

# CONNECTION

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## #NationalSelfieDay

The Psychology of the Selfie



National Selfie Day is June 21. Why do we take selfies? Some may say it's because of vanity, narcissism, and the short attention span of modern life. The more interesting answer concerns identity, memory, belonging, and an ancient human need: the need to say, "I was here."

### **Narcissism?**

Research has found a link between narcissism and selfie-taking: people with higher levels of narcissism tend to take and post more selfies—narcissism involves an inflated need for external validation whereas self-esteem is a quieter sense of one's own worth. *They're not the same thing.*

A person posting a selfie from a lavish birthday dinner or showing off a new outfit and a person documenting staying at a job for one year or baking cookies for the first time are doing different things, *even if the images look similar*. A selfie is a self-generated, self-selected picture that communicates a *changing* message about oneself at a particular moment—*I was here*. This happened to me. I looked like this at this moment.

# I Selfie, Therefore I Exist

Sociologist Erving Goffman described *impression management* (a process where people attempt to influence others' perceptions by regulating and controlling information). We have an idea of what others expect of us, or what others consider a good impression of us, and that shapes how we present ourselves. Sometimes selfies are a way to acquire social acceptance. That's not pathological. That's just being human in a social world.



## Do Selfies Make Life Look Better Than It Was?

Both yes and no — and the tension is interesting. Photography increases engagement with an experience in the moment, this tends to make the memory of the experience more positive (look how happy everyone looks in the photo above left). But psychologist Linda Henkel's research also identified a *photo-taking impairment effect*: people who photographed objects remembered fewer details and had hazier impressions than those who simply looked and took it all in. The camera can take the place of memory; I took a picture, so I don't have to remember it.

So yes, the photo may make the moment look better than it was. Is this a problem? That depends on what you're after. An emotional memory requires presence and attention. A curated archive of a life being lived requires documentation. Both are legitimate. *They're just different things.*

## Why Selfies Matter for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

At CH&S, we work with adults who have spent much of their lives having decisions made *about* them rather than *by* them. *Self-determination*—the right to direct your own life, make your own choices and express your own preferences—is a core value in our field because it is so important yet also often denied.

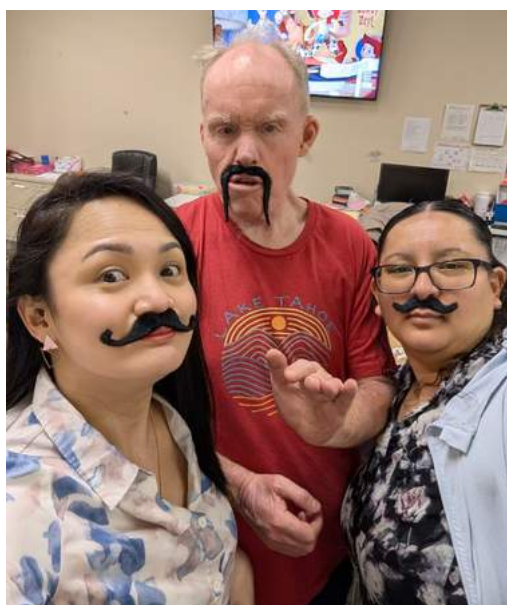
Choosing to take a picture, deciding how to pose and who to pose with, and picking a moment worth capturing — these are small acts of authorship. *I choose what to*

# I Was Here

*document.* I decide what matters. For people whose choices are frequently managed or constrained by others, that agency (having control over the decisions that shape your own life — what you do, how you spend your time, and what matters to you) counts.

There's also the simple pleasure of being seen. A photograph says: *this person was somewhere, did something, and had a good day.* At CH&S, when staff photograph themselves with students during outings, activities, or celebrations—or when students photograph themselves—those images serve an important purpose. They create a record of real lives being lived: not lives defined by a diagnosis, but lives with fun moments, friends, laughter, and places visited. Shared in a newsletter, on Instagram, or shown to a family member, those pictures carry meaning way beyond just the aesthetics of the moment they were captured.

**selfie!**



A selfie from a program outing, a cooking class, or a birthday celebration isn't just a cute picture. It's evidence of a life being lived on one's own terms.

It says:

**I was here.**

**I did this.**

**I had fun.**

**And I want you to know!**

# Congrats Courtney!

Long before pickleball, before cornhole, before any of the backyard games we play today, there was *bocce*. One of the oldest sports in recorded history, bocce traces its roots to ancient Egypt and Rome, where soldiers played it with rounded stones. The game spread through Europe to the Americas and quietly became one of the most inclusive competitive sports in the world.

