

Memorial Day Activities for Senior Residents

Memorial Day (May 30) is a special day for our country to honor and remember those who have died in the line of duty. While many of us enjoy seeing Memorial Day as the unofficial beginning of summer, it is important for us to help our senior residents honor this day and their memories of those who were lost. Of course, you should still plan your Memorial Day cookout – after all, who doesn't want to have fun eating hot dogs and watermelon – but also think about adding some of these more themed activities into your Memorial Day schedule.

National Moment of Remembrance: At 3 pm local time, all Americans are asked to observe a moment of remembrance for those who have died while serving. During this time, consider planning a short tribute where there is a moment of silence followed by the playing of the “Taps” bugle call.

Flag Raising: The most identifiable symbol of Memorial Day is the American flag. If your facility has a flag pole, host a flag-raising ceremony on Memorial Day. Please note that the **flag** should be flown at half-staff on Memorial Day until noon, at which time it should be raised to the top until sunset.

Poppy Flowers: Red poppies are known as the universal remembrance flower, as it has been used as a way for people to mourn the loss of soldiers in the line of duty dating back to World War I. Schedule a craft activity for residents to make their own **red poppies**. You can also contact your state's headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to purchase artificial red poppies through the Buddy Poppy Program, a program in which the poppies are made by disabled veterans in veteran hospitals.

Soldier Cemetery: Memorial Day was once known as Decoration Day because it was a day for people to decorate the grave sites of fallen soldiers. Organize a bus trip for your residents to visit a nearby soldier's cemetery or military landmark to place flowers in memory of fallen soldiers. Beforehand, schedule a craft in which residents use real flowers to assemble and create bouquets to set at the graves.

Yellow Ribbons: Most recently, yellow ribbons have been used to signify support for American troops. Provide residents with yellow ribbons to wrap around the trees in your facility's yard.

Memorial Day Fundraiser: Memorial Day will provide lots of visitors to your facility. Raise money for a local military group that supports the families of fallen soldiers. Either ask for cash donations or involve your residents by encouraging them to make unique patriotic crafts like patriotic **tie-dyed shirts** that can be sold to the visitors.

Military History: Make May the month to start documenting the military history of your residents. Recruit volunteers to help you interview residents about their or their loved one's time in the service. Your residents have so much to share, so be sure to collect as many stories and memories from their knowledge and experience, which dates back several wars. Record the information and send it to your residents' family members for preservation.