

# CONNECTION

Sharing the day-to-day learning experience

at

Community Homes & Services

PO Box 744, Novato CA 94948

415-408-3604

[www.communityhomesandservices.com](http://www.communityhomesandservices.com)

## Alice in Wonderland Day



July 4th is not only Independence Day, it's also Alice in Wonderland Day. In 1865, Lewis Carroll self-published *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the book has been in print since. In fact, the book has been translated into 176 languages. More interesting facts about Alice's adventures:

- There was a Real Alice. Alice Liddell, the daughter of Carroll's boss, Henry Liddell, was Alice's real-life inspiration.
- The manuscript was initially called *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*. Other potential titles included *Alice's Hour*

*in Elf Land, Alice Among the Fairies, and Alice Among the Goblins.* We talked about these titles and Amy said that if the title was *Alice Among the Goblins*, she would not have read that book.

- Carroll based the Dodo bird on himself, inspired by his real surname, Dodgson, and his stammer "Do-do-dodgson."
- Carroll suffered from a disorder causing hallucinations that made objects appear larger or smaller. The disease wasn't discovered until later (1955) and was named "Alice in Wonderland Syndrome."
- Carroll popularized phrases like "Mad as a Hatter" and "I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date!"

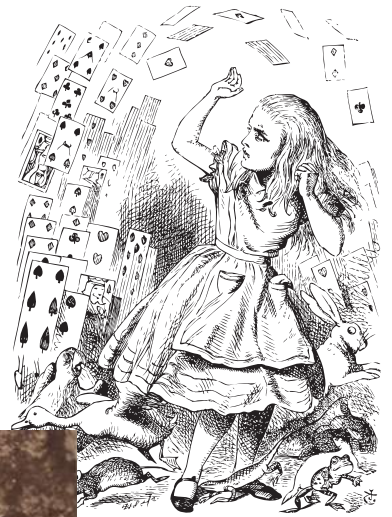


# More Wonderland

- For *Alice in Wonderland* movie watchers, Alice in Carroll's book (like the real girl, Alice Liddell) was a brunette! (right). The 1951 Disney version of *Alice in Wonderland* depicted Alice as a blonde, so we tend to think of her that way.

For Carroll, an "obsessive photographer" (per the [Metropolitan Museum of Art website](#)), Alice Liddell was more than a favorite model; she was his "ideal child-friend." A photograph of Alice at age seven illustrated the last page of her copy of *Alice's Adventures Underground*.

For a free read of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, go to Project Gutenberg:  
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11>



## Happy July Birthday!

7/2 - Courtney

7/9 - Jake

7/10 - Peter

7/17 - Justin

7/28 - Connor, Darren







# JULY 2024 NATIONAL DAYS

**National Hot Dog Month, National Picnic Month, Anti-Boredom Month**

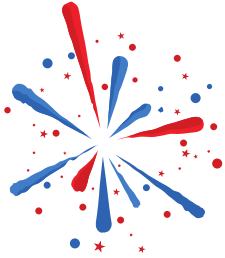
- 7/1 - Creative Ice Cream Flavors Day
- 7/2 - Wildland Firefighter Day
- 7/3 - Plastic Bag Free Day, Compliment Your Mirror Day
- **7/4 - Independence Day-HOLIDAY**
- 7/5 - Hawaii Day, Workaholics Day
- 7/6 - Play Outside Day, Fried Chicken Day
- 7/7 - National Day of Rock 'n' Roll, Koi Day
- 7/8 - Raspberry Day
- 7/9 - Cow Appreciation Day
- 7/10 - Kitten Day, Chronic Disease Day
- 7/11 - 7-Eleven Day, Pet Photo Day
- 7/12 - Eat Your Jello Day, French Fry Day
- 7/13 - Beans 'n Franks Day
- 7/14 - Macaroni and Cheese Day
- 7/15 - Gummi Worm Day, I Love Horses Day
- 7/17 - Hot Dog Day, World Emoji Day
- 7/18 - Sour Candy Day
- 7/20 - Fortune Cookie Day
- 7/21 - Ice Cream Day
- 7/22 - Mango Day, Hammock Day
- 7/24 - Cousins Day, Amelia Earhart Day
- 7/25 - Chilli Dog Day, Merry Go Round Day
- 7/26 - Disability Independence Day, Bagelfest Day
- 7/27 - Love is Kind Day
- 7/28 - National Waterpark Day
- 7/29 - Lasagna Day
- 7/30 - Cheesecake Day
- 7/31 - Avocado Day, Mutt Day