The premise is simple—roll your ball as close to the small target ball (the *pallino*) as possible. Bocce rewards patience, spatial reasoning, and precision under pressure. It is, at its core, a thinking person's game dressed up in an easy game.

Bocce was introduced to the Special Olympics program because it levels the playing field in a genuinely meaningful way: strength and speed matter far less than focus, consistency, and reading the court. Athletes who use wheelchairs can compete on equal terms with players who stand.

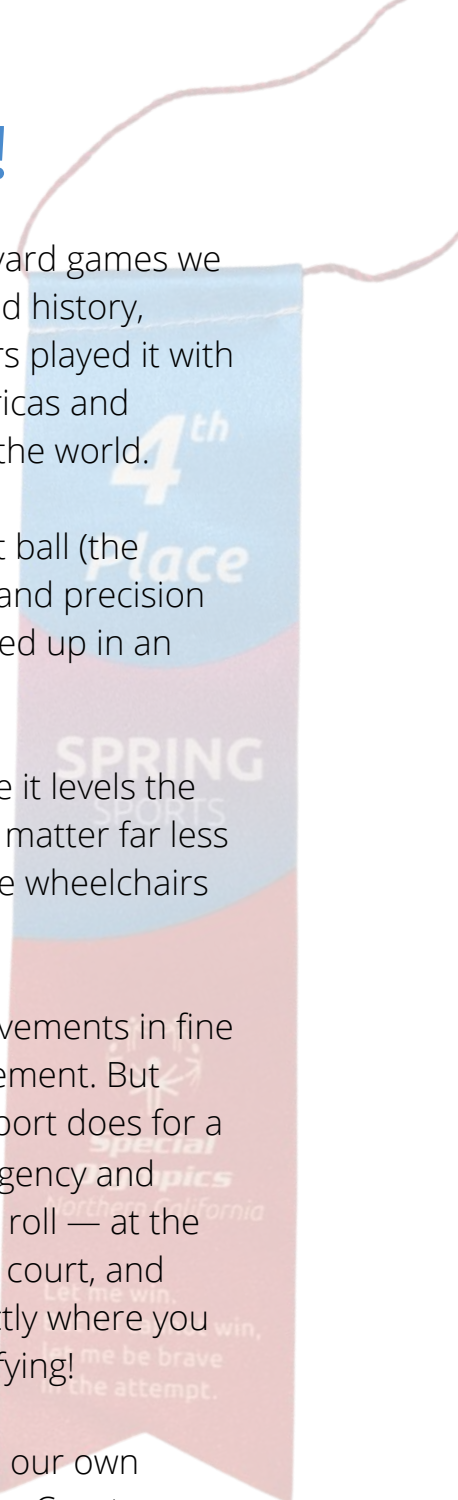
Studies in adapted physical education have documented improvements in fine motor coordination, visual-spatial processing, and social engagement. But perhaps more important than the clinical benefits is what the sport does for a



person's sense of agency and pride. To stand—or roll — at the foul line, survey the court, and place your ball exactly where you intended is so satisfying!

For participants like our own bocce ball champion, Courtney, who earned fourth place at Special Olympics, that power is entirely real. Fourth place is a great achievement and a testament to hours of practice, athletic skill, and a love of the game.

Congratulations to you, Courtney, our bocce ball champ!



# ***Rose's Journey: Living Life in Full Color*** ***with the Red Hat Society***

with Rose, Carolyn, Mary, Suzi, Valerie, Phoebe, and Carolyn



We want to tell you about our student, Rose, who has a busy and happy life at Enterprise. She and Carolyn recently spoke about the Red Hat Society, an organization known for its fun and friendships — and its colorful history.

The Red Hat Society was founded in 1998 by Sue Ellen Cooper of Fullerton, California, inspired by Jenny Joseph's beloved 1961 poem "Warning," which opens with:

“When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me...”

Cooper gave a red hat as a gift to a friend, the gesture caught on, and the playful tea gathering grew into a formal organization. The society is built around the idea that women over 50 deserve to embrace fun, friendship, and a little silliness rather than fading into the background — and they do it in style, wearing red hats paired with purple clothing as their joyful, signature look. The organization grew rapidly in the early 2000s into an international sisterhood with hundreds of thousands of members across dozens of countries, making it one of the largest women's social organizations in the world.

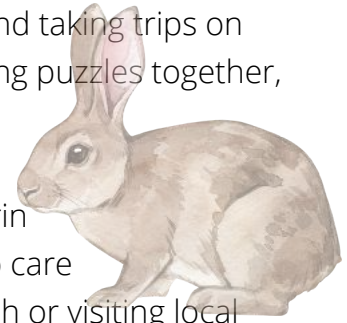
What did you think of the thrift store photo which we asked A.I. to turn into a garden tea party? Good job? Or?



