



PLANNING
GUIDE

season of
REFLECTION



NATIONAL ASSISTED LIVING WEEK®
SEPTEMBER 10-16, 2023

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About National Assisted Living Week®

Established in 1995 by the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL), National Assisted Living Week® (NALW) provides a unique opportunity for residents, their loved ones, staff, volunteers, and local communities to recognize the role of assisted living in caring for America's seniors and individuals with disabilities. The annual observance encourages assisted living communities around the country to offer a variety of events and activities to celebrate the individuals they serve, as well as to help educate members of the public about this important aspect of long term care.

NCAL is grateful to once again have the support of this year's NALW official sponsor, **First Quality**.

Season of Reflection

This year's NALW theme – *Season of Reflection* – offers assisted living staff, communities, residents, and families the opportunity to pause and reflect on the important things in life, including the special relationships and bonds created within assisted living communities. This theme also offers a chance to embrace and welcome the sense of renewal that comes with the changing season.

Assisted living communities around the country are encouraged to host a variety of events that celebrate residents, staff, and volunteers. Please explore the suggested activities in this planning guide for ideas on how to celebrate and commemorate NALW in a meaningful way.

Visit NALW.org for a wide range of "Season of Reflection" themed products that serve as great activity and thank you gifts!



Share your
NALW celebrations!



Show us your NALW activities,
photos, and videos on
Facebook and Twitter using

#NALW

PLANNING IDEAS

Assisted living providers are encouraged to use an infection control and prevention mindset to help come up with innovative methods of keeping residents and staff connected during NALW. Please be sure to plan your activities through this lens and modify them based on the latest guidelines.

Kick Off The Week With A Grandparents Day Celebration

NALW starts on Grandparents Day, so what better way to kick off the week than with this special celebration? Invite residents' grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and other family members – as well as staff and their family members – to a party! Arrange for special music, whether a live band or music that residents have picked out, and host a meal such as an outdoor picnic or grilling. You can also stay inside and transform the dedicated event room with NALW posters, banners, balloons, and other fun seasonal decorations. There are many ways to celebrate Grandparents Day, so be creative and design a unique day that you know your residents will love!



Invite and Involve the Community

- Invite families, school groups, community members, and/or local officials to join a special fall fling event. Plan a concert with local musicians, host a game night, and serve food that residents and staff love. Invite family members and friends, including local lovable furry animal friends. Make your events even more special with NALW themed decorations, gifts, and prizes!
- Create and share music and art experiences. Not only is this therapeutic, but it is a powerful way to connect to one another. Identify music or art projects, such as a painting project or sing-along. Invite families and the local community to view the artwork and/or attend a talent show.
- Host a special resident awards celebration. Invite family members to join as you honor residents with special awards, such as best male/female vocalists, most enthusiastic Bingo fan, most avid reader, biggest movie buff, and more. Encourage attendees and residents to get dressed up and walk the red carpet. Consider giving out themed prizes and serve special refreshments after the ceremony.
- Host a Vaudeville night. Invite the community to join as you celebrate and remember the past. Give residents and performers from the community a chance to show off their singing, dancing, and comedy talents. Play Vaudeville video clips and decorate the room to transform attendees to this era.
- Launch an intergenerational partnership with a local nursery/elementary school. Research shows that intergenerational programs increase the health and well-being of both young and older participants and decrease social isolation among seniors. Activity ideas include reading to children, serving as pen pals, and working on collaborative art projects.
- Create an opportunity for residents to volunteer, giving them a sense of purpose and connection. Work with a local animal shelter to explore the possibility of adopting and caring for older, mellow rescue dogs. Providing a home for older dogs has multiple benefits for both humans and their furry friends. Residents who are able might even take on the tasks of feeding the dogs, giving them their medications, grooming them, and taking them for walks.

MORE IDEAS TO CONSIDER

Celebrate the Season

- Serve special fall-themed meals throughout the week.
- Plant and name favorite fall flowers, trees, or plants in honor of residents and staff or simply give flowers, a nice plant, or favorite baked goods.
- Host a fashion show where residents can get dressed up and show off their “fall collection” of favorite cooler weather outfits, suits, or dresses.
- Take on a local service project. Many students are headed back to school around this time of year, and there may be opportunities to partner with schools on various projects such as providing supplies for those students in need.

Encourage Residents to Share Their Stories

- Host a show-and-tell for residents and staff to share an object, photograph, or story that is a happy memory. Consider enlarging photographs and displaying them around the community.
- Create opportunities to slow down and spend time chatting with co-workers and residents. Enjoy a conversation and learn something new over a cup of tea or coffee.
- Organize a special walk at a preferred location for those who can participate and love to socialize. Consider talking about what the changing season means, sharing special memories as you walk together.

Share Your Stories

Be sure to share the many unique ways your staff, volunteers, residents, and families are celebrating this “Season of Reflection.” Send your extraordinary stories, photos, videos, and other content to storiesofcare@ahca.org, a special feature of AHCA/NCAL’s *Provider Magazine*.



Looking for more great ideas? Check out **The Big Book of Resident Activities** with over 100 resident activities! Visit nalw.org.

MEDIA TIPS

Connect with the public by reaching out to your local press outlets to spread the word about NALW. You can promote your unique NALW events or highlight innovative services or programs you offer.

News Releases

News releases are used to alert the local media of significant events, issues, services, programs, awards, and other happenings. Send the release to your local news editors and reporters, especially those who specifically cover your issues or “beats.” If you plan to invite the press before the event occurs, send a media advisory or a personal invite at least one week before the event or desired coverage. Be sure to follow up a couple of days before to see if they can come. Also include details on any infection prevention guidelines in your community.

Media Kits

A media kit about your assisted living community serves as a quick reference or “background” for the local reporters who cover your community during NALW. Elements of the kit can include information about your assisted living community, the services you offer, its role in the larger community, and a schedule of your NALW activities. Remember to include the contact information for your assisted living community’s spokesperson or marketing representative.

Letters to the Editors/Op-Ed Pieces

These short articles provide greater control over the content of your message, as they can be authored by a designated representative of the community (e.g., executive director). Share the many ways in which your assisted living community plans to celebrate NALW with your local newspaper and magazine editors. Also consider encouraging an active resident or their loved one to write a letter to the editor about their experience.

Proclamations

Proclamations are a great mechanism to have your local elected officials visit your community. Invite your governor, mayor, or city council members to issue a proclamation (offer a sample) in honor of NALW. You can invite them to visit the community and kick off the week on Sunday, Grandparents Day.

Social Media

Post items throughout NALW on your assisted living community’s website and/or social media channels. Share photos and videos* of unique events or highlight resident stories. Use the hashtag #NALW on channels like Facebook and Twitter to contribute to the national conversation. Follow NALW on Facebook to see what your colleagues around the country are doing.

Keep in Mind

While technologies such as smartphones and social media platforms have allowed providers, as well as residents themselves, to enhance quality of life, they have also unfortunately proven to be a set of tools used by offenders to violate the privacy and dignity of vulnerable residents. To help prevent these actions, assisted living communities must remain vigilant and ensure policies and procedures are in place. Make sure your center and company are following these **best practices** from AHCA/NCAL.



***Note:** Your residents’ privacy should take priority over publicizing NALW activities. **Only post pictures and videos of residents who have signed your community’s image authorization form.**

Find samples and easy-to-use media templates at www.nalw.org