# July 4th -- Happy Independence Day!



As fireworks light up the sky on this Fourth of July, the staff and students at CH&S want to take a moment to wish you all a joyous Independence Day! This holiday holds a special place in American history. Did you know that on July 2nd, 1776, the Continental Congress voted in favor of independence? The now-famous Declaration of Independence wasn't formally adopted until July 4th, but the seeds of freedom were sown two days earlier!



In the spirit of celebrating freedom, **we'll be closed on July 4th** so that all of us can enjoy a day off. CH&S will reopen on July 5th. We wish you and yours a safe and festive Independence Day filled with fireworks, barbecues, and friends/family!

## Meet New Instructor Mary Good

**Darnell:** What do you want our students to know about you?

**Mary:** That I love it here! I'm in it for the long haul.

**Darnell:** What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

**Mary:** Take care of your teeth!

**Darnell:** What is your theme song?

**Mary:** The Beatles song "Here comes the sun."

**Darnell:** As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

**Mary:** A veterinarian. Kitties! Lots of kittens and puppies!

**Darnell:** If aliens landed on earth tomorrow and offered to take you with them, would you go?

**Mary:** Right now, no. There is too much to do!

**Darnell:** If you could rename yourself, what name would you choose?

**Mary:** I would be Miranda Beauregard.

**Darnell:** What's the best item you have bought this year?

**Mary:** That's easy, an electric throw blanket! On cold days, I lie on it the minute I get home. So nice.

**Darnell:** What is your favorite ice cream flavor and topping?

**Mary:** Chocolate ice cream with marshmallow fluff. Yum!





With Jennifer, Nino, and Randall

July 12th is National Eat Your Jell-O Day, and while we personally don't think anybody needs to be prompted to eat their Jell-O, we were happy to research, cook and taste-test "America's Favorite Dessert".

Jell-O has been around a long, long time. The inventor of Jell-O originally made cough syrups and laxatives before pivoting to something sweeter in the late 1800's. Since then, gelatin desserts have done it all—they have been the height of luxuriousness, gone through a savory "salad" phase, become synonymous with hospitalization, and been slurped down in boozy shot form at many a party. Jell-O has sailed the seas, been carved into art, blasted off into outer space, and hit the silver screen in movies galore.

Once a fancy status symbol, a gelatin mold was one of the final desserts to be served aboard the Titanic. "Peaches in Chartreuse Jelly" was part of the 10 course meal on April 14, 1912, the very night the Titanic collided with an iceberg and sank. It was likely the showcase centerpiece of the dinner, with its bright green hue, elegant molded form, and garnish of edible flowers. While our minds went immediately to lime green Jell-O, chartreuse the color was actually named after an herbal French liqueur crafted by Carthusian monks in the 17th century. The dish would have had a spicy kick to it!

The 1950's saw a savory side of Jell-O, and savory Jell-O salads were all the rage. Molds of all shapes were filled with Jell-O dotted with tuna, tomatoes, celery, SPAM, olives, and boiled eggs, often with mayonnaise in the mix. Thankfully, these so-called salads have gone to their jiggly graves.

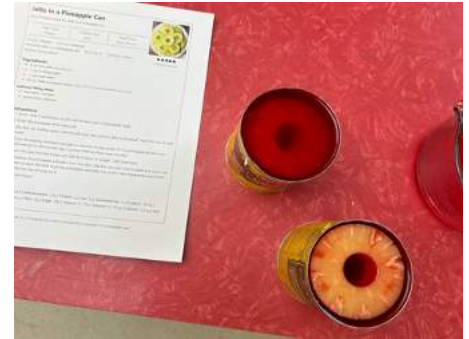
Jell-O has long been a mainstay on hospital menus. Jell-O is part of a clear liquid diet, which slows down digestion and can be used to prepare for medical tests or after surgery. Clear liquids also don't leave undigested food in the body. Jell-O's smooth texture and mild flavor can be easier to tolerate for people with sensitive stomachs or who are recovering from surgery. It's also easy to swallow and digest, making it suitable for patients who have difficulty eating solid foods. And it's virus-friendly: gelatin can help regulate blood sugar, which can provide energy to help fight off sickness.