# **Red Hatters and Pink Rose**

Like the Red Hat Society, Rose's schedule is packed with local trips and ways to connect with people in the community. She truly lives the life of a Red Hatter! Rose is an adventurer who loves seeing shows at the local theater and taking trips on the SMART Train. Her favorite things to do include hiking, putting puzzles together, playing games, and her book club.

Rose also believes in helping others. She volunteers at the Marin Humane Society, spending time in the Rabbit Romper Room to care for the animals there. A special part of Rose's life is having lunch or visiting local coffee shops with her friends to share good food and great conversation.



The Red Hat Society has a rule about hats: women over 50 wear **red** hats paired with purple. Because Rose is under 40, she proudly wears a **bright pink** hat — a sign that she will be a Red Hatter someday! Staff and friends who are over 50 wear their classic red hats and complete this colorful garden of friends.

For more info on the Red Hat Society, click here: <https://redhatsociety.com>



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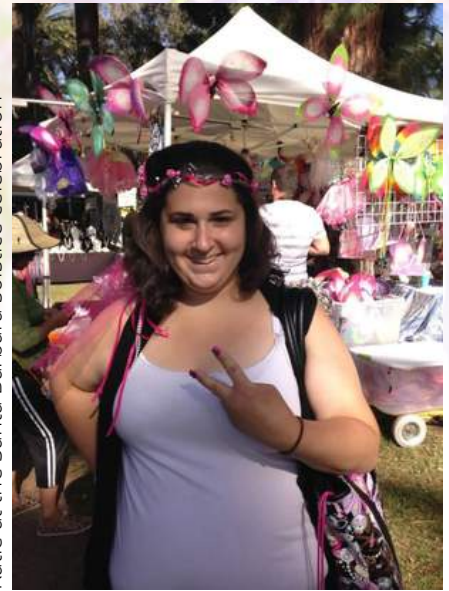
# Katie on Summer Solstice

## How Three Countries Celebrate the Longest Day of the Year

Katie is interested in how summer solstice is celebrated in different parts of the world. Katie loves solstice celebrations—making flower crowns, being in nature and learning the history of solstice celebration in other countries. She decided that she wanted to research how midsummer is celebrated in Finland, Sweden, and Lithuania.

Picture this: it's midnight, and it's not dark. Somewhere in Finland, a family sits around a lakeside bonfire, the sky still glowing gold. In a Lithuanian forest, young people are crashing through the underbrush searching for a particular flower that is said to bloom once a year. In a Swedish meadow, children weave crowns of wildflowers while

adults eat pickled herring and strawberries then dance around a pole decorated with greenery. Same day. Same sun. Three countries whose Midsummer celebrations embody everything Katie loves about summer solstice.



Katie at the Santa Barbara solstice celebration

### **Finland: The Holiday More Important Than Christmas**

After the long and cold winters filled with perpetual darkness, *Juhannus* became perhaps the most important holiday to Finns — more popular than Christmas to some families. The essentials are always the same: a bonfire (*kokko*) lit by the water's edge, a wood-fired sauna followed by a plunge into the lake, and a long table outside with new potatoes, grilled salmon, and bowls of fresh strawberries.



One of the oldest *Juhannus* traditions is *juhannustaika* — love magic. To invoke a dream of her future husband, young women pick seven different wildflowers from a field and place them under their pillows. Birch branches are cut and hung on the sides of the front door to keep spirits away and to bring fertility and good health to the house. Since the sky never quite turns completely dark, celebrations often continue into the wee hours since it is easy to lose track of time altogether.

### **Lithuania: The Dew Festival — Europe's Last Pagan Country**

Lithuania was the last country in Europe to officially adopt Christianity, in 1387. That means its pagan traditions had more time to take root, and the roots are deep. *Joninės* or *Rasos* (*Holiday Dew*) is defined by three elemental rituals: herbs, fire, and water.

# Swedish Midsommar



Lukashenko.lena, CC BY-SA 3.0  
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>

Wild plants are believed to reach their peak healing power this night. Bonfires burn until dawn to ward off evil spirits. And bathing at midnight and rolling in morning dew is said to bring health, beauty, and renewal for the year ahead.

The dew deserves special attention. At night, dew was collected by dragging linen cloth over meadows — the dew was used for healing, and faces were washed with it, especially dew wiped from rye in the belief that it would

make the complexion brighter. Then there's the fern flower: according to old beliefs, ferns only bloom on St. John's Eve, so young people in pairs go to the forest at night to look for it.

