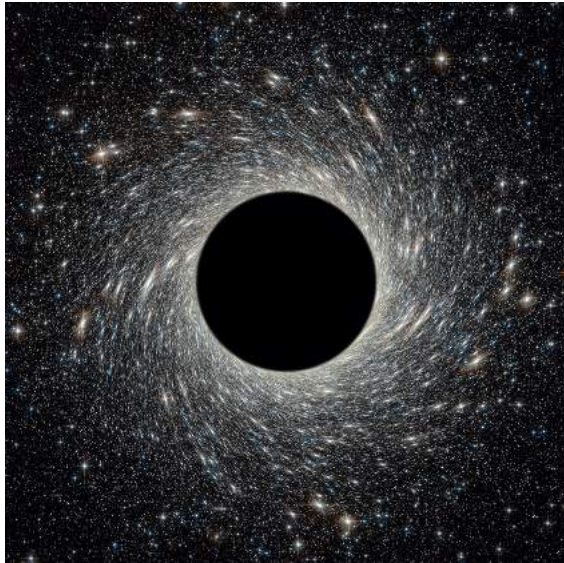
We accept and appreciate donations of any size or kind.
All donations to CH&S are tax-deductible.
CH&S is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

(Above) comet

(Right) meteor



DRAW A LINE FROM THE WORD TO THE MATCHING PICTURE



Saturn

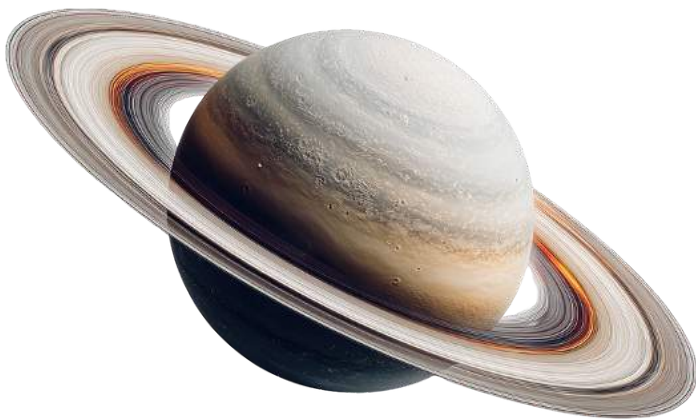
Black Hole

Milky Way

Earth

Meteorite

Supernova





Nathan's Travelogue

With a program design that emphasizes Project Based Learning, CH&S has the versatility to customize individualized service arrangements for each student.

Coming up with a project for Nathan did not take a lot of imagination. He is a world class cyclist and his element is the great, big, beautiful outdoors. He is also a wealth of knowledge when it comes to places to go and things to see and do all over Marin and

Sonoma Counties. On most Tuesdays and Thursdays, Nathan and Carolyn (also an avid cyclist) hop on their bikes and go "on assignment." Besides being fun and exhilarating, bike riding improves balance, coordination and over-all fitness while being gentle on the joints. Being outdoors can reduce stress, lift mood, and create a sense of freedom. Riding together helps to build connection and confidence while being independent.

Nathan and Carolyn always collaborate in describing their adventures within Nathan's Project Journal and they do so in *Nathan's voice*... which pretty much makes for the wackiest travelogue you'll ever read. Look for future installments in coming issues of this magazine.



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Coffee with Katie



This May, Katie hits a milestone birthday. Turning 40 has a way of making one pause and take stock, but in her case, it also sparked something new. Katie suggested a column in this magazine where she can explore and share one of her everyday joys: great coffee and the places that serve it.

Katie will be visiting some of her favorite coffee spots around Marin, along with a few new ones, and giving honest, down-to-earth reviews. No pretension, no complicated rating systems. Just what's good, what's worth ordering, and why she keeps going back.

If you know Katie, you already know her order. Iced mocha, no whip, with oat milk. Always iced. Yes, even when it's cold out. Over the coming months, she'll be stopping by a handful of local favorites, including Trailhead Coffee, Marin Coffee Roasters, and Kitchen in Hamilton (a weekday-only gem that's worth planning around). But for her very first review, she's starting with a place that feels like home.