# Eat Your Jell-O

Jell-O is ready for its close-up! The jiggly dessert has made many appearances in movies, tv shows, and even music videos, both as itself, and as a special effect. Perhaps the most iconic Jell-O featured in film is the green Jell-O jiggle of terror in Jurassic Park. Inventor Flint Lockwood makes a giant Jell-O house in Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs for he and Sam Sparks to swim and smooch in. And who could forget the cat-food Jell-O mold Aunt Bethany gift-wraps in National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation? Jell-O's earliest movie role was in Cecil B. DeMille's 1923 Biblical blockbuster The Ten Commandments, Moses parts a Red Sea of Jell-O. Grape Jell-O was used to dye the Horse of a Different Color in 1934's classic The Wizard of Oz (we are trying not to imagine what a grapey horse would smell like...) The UFO in Close Encounters of the Third Kind was created out of glass dishes filled with red Jell-O. And the "Primate Parfait" dessert of monkey brains in Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom was actually whipped cream, Jell-O and food coloring.



Love it or hate it, just about everybody knows about Jell-O. It has a 99% brand recognition in the U.S., which means that in any given group of 100 Americans, only one of them will have no idea what Jell-O is. We are certain the other 99 would be quick to explain.

Nino helps prepare "Jell-O in a Pineapple Can", a wacky recipe we just had to try! Photo credit: Randall Martin



## July 17th is World Emoji Day

Did you know...?

- Emojis come from Japan! The word itself combines "e" (picture) and "moji" (character).
- Simple emoticons made with punctuation marks (like :-)) for a smile) came first in the 1980s.
- The first set of emojis we know today were created in 1999 by a Japanese designer named Shigetaka Kurita.
- There are over 3,000 emojis in use today, with new ones added every year! **Do you know what these four emojis mean?**



# Props to Us!

with Michelle, Jennifer, Hayley, Nino, Randall, and Justin

At CH&S, anything is possible. With the imagination of our students and the support of our teachers, a styrofoam ice chest or a cardboard box can become just about anything. Through the wonderful world of prop-making, our imaginations bring some pretty incredible art to life!

Prop-making has become a popular addition to our Art curriculum this past year. The pieces we created have been displayed in elaborate yard decorations for the many holidays and themed weeks celebrated at the College. From the grim resting place of Edgar Allen Poe, shark infested waters, shipwrecked pirates and their plunder, to an enormous rainbow raining lucky gold coins, our rotating displays have certainly caught the eye of our community. Neighbors are always eagerly anticipating what we will come up with next!



Our most recent work has been a collaboration with The Community Church next door. Since last fall, we have shared our space with the church for their Sunday School program, which had previously been held in the parking lot. We were asked by Pastor Tim Seo if we would be interested in helping them with their Scuba themed Vacation Bible School decorations. Of course, we were very interested! July is our ocean-themed month, which Shark Week happens to fall in, so we knew everything we built would get a second run on display in our yard after VBS ended—twofer! We eagerly said yes and took a deep dive into all things underwater, on a mission to build a coral reef worthy of King Neptune himself.

To help spark our imagination and inspire our build, our prop-making team started by first exploring coral reefs and learning more about the sea life that lives there. (What a great excuse to pop some popcorn, pull down the big screen and watch some Attenborough documentaries!) With a clear vision in mind, we gathered up our empty boxes and collected styrofoam pieces, rummaged around in the recycling bin perhaps more than is healthy, and bought up all the fluorescent paint we could get our





# More Prop Making

hands on. With a few additional thrifted finds and household items from The Dollar Tree, we went to work painting, carving, gluing and assembling our ambitious build.

