

## WESTERN DAY / A FACILITY-WIDE CELEBRATION

This day is not exclusive to residents but is an activity for residents and employees with activities spanning the day. Provide ample and early information so people have time to put together an outfit as all employees are encouraged to dress the part, wearing western clothing and gear, cowboy/rancher outfits, hats, boots, bandanas, etc.

At least a week before the day, work with employees and residents to obtain photographs to be used on the "wanted posters". Explain to all involved that their picture will be on a wanted poster with a crime and capture reward posted. Before snapping the photo, ask each participant for their best "bad guy", mean, or "snarly" expression. Once you have the photos, place each one on a "wanted poster" with their fictitious crime. Make several posters explaining the process; example follows.

Construct a jail using a small, self-contained room. We used our library.

Refrigerator boxes were painted to make up the rough board walls of the jail and black crepe paper was used to make the bars on the door and window.

The day of the party, display the outlaw posters, perhaps half during the morning shift and half during the PM shift. Outlaws can be captured **ONLY** by residents. Employees cannot capture on their own but may assist a resident if asked. When the outlaw is brought to the jail, with their wanted poster, the capturing resident receives a reward (decided upon by staff; sweets, money, café certificates, etc.)

During the course of the day, present an activity of "Cowboy Poetry". There are several good books of cowboy poetry easily available. Present more than one reader, perhaps a male-female combo or, three or four of the activity staff. It is more enjoyable if readers are dressed for the part, wearing western or pioneer clothing; long calico dresses, sun bonnets, aprons, western shirts or checked shirts with jeans, boots, and western hats.

An hour of games in the afternoon might include indoor horseshoes, cow-pie throwing contests (Frisbees painted brown), and looping Coke bottles with rope rings.

During the usual social or Coffee hour, decorate the tables simply with a bandana placed in the center. As a centerpiece, add mason jars filled with old fashioned root beer barrel candy tied with calico ribbons. Also bright and eye catching is a mason jar of wheat stems on each table. Hang cowboy hats in various places around the room or place straw cowboy hats on the tables. Coffee hour itself might include not only coffee but also root beer. Instead of cookies, serve small slices of apple pie with ice cream. If you would like some background music during social hour, old fashioned fiddle music is a good choice and CDs are quite easily available.