## Sweden: Midsommar and the Maypole in the Meadow

Most Swedes leave the city and head to the countryside to gather with loved ones. They walk barefoot in the morning dew for good health, wearing floral crowns to celebrate beauty and fertility. The maypole goes up in the nearest meadow, and people of all ages dance around it singing folk songs whose lyrics are as old as the hills. People stock up on pickled herring and strawberries topped with whipped cream (hopefully not at the same time!)

What strikes Katie when we researched all three traditions is the rituals they have in common beneath the different forms. Flowers. Fire. Water. Dew. The fear of evil spirits, and the rituals designed to hold them at bay.

## Try It Yourself: How to Celebrate the Solstice

You don't need a Finnish lake or a Lithuanian fern forest. Here are simple ways to bring these traditions home on Sunday, June 21:

- **Make a flower crown** — the Swedish and Lithuanian way. Gather any flowers or greenery you can find — from a garden, a farmers market, a backyard — and weave them together. Wear it for the day.
- **Pick seven flowers** — the Finnish tradition. Collect seven different wildflowers (or seven different blooms from a garden) and sleep with them under your pillow. See what kinds of dreams you have.

# Celebrating Solstice

- **Walk barefoot in the morning dew** — the Swedish and Lithuanian practice, believed to bring health and good luck. Early morning grass, bare feet, a slow walk. It's simple, lovely, and a little bit cold.
- **Make the meal** — new potatoes with butter and dill, grilled salmon or fish, strawberries with cream. All three countries set this same table. It turns out the summer solstice has a flavor, and it tastes like June.
- **Watch the sunrise or sunset** — the Lithuanians say the essence of Joninės is greeting the light. Step outside. Notice the sky. That's the whole tradition, at its core.

The summer solstice falls on Sunday, June 21, 2026 — the longest day of the year, and the one day when the whole Northern Hemisphere tilts its face toward the sun.

Katie insisted on listing some California solstice celebrations so you would not miss out. Here's what she recommends, with her favorite celebration listed first:

- **Santa Barbara Summer Solstice (June 19-21, 2026)**: A three-day festival in Alameda Park featuring a major parade on Saturday, June 20th, with creative art, costumes, and music. <https://www.solsticeparade.com/festival-parade>
- **Summer Solstice Mini Rock Fest (June 20, 2026 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM)**: This Santa Rosa festival at The California, 528 7th St, Santa Rosa, CA 95401 features live music. <https://www.caltheatre.com/event-details/summer-solstice-mini-rock-fest>
- **Summer Solstice Sunset Sail (June 21, 2026 7:15 PM - about 9:30 PM)**: A scenic boat cruise on the schooner Freda B on the San Francisco Bay. Departs from downtown Sausalito. <https://schoonerfredab.com>

## CH&S June Birthdays

Happy  
Birthday!

6/13 - Adara

6/14 - Nino

6/25 - Andrew Na

# JUNE 2026 NATIONAL DAYS

National Oceans Month, Safety Month,  
Great Outdoors Month, LGBTQIA Month

- 6/1 - Say Something Nice Day, Pen Pal Day, Dinosaur Day, Nail Polish Day
- 6/2 - Rocky Road Day
- 6/3 - World Bicycle Day, National Egg Day
- 6/4 - National Cheese Day, International Corgi Day
- 6/5 - Ketchup Day, Hot Air Balloon Day, Donut Day
- 6/6 - Gardening Exercise Day, Yo-yo Day, Black Bear Day
- 6/7 - VCR Day, June Bug Day
- 6/8 - Best Friends Day
- 6/9 - Strawberry Rhubarb Pie Day, Donald Duck Day, Meal Prep Day
- 6/10 - Herbs and Spices Day, Egg Roll Day, Iced Tea Day
- 6/11 - Corn on the Cob Day, Making Life Beautiful Day
- 6/12 - Peanut Butter Cookie Day, Jerky Day, Sewing Machine Day
- 6/13 - Weed Your Garden Day, Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 6/14 - Flag Day, Monkey Around Day
- 6/15 - Smile Power Day, Megalodon Day, Nature Photography Day
- 6/16 - World Sea Turtle Day
- 6/17 - World Croc Day, Mascot Day, Eat Your Vegetables Day
- 6/18 - International Picnic Day, Clean Your Aquarium Day
- **6/19 - Juneteenth HOLIDAY**
- 6/20 - World Juggling Day, West Virginia Day
- 6/21 - Father's Day, First Day of Summer, Seashell Day, Selfie Day, Intl Day of Yoga
- 6/22 - World Rainforest Day, Onion Ring Day, Kissing Day
- 6/23 - National Pink Day, Typewriter Day, Pink Flamingo Day
- 6/24 - World UFO Day
- 6/25 - Global Beatles Day, National Catfish Day
- 6/26 - Food Truck Day
- 6/27 - Intl Pineapple Day, PTSD Awareness Day, Sunglasses Day
- 6/28 - Paul Bunyan Day, INTERNATIONAL CAPS LOCK DAY
- 6/29 - National Camera Day, Waffle Iron Day, Intl Day of the Tropics
- 6/30 - Social Media Day, International Asteroid Day