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Our prop department team includes Michelle, Jennifer, Nino, Randall, Adian, and newest addition Hayley, special build team of Bruce and Darren and Iris, plus Colleen, Cat and Zachary on display installation. Nino, Aiden and Hayley did an incredible job painting all the sea life we created using paper products, packing peanuts, and artificial plants and seashells. Randall put his paper mache skills to work on the boulder builds. Darren lent Bruce a hand making a sunken boat bow from a pallet Jennifer dragged down the alley in heels on her way back from the Project Center. Colleen and Zachary's keen eye for detail, and their energy and enthusiasm, came in handy during the two-day installation. It was unbelievable fun finding just the right nook or cranny for each of our critters!

Our final product included a five-tiered styrofoam rock arch, a large reef wall structure made from cardboard boxes and several cans of spray foam, plus a corner reef structure from a faux stone fountain Bruce rescued from the side of the road. There were half-a-dozen paper mache boulders, a large bubble and sea kelp forest strung from the gold arch we repurpose each holiday, two floor-to-ceiling coral reef panels and three half-sized panels. Top that all off with an abundance of urchins, anemones, coral, shells of all shapes and sizes, and underwater plant and animal life, and it all came together beautifully (if we do say so ourselves!)

Since it seems a shame to shove any of that into our storage shed just yet, we will have the coral reef on display in front of Life College at 837 Sweetser Ave. for the entire month of July, with added "sharkiness" to chum the waters for Shark Week. We welcome everyone to stop by and see our underwater wonderland for themselves—the pictures really don't do it justice!

## *July 9th is Cow Appreciation Day*

Did you know...

- **Cows have BFFs!** Cows are social creatures and form strong bonds. They seem to have "best friends" (BFFs) that they prefer to spend time with.
- **Cows have panoramic vision:** Forget a blind spot! Cows have eyes located on the sides of their heads, giving them a nearly 360-degree field of vision. This amazing feat helps them stay alert for predators.
  - **What does "panoramic" mean?**



Cows are outstanding in their field!