First Stop: Creekside Bakery

Creekside Bakery (1719 Grant Ave, Novato, CA 94945) is relaxed, a little tucked away, and full of things that feel thoughtfully made rather than overdesigned. Katie's order here goes beyond just the drink—what really keeps her coming back is the food. At the top of her list is the savory waffle. It's not currently on the menu, but *if you know, you know*.

Then there's the biscuit and gravy, which she's personalized. The biscuit comes split in half, and instead of leaving it as-is, she builds it into a breakfast sandwich with egg and bacon tucked right into the middle. She's also a fan of the classic breakfast sandwich on brioche.

Katie's turning 40, but this column isn't about age. It's about paying attention to the things you already love and sharing them with others. Next up, she'll head over to another Marin favorite. Same drink order. New spot. Honest take.

If you have a place you think she should try, let us know.



Knowledge Class

We've been enjoying a timeless favorite...

Snakes in a Class/Facts & Talking Points

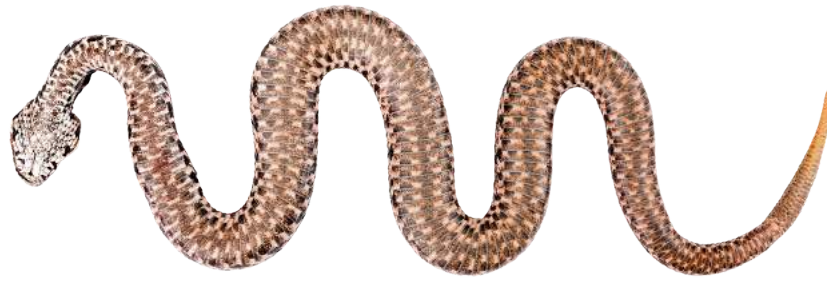
**Let's Talk Snake Facts:* How many legs do snakes have? (Trick question!) There are a whopping 3,000 species of snakes on earth. Snakes come in all sizes: the smallest snake in the world is the Barbados thread snake, which is about 4 inches, smaller than a nightcrawler. The largest snake is the reticulated python, which can grow up to 20 feet! The heaviest snake is the green anaconda, which can weigh up to 550 pounds! That's a heavy snake.

**Snake Snacks:* Snakes eat their prey whole, which means they swallow the whole thing without chewing. They can separate their jaws, so they can consume prey up to three times larger than their head. Why do they flick their forked tongues? That's how they smell what's around them.

**Snake Snoozing:* Most snakes are nocturnal, so they sleep during the day and are active at night. Snakes are cold-blooded, so they can't create their own body heat. Instead, they sun themselves to regulate their body temperature. Snakes love themselves a nice warm rock!

**Staring Contest Champions:* Snakes don't have eyelids! Snakes can't blink or close their eyes. Since snakes spend much of their time close to the ground, with leaves, grit, sand, and dirt, they need eye protection. So how do their eyes stay safe and not dry out? Snake's answer to the eyelid is a clear scale over each eye, so they can see even when covering their eyes.

**All snakes can swim, so don't go thinking you can escape a snake by jumping into a river.*



Exercise Ideas & Discussion Stimulants

*Share your experiences with snakes. Have you ever seen a snake in the wild? Besides in a zoo or a pet store, where have you seen a snake? Were you scared? (Fear of snakes is called ophidiophobia.)

*How many types of snakes can you think of? (asp, anaconda, boa, cobra, copperhead, garter, gopher, grass, mamba, rattle, etc.)

*Collective terms for multiple snakes include: a den of snakes, a pit of snakes, a nest of snakes, and a slither of snakes. There is also a quiver of cobras. Which one is your favorite?