# DANGEROUS INSECTS

with Connor and Joe

Connor has been interested in dangerous insects for many years. Though he doesn't remember exactly when his fascination began, he knows that he still wants to know more. He's been working with Joe once a week for the past few months on a knowledge class about them, and in the following pages you'll see a sneak peek of what they've come up with. The following entries were written by Connor, and they reflect the notes he's taken.

**Mosquitoes** (bottom right) are by far the most deadly insect on the planet because they transmit pathogens so effectively. Have you ever heard of zika, malaria, or dengue fever? These deadly pathogens are transmitted by mosquitoes.



<https://www.msosquito.org/velvet-ant>



**Red Velvet Ants** (top left), or “cow killers” aren't actually ants. They're wasps - the males have wings, and the females don't. They're what's known as a “parasitoid” - meaning instead of making their own homes, they take over existing insect colonies. Adults eat cockroaches, beetles, flies, bees, and other wasps. They're about 2 centimeters long, on average, making them one of the largest Velvet Ant species (there are over 3,000). They also have one of the most painful stings in nature, and can also release a strong “leave me alone” pheromone when cornered. Red Velvet Ants are found in the southern United States and into Mexico.



**Blister beetles** are dangerous because they produce a compound called *cantharidin*. Cantharidin, is an odorless, colorless, fatty substance that causes severe, painful blistering when it comes in contact with skin. The catharidin is present in the blister beetle's blood - which means it doesn't have to sting or bite you to give you a blister. Instead, a stressed out blister beetle will do what's called “reflexive bleeding”, or bleeding as a means of self defense. If you touch a bleeding blister beetle, you're in for a world of hurt. Blister beetles are a significant livestock pest because they can harm livestock if eaten.

# SPIDERS AND JETS

**The Black Widow** is the most venomous spider on the planet. They live under rocks, logs, and in crevices. Black widows can be identified by their distinctive red hour glass shape, and rounded dorsum. Some have red spots instead of the hourglass. Black widows weave "tangle webs", also known as cobwebs - rather than spoked, focal point webs.



Beetles are the black widow's main food source, and the reason the spiders are so venomous is because their food is so large. Symptoms of a black widow bite are pain at the bite site, muscle spasms, nausea/vomiting, and respiratory failure. There have been no reports of deaths caused by black widow bites since 1983. There are 31 different species of black widow that all fall under that designation. Black widows live on every continent except Antarctica.

**Fun Connor Side Note:** There are also two types of aircraft named after the black widow. There's the YF - 23 Black Widow stealth fighter, which was only built between 1989 to 1990, and the Northrop P-61 Black Widow - a twin engine fighter aircraft flown during World War II.



## Happy Thought

by Robert Louis Stevenson

The world is so full of a number of things  
I'm sure we should all be  
as happy as kings.

# Speaking of Dangerous Insects, What is This?



Look what we found while walking on the trail (left). Do you know what this is?

Summer is a great time to be outside. But it's also the time of year when bald-faced hornets are most active. Knowing a little about them can help keep you safe.

Bald-faced hornets are large black and white stinging insects (see below). They are bigger than a wasp and they build gray nests that look like a paper football.

This was a small piece of an old nest lying on the trail (above). There were no hornets around when it was found.

In Marin County, bald-faced hornets are found in parks, hiking trails, and backyard gardens. They like wooded areas and leafy bushes. Be extra careful when you are:

- Walking on trails with lots of trees and bushes
- Working in the garden
- Sitting near wood piles or dense shrubs



## How to Stay Safe

- Look before you touch trees, branches, and bushes when walking in the outdoors.
- Stay calm. If a hornet lands on you, don't swat at it or it may defend itself by stinging you.
- Keep food covered. Sweet smells and open drinks can attract wasps.
- Tell a staff member if you see hornets or a nest nearby.

# Bald-faced Hornets

## If You Get Stung

Move away from the area right away. Tell a staff member. Wash the sting with soap and water and put something cold on it. If you have trouble breathing, feel dizzy, or your throat feels tight, this is an emergency — tell someone immediately or call 911.