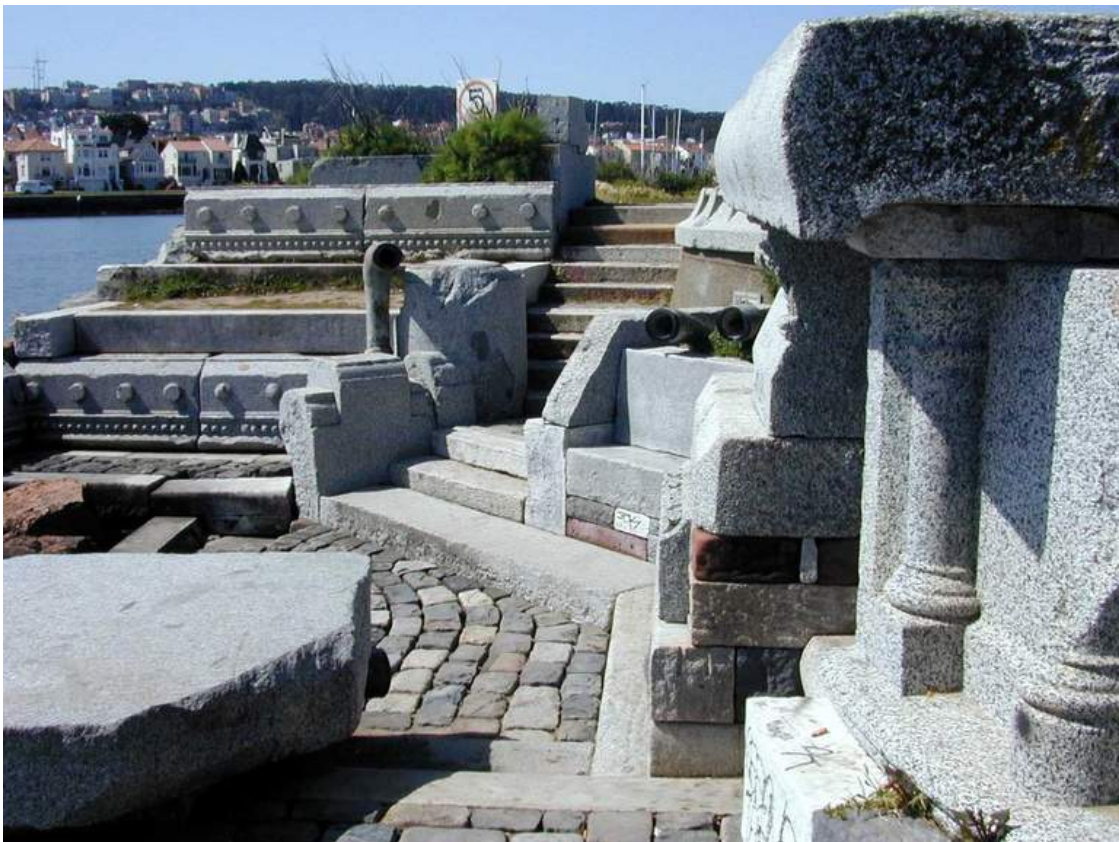
# Travel and Our Upcoming Cultural Fair

with Bert, Joe, Mary, Mike, Phoebe, and Tyrone

In anticipation of the Community Homes & Services Cultural Fair (coming to the project center this month), Bert, Joe, Mary, Mike, Phoebe, and Tyrone have been learning about The United States.

There's so much to learn! Even though most of us have lived here for our entire lives, there are still many new facts to be discovered about the country we call home. The project began with some deep-dives on individual states. First we did some research about the basics: the state flowers, the state birds, the state seal, the state flag, etc.

We found the more we learned, the more we wanted to learn. So we kept going. For example, did you know there's a "wave organ" in San Francisco? We didn't either! It was created by Peter Richards and George Gonzalez (in collaboration with the San Francisco Exploratorium) and installed in 1986. The way it works is as the tide ebbs and flows, the waves crash against a series of pipes made from PVC plastic/concrete, which creates interesting and non repeating melodies for any visitors to enjoy.

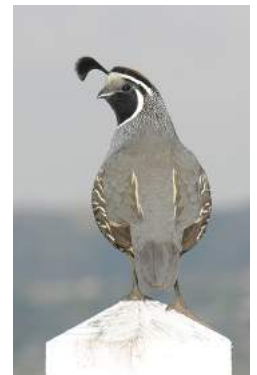


**Do you know of any interesting places off the beaten path that are worth mentioning?**  
Tell us more!

# We've Been Everywhere, Man...

"...Of travel we've had our share, man. We've been *everywhere*:

- **Jason's** been to Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, and Maine.
- **Martha's** been to Hawaii and Nevada.
- **Justin's** been to Nevada and Oregon.
- **Nino's** been to Hawaii, Illinois, and Oregon.
- **Bert's** been to Oregon, Washington, and Florida.
- **Phoebe's** been to Oregon and Nevada.
- **Mike's** been to Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.
- **Tyrone's** been to Oregon, Washington, Nevada, and Florida.
- **Linda's** been to Hawaii, Louisiana, and Florida.
- **Steve's** been to Hawaii and Nevada.
- **Valerie's** been to Oregon.
- **Frank's** been to Nevada.
- **David's** been to Nevada and Hawaii.
- **Jake's** been to Texas.
- **Meredith's** been to Virginia and Colorado.
- **Shirley's** been to Washington and Oregon.
- **Adara** was born in Hawaii.
- **Peter's** been to Oregon, Wyoming, Nevada, and Washington.
- **Pam's** been to Hawaii.
- **Donald's** been to Washington, Oregon, Wisconsin, Maine, and Illinois.
- And **Suzy's** been to Michigan, Texas, and Missouri.



We've been everywhere, man..."





# Travel Quiz Time

## California pop quiz!

Can you name three things on the California state flag?

A bear, a star, grass, "California Republic", a red stripe

What is our state bird?

California Quail

What is our state flower?

California Poppy



When was California admitted to the union?

1850



## July 31st is National Avocado Day

Did you know....?

- Avocados are a **fruit**, with a single large seed at their center.
- Avocado trees have been cultivated in Central and South America for over 7,000 years!
- The Aztecs called avocados *ahuacatl*. The Aztec word for tree is *quahuatl*. So the avocado tree becomes *ahuacaquahuatl*.
- In South America, avocado is called *la palta*.
- In Mexico it's called *el aguacate*.
- In Brazil, avocado is called *abacate*. Brazilians often enjoy avocado in sweet dishes. They blend it into smoothies ("vitamina de abacate") with milk and sugar, or create creamy avocado mousses and ice cream.