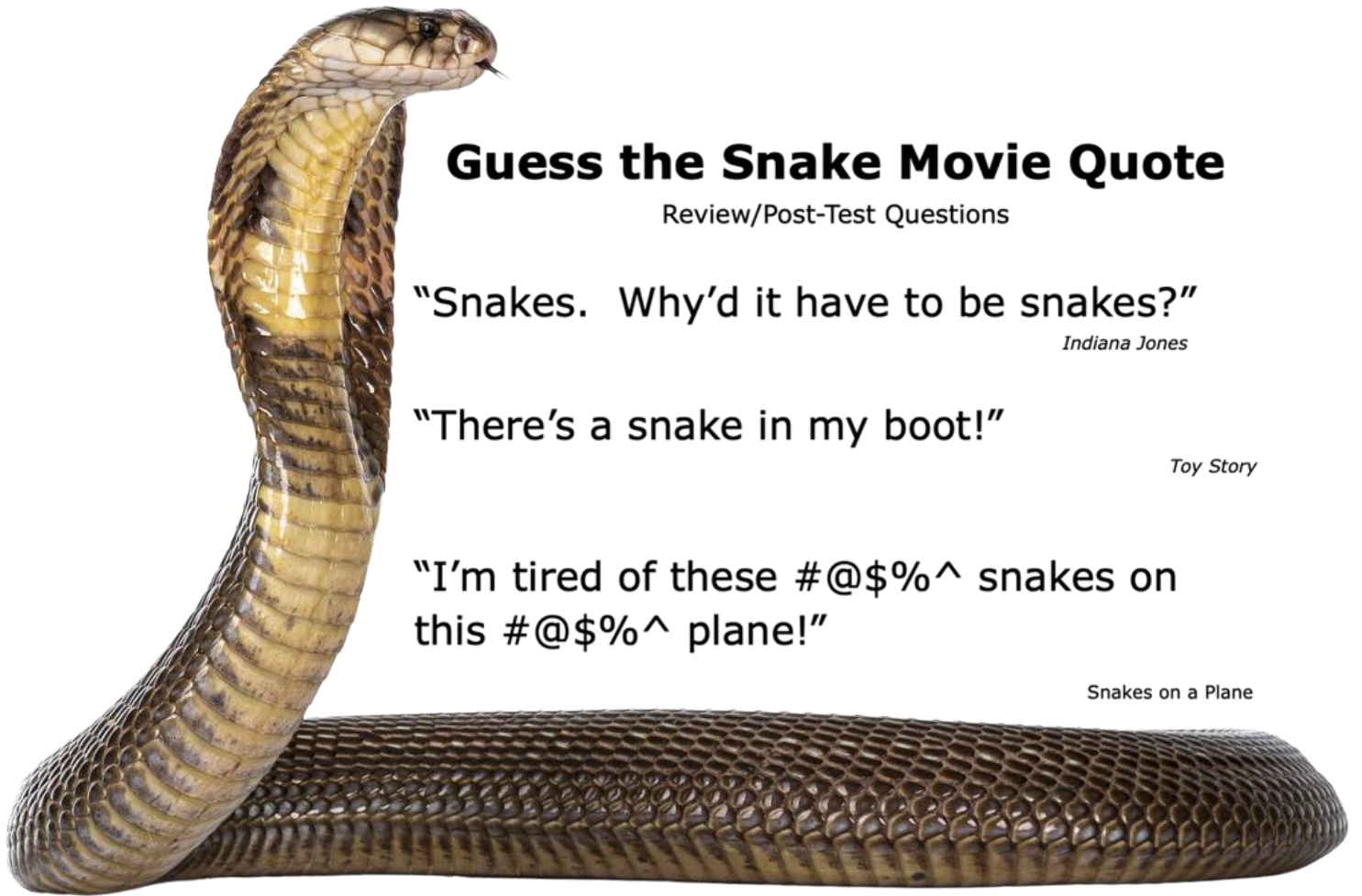
*Snake Sayings and Idioms: *If it was a snake, it would have bitten you! He's a real snake in the grass.*

*If you roll the dice in Vegas and you get snake eyes, what does that mean you rolled? Is it lucky or unlucky?

*What's a snake oil salesman?

*A plumber uses a snake to unclog a drain. What species of snake does he use to get all that nasty gunky hair out?

*Snakes and Ladders (turned into the less-snakey Chutes and Ladders)



Guess the Snake Movie Quote

Review/Post-Test Questions

"Snakes. Why'd it have to be snakes?"

Indiana Jones

"There's a snake in my boot!"

Toy Story

"I'm tired of these #@\$%^ snakes on this #@\$%^ plane!"

Snakes on a Plane

Happy May Birthday!

5/2 - Gail and Dylan

5/7 - David G. and Katie

5/8 - Andrew N.

5/11 - Colleen and Harold

5/29 - Donald



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Community Homes & Services

May 2026 Connection Magazine

Hanging out and cooking with friends!