### The Good News

Most people who see a bald-faced hornet are just fine. If you leave them alone, they will usually leave you alone too.

Just stay aware, and enjoy your summer!



### Staff Tips



- Know your students' allergies. Make sure an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) is available and accessible if indicated in their health plan.
- Do a quick site check. Before students arrive at an outdoor location, do a brief walk-through to look for nests in bushes, under benches, around trash cans, and along fence lines.
- Have a plan. If a student is stung, stay calm, move the group away from the area, and follow first aid protocol. Know the location of the nearest urgent care in case of a serious reaction.
- Watch for delayed reactions. Allergic reactions can sometimes take 20–30 minutes to appear. Keep an eye on anyone who has been stung, even if they seem fine at first.

# Nino Surveys the Situation

## Dinosaur Day and Egg Day

National Dinosaur Day is on June 1st. No one really asks this once we're adults, but... What's your favorite dinosaur?

Carolyn: T-Rex

Hayley: T-Rex

Connor: Appatosaurus

Zachary: Tyrannosaurus Rex

Cat: All kinds of dinosaurs

Martha: T-Rex

Dana: Pterodactyl

Bruce: Velociraptor

Jennifer: Ankylosaur-I would name him Fluffy if I had one for a pet.

Andrew M.: Tyrannosaurus, based on Mighty Morphin Power Rangers

Aidan: T-Rex

Katie: Brachiasaurus

Iris: T-Rex

Justin: No thank you

Dylan: Titanasaur



This June 3rd on National Egg Day, Nino asks, "How do you like your eggs?"

Carolyn: I'll have eggs benedict please.

Cat: Boiled and scrabbled

Martha: Well-done

Dana: Over medium please

Bruce: Hard boiled

Jennifer: No, thank you!

Katie: Scrambled

Iris: Boiled

Hayley: With cheese and bacon

Justin: Scrambled

Dylan: As part of an omelette

Andrew M: I agree with Zachary about dinosaur eggs!

Connor: I like them in fried rice

Zachary: Like a dinosaur egg with a baby dinosaur inside?



# Nino Surveys the Situation

## June Bug Day

June Bug Day is celebrated on June 7th. Nino wants to know: "If you had to be a bug, what kind of bug would you want to be and why?"

Carolyn: A butterfly

Andrew M.: Yellowjacket

Connor: A water skeeter

Zachary: A butterfly

Cat: A roach

Martha: A ladybug

Bruce: A scarab

Jennifer: A fuzzy bumblebee

Aidan: A praying mantis

Katie: A monarch butterfly

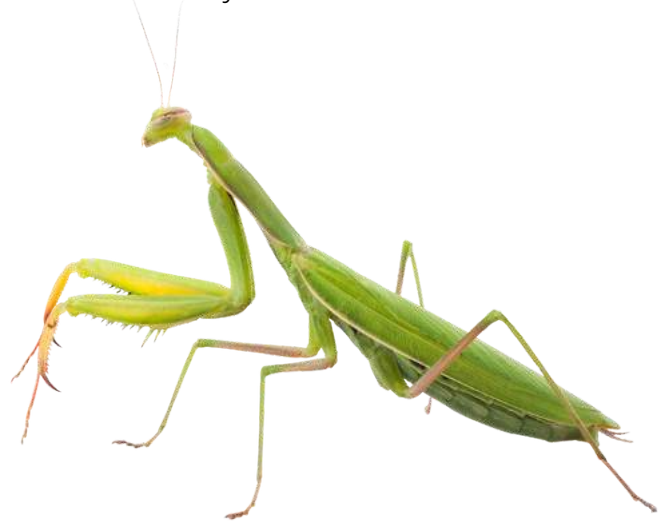
Iris: A butterfly

Hayley: A butterfly

Justin: I would be a butterfly too!

Dana: A ladybug or a spider—that's a hard one!

Dylan: A daddy longlegs cuz they've got legs for days!



### Dinosaur, Egg, and Insect Jokes

What do you call a bee that can't make up its mind?

A maybe.

Why don't eggs tell jokes?

They'd crack each other up.

What do you call a sleeping dinosaur?

A dino-snore.

What do you call a dinosaur that crashes their car?

Tyrannosaurus wrecks.

# Pam Painted a Sea Turtle

with Pam and Jehann



Check out Pam's painting! She finished a paint-by-numbers kit, and honestly, it looks like something you might see hanging in a café or little art shop. Up close, it is even more impressive because every tiny section was painted carefully by hand, one number at a time.