How do you like to eat avocado?



# A.I. Helps Us Organize!

with Amy, Darnell, and Thea

We agreed we would spend the morning organizing our main office, aka "Chas's office," but being the good procrastinators that we are, we got to talking instead. The topic of July 16th being A.I. Day came up, so we decided to check out A.I. for ourselves. We logged onto Google's A.I. which they recently renamed Gemini <https://gemini.google.com> and asked some questions.



**Amy:** "What is A.I.?"

**Thea** (typing question into Gemini): Please give us a good, short definition of AI.

**Gemini:** Artificial intelligence (AI) is basically smart machines! It's when computers can do tasks that usually require human intelligence, like learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. Imagine your phone recommending songs you'd love, or a map app finding the fastest route - that's AI in action. It's already everywhere, making our lives easier and helping in many fields.



Next we decided to ask Gemini for organizing advice:

**Thea:** How should we phrase a question about organizing?

**Darnell:** How about "what is the most efficient and easiest way to clean out and organize an office that hasn't be organized for years?"

**Amy:** That sounds good. (Thea then typed the question into Gemini and here is what we got:)

**Gemini:**



## Organizing Tips

Taming a neglected office for over a decade can feel daunting, but a systematic approach with a focus on decluttering before organizing will make it efficient and achievable. Here's a breakdown of the best way to purge and organize your office:

### PREPARATION:

1. **Set aside enough time:** Block out dedicated time in your calendar, acknowledging this might take a few sessions depending on the clutter level.
2. **Gather supplies:** Grab trash bags, recycling bins, donation boxes, labels, and cleaning supplies. Consider getting organizers like bins, trays, or drawer dividers after you declutter to see what storage solutions you truly need.

### DECLUTTERING:

1. **Empty everything:** Take everything out of desks, shelves, drawers, and cabinets. This creates a clean slate and lets you assess everything at once.
2. **Sort by category:** Group similar items together, like office supplies, electronics, paperwork, or miscellaneous items.



# Organizing with A.I.

3. **Ruthlessly discard unnecessary items:** Here's the key question to ask yourself for every item: "Have I used this in the past year? Will I realistically use this in the next year?"  
Be honest!

- **Trash:** Anything broken, expired, or useless goes here.
- **Recycle:** Paperwork you don't need (consider shredding sensitive documents first), old electronics (check local e-waste disposal options).
- **Donate:** Usable items you no longer need can be donated to charity or colleagues.

## ORGANIZING:

1. **Clean surfaces:** Give your desk, shelves, and cabinets a good wipe-down.
2. **Categorize and assign storage:** Now that you have less stuff, group similar items together and designate storage locations.
3. **Label everything:** Clearly label shelves, drawers, and bins to make finding things a breeze and maintain organization.

## Tips:

- **Take breaks:** Decluttering can be mentally tiring. Schedule short breaks to avoid burnout.
- **Work in sections:** Don't try to tackle the entire office at once. Divide it into manageable zones like one desk or cabinet at a time.
- **Play upbeat music:** Set the mood for productivity and make the process more enjoyable.

Remember, the goal is to keep what you truly need and use. By decluttering first, you'll have a clearer picture of what organizational solutions will work best for your space. Good luck!

Wow! We were impressed with the solid, practical suggestions that were delivered in about 5 seconds! We found the suggestions hands-on and helpful and if you're needing some advice on how to organize, we hope that you find these suggestions as useful as we did!

FYI, we thought the "empty everything" direction was the most useful—it was so helpful to start with a clean slate then only return items that we have actually used in the last five (or ten) years!



Check out the results:





# Mike Rigney

## CH&S STUDENT PPP



Mike Rigney is an elegant man with an amazing mind, an enthusiasm for life

that is a very contagious and a handsome smile that is equally infectious.

He is a fast thinker and a deep thinker with a wealth of knowledge on a wide range of topics: Rocks, animals, history, and rock 'n' roll, (squirrels), just name a few.

Once Mike has met you, he will forever remember the experience and so will you.