That's part of the magic of paint-by-numbers. You start with a board full of little shapes and numbers that don't seem like much. Then slowly — almost like a puzzle — a real picture starts appearing. The head, the flippers, the underwater background. Suddenly people who say, "I'm not an artist," are sitting there painting for an hour without noticing time passing.

Paint-by-numbers became popular in the 1950s after artist Dan Robbins

helped create kits that let ordinary people make their own artwork at home. The slogan was basically: anyone can paint. And it turned out...they could.

Researchers have found that making art can genuinely help people relax and focus. Studies show that creative activities can lower stress levels and improve mood, even for beginners with no formal art training. For our students, art activities can build confidence, communication, patience, and self-expression.

You don't need a research paper to see the benefits. Spend ten minutes near someone who is deeply focused on painting tiny numbered sections orange or blue and you'll notice something: *people settle in*. Conversations get quieter. The room changes.

And the best part is that Pam gets to say "I made that!" She enjoyed painting so much she bought another *peinture par numéros* set- next up? *La vaca*.



# Justin Olsen

## CH&S STUDENT PPP

Justin Olsen has a fascinating mind and a gigantic heart of gold.

His way with words is special,  
and his way with people is valuable.

Justin will always listen,  
he will always care,  
and he can always be counted upon to appreciate.

We can sure use more Justin Olsens in this world!

He is positive and honest,  
a solid citizen, a loyal friend, an unforgettable character...

This list can get pretty long.



Here's more:

Justin

Is enthusiastic

Is devoted to his mother

Is a reliable & conscientious professional Is always looking really good

Knows a lot about a lot of things

Happens to be a math wizard whose memory is second to none

Is a true gentleman

Is a man of peace

Spreads joy

Watch Justin's PPP video  
on our Instagram account:  
<https://tinyurl.com/rehuvzj8>

# Andrew's Corner

## Sheep Detectives Review

The movie *The Sheep Detectives* is based on a novel called *Three Bags Full* by Leoni Swann. The film is about a herd of sheep trying to solve the murder of their shepherd. The film was directed by Kyle Balda, who previously directed Illumination Entertainment Films, including *Minions*, *Despicable Me 3*, *The Lorax*, and *Minions: The Rise of Gru*. The writer of the film also wrote serious tv dramas, such as *Chernobyl* and *The Last of Us*. The sheep shepherd is played by Hugh Jackman, who played *Wolverine* in the *X-Men* films! Julia Louis-Dreyfus, who played *Elaine* in *Seinfeld*, plays the main sheep, *Lily*. My favorite sheep was *George*, because he is a very cute baby sheep! I liked the movie because it was really funny. I recommend it for kids and for fans of comedy movies. Hugh Jackman got a wool sweater as a gift from a fan that said "Woolverine", and he said, "Always be selling! I'm gonna sleep in this. I'm walking down the street in this. With the claws. And a sheep beside me!"



*Bio: Andrew Newson is a student at Life College and is 25 years old. He likes comic books, video games, hiking, and 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 has a curious mind and loves to research and learn new things.*

## What Kind of Dinosaurs Are These?



# JOE AND THE PROJECT CENTER

Joe and his wife, Ashley, are moving to West Virginia on June 20 th for financial and musical reasons, and it is difficult to fully express how much they will be missed. Joe was a huge part of building our Project Center from the ground up.

The Project Center is an elegant, multi-purpose classroom, studio, laboratory, office space, meeting place (and actually kind of a ballroom) where you can see not only a dazzling display of student projects in progress, but also, most delightfully, where you can see Joe.

In so many ways, it has been Joe's personally patented brand of person-centered thinking that has made our Project Center magical. Joe considers the entire student body his caseload, and a merry and productive caseload they are because they know that Joe always listens, he always cares, and he's always totally there to help make their ideas fly.

It will be a challenge for each of our students and all of our faculty to carry on without Joe. It is definitely safe to say that he cannot be replaced. He is leaving behind, however, something truly beautiful and we know we will be benefitting from his excellent work for years to come!

Good luck in West Virginia, Joe and Ashley... and, by the way, please come back!



# AUTISM PRIDE DAY

## UNDERSTANDING AUTISM AND CELEBRATING NEURODIVERSITY

Every year on June 18, people around the world recognize Autism Pride Day. On this day we celebrate people with autism for the unique individuals they are and to encourage understanding, acceptance, and respect for them and each other.

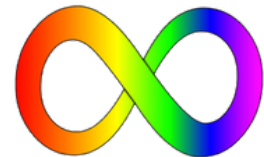
*Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a developmental disability that affects how a person communicates, socializes, learns, and experiences the world. Autism is called a “spectrum” because it affects people in many different ways. Some people with ASD talk a lot, while others may use few or no words. Some enjoy routines and quiet spaces, while others may be very social or have strong special interests.*

As Chas always says: “If you know one person with Autism Spectrum Disorder, you know ONE person with Autism Spectrum Disorder.” Everyone is different, so please do not expect everyone with ASD to have the same interests, idiosyncrasies, or behaviors.

Autistic people may experience the world differently through sound, light, touch, emotions, or movement. Some may have unique strengths, such as Justin’s strong memory, Steve’s aptitude for Roman numerals, or Iris’ knowledge of African animals and their care.

“Pride days” are not about saying someone is perfect or never struggles. They are about recognizing that *differences are part of being human*. Some people with ASD have said they do not want to be seen as “broken,” but rather understood and supported, as we all do.

The symbol often connected to Autism Pride Day is the rainbow infinity sign, which represents neurodiversity — the idea that *human brains naturally work in many different ways*.



A simple way to celebrate Autism Pride Day is by listening to people with autism, learning more about autism, practicing kindness and patience, and helping create communities where all people feel respected and that is what we do here at CH&S!

# State Expo Highlights

With Iris, Andrew M., Martha, Zachary, Aidan, Jennifer, and Devlin

Remember when we did country reports and had a cultural festival at the project center? Well we do, and we really dug it! This time, we researched different states in the United States and made little floats for a State Expo! Students chose their states based on their interests, family connections and friends. Justin went on an unforgettable trip to Alaska when he was younger. Zachary chose Nevada because he's been to Circus Circus in Las Vegas. Nino chose Illinois because his sister lives in Chicago, and he visits there every year. Martha picked Minnesota because it's where her mother was born. Connor chose Kentucky because he lived there when he was in middle school. Devlin picked Colorado because he lived in Fort Collins, where his dad Mike was from. Katie chose Maine because she has friends there, and went to her brother's wedding there. Similarly, Randall chose New Hampshire because his sister lives there and got married there. And in more than one case, people are MOVING to the states they are reporting on! Iris is moving to Texas with her brother Wayne, and of course, her cat Sweetie Pie. And Joe is moving to West Virginia with his wife and their cats!

Iris is moving to the island city of Galveston on the Texas coast. Texas is the second largest state in the US after Alaska. There is a bridge in the capital city of Austin that is home to the largest urban colony of bats in the world—1.5 million bats live under the bridge in the summer time. Galveston has an amusement park and aquarium that features live cams of some of their critters—we plan to check in with them regularly in our Armchair Travel classes. Here is a link: [Moody Gardens LIVE Webcams](#) Texas is home to an endangered species of wildcat called an ocelot—they are about twice the size of an average housecat, and look like miniature leopards! We do NOT recommend Sweetie Pie hang out with any ocelots in Texas, although we are certain from Iris' experience with wild animals that she'd have a wild one trained and tame in no time flat.

Dr. Pepper was invented in Texas by a pharmacist who liked to experiment with flavored syrups, and is the oldest soda in the US. Six Flags was founded in Texas, and got its name from the six flags that Texas has flown under (Spain, France, Mexico, The Republic of Texas, The Confederate States of America, and the United States of America). Red grapefruit was discovered on a single tree in Texas. Famous people from Texas include Beyonce, Steve Martin, Bonnie and Clyde, Selena, and Willie Nelson.

# West Virginia and Texas

With Aiden, Devlin, Iris, Martha, and Zachary,



Miss Martha's Minnesota float is the prettiest shade of pink!



Zachary's Nevada float looks like a slot machine!  
Aidan cuts out images for his South Dakota float.

Andrew M. researched Joe's future new home state of West Virginia, where the Hatfields are from, and the bordering state of Kentucky, where the McCoy family resided. You can take a Hatfield-McCoy feud driving tour that covers both West Virginia and Kentucky locations, as well as visit the Hatfield McCoy Moonshine Distillery and Bar & Grill. The first steamboat was built and tested in West Virginia in 1787. Mother's Day was first created and celebrated in West Virginia. The official state food of West Virginia is the pizza roll, which is a savory baked bread roll filled with pepperoni. Its origins trace back to Italian immigrant miners who packed them as a nice hearty, non-perishable lunch.

We are certainly going to miss Iris when she moves to Texas and Joe when he moves to West Virginia! It helps to have learned so many interesting things about where they will be, and imagining all the fun they have ahead of them. Happy trails!



Devlin with his Colorado float—we love the 3D mountains!



Zachary's Nevada float looks like a slot machine!



Iris with her finished float—now she gets to take it to Texas!

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Do you remember when we wore masks (nearly all of the time) to protect ourselves and each other from Covid 19?