Mike is:

Intelligent and independent

A superb judge of character

Very cultured

Polite, kind, and caring

An appreciator extraordinaire

A family man and a good friend

A reliable worker and a solid professional

A true gentleman!



REEL SHARED ON JUN 28, 2024  
BY COMMUNITYHOMESANDSERVICES

(Left) QR code. Open your phone's Camera app and point it steadily for 2-3 seconds towards the QR Code. Then click on the Camera app's notification to watch Mike's PPP video on our Instagram account <https://www.instagram.com/communityhomesandservices/>.



# Art Teacher Chris Frost

Christopher Frost is a versatile artist, print pro, and art instructor. He teaches in our day program in Novato and handles printing at Staples in Petaluma. Chris also runs *Frostwerks*, selling his unique artwork through Facebook and Instagram. He's passionate about drawing, painting, sculpting, framing, and graphic design.

Lately, he's been diving into abstract paint pouring, mixing paint with a fluid medium to create mesmerizing textures. With experience in various settings and working with diverse individuals,

Chris believes art is a universal language that connects people effortlessly.



(Above from left) Jonas, Rebecca, Jehann, Billy, and Chris

Darnell Drew a Picture of a  
CH&S Staff Person—  
Can You Guess Who This Is?



Do YOU draw? To submit your art to this  
Magazine email to:  
[media@communityhomesandservices.org](mailto:media@communityhomesandservices.org)



# Amy's Book Review



For those who don't already know, we have an writer on staff. Instructor Matthew Stone, is not only a Latin and algebra teacher, he writes in his spare time. He recently gifted Amy Martin a copy of a book that he wrote: *From Night On: Magdalene*.

Darnell and Amy discussed the book and here is Amy's review:

**Darnell:** How did you like this book, Amy?

**Amy:** It was really good! If I hadn't forced myself to put it down I wouldn't have gotten any sleep!

**Darnell:** Can you tell us about the plot of the book?

**Amy:** It takes place in the time of 746 ab Urbe Condita, which for us would be 64 BCE.

In a nutshell, a girl, Meira, is accused of being a witch by the townspeople. After Meira warns her dad that he's about to purchase poisoned wine, her dad also accuses her of being a witch, and she is forced to run away from home.

The townspeople try to drown her, and light comes out of Meira's hands, and she is able to float to the surface and survive. Then a neighbor man lets her stay at his house to hide her from the crowd, and later, other people come to her rescue, including a Roman general named Marcus, who teaches her how to fight.

**Amy:** I don't want to give too much away though.

**Darnell:** What would you say is the general tone of the book?

**Amy:** Kind of funny, suspenseful, it's an adventure and it is very intriguing.

**Darnell:** Would you recommend this book to other people?

**Amy:** Definitely!

**Darnell:** What other comments would you like to make about this story?

**Amy:** It was really worthwhile reading. I liked the characters and the story. I couldn't put it down!





# Put on a Happy Face

With Michelle and Nino

Nothing is more inviting than a smile. The name alone will make you... well... SMILE! Whether you call it a smirk, grin, beam or smile, there's no denying the feel-good power of this happy facial expression. A smile can brighten a day, lift a mood, and warm a heart.

Not only does a smile automatically make you feel good, it also makes everyone you smile at feel good too. Smiling is contagious! People cannot help but smile back when you smile at them.

Smiles have health benefits too. That's right, smiling can improve your health! The more we smile, the healthier our brains become. Every time you smile, our body creates a cocktail of happy chemicals (dopamine, endorphins and serotonin) that result in a feel-good party in our brain. Smiling can reduce stress, lower blood pressure and boost your immune system.

## Nino Surveys the Situation-Smile Edition

### What makes you smile?

Justin-Going to the movies, like being out in the community

Martha-People

Cat-When I go out sometimes

Andrew-Going to places I like, like restaurants and the comic book store

Matthew-Absolute moral truth, or maybe warm pretzels. They smell the same.

Michelle-When I hear Nino's name

Jennifer-Silly words like kumquats and pumpernickle

Connor-Whenever I get my way

Chas-I laugh at my own jokes

Devlin- Thinking about my family



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★ **HAPPY** ★

*Independence  
Day*

**July 2024 Connection Magazine**