

CONNECTION

Sharing the day-to-day learning experience
at

Community Homes & Services

PO Box 744, Novato CA 94948

415-408-3604

www.communityhomesandservices.com

The Texture of Feathers



Animal-assisted activities offer a rich, multisensory experience: the warmth of a living body, the texture of feathers, the sounds an animal makes, and the slight shift of weight as the animal settles into someone's arms. A 2025 study in the *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* (Yurdadön et al., "The Effects of Animal-Assisted Therapy on Adolescent and Young Adults With Intellectual Disabilities," 2025) found that animal interactions were associated with improvements in anxiety management, emotional awareness, self-esteem, and self-expression among young adults with intellectual disabilities.



September is National Chicken Month



Docile poultry breeds are increasingly used in therapeutic settings because they offer a tactile experience quite different from a dog or cat. Therapy programs in England and Australia have documented that holding chickens and similar poultry can reduce agitation and promote calm, particularly for individuals with sensory processing differences or anxiety.

The Real Value of a First Time

Although research may be scant, anyone who works in direct support recognizes immediately the look on someone's face when they encounter something for the first time and find that they like it. That moment of surprise—*I didn't know I could do this*—is not a small thing. It is an expansion of self-concept. For people whose daily options are often limited by setting, staffing, transportation, or the assumptions of others, a first-time experience is also an act of inclusion: the message that the full range of life's textures and experiences are meant for everyone!



Rebecca and her
rooster
Lamberto



Rooster Encounters



Holding a rooster will not change anyone's life on its own. But a program that consistently seeks out these encounters—that treats novelty as a form of respect and inclusion—is doing something important. It is saying: we believe you are someone to whom interesting things should happen.



At CH&S, that belief is part of the work every day!



What sound does a rooster make (in different languages)?

- English: cock-a-doodle-doo
- Spanish: quiquiriquí (kee-kee-ree-KEE)
- French: cocorico (koh-koh-ree-KOH)
- German: kikeriki (kee-keh-ree-kee)
- Tagalog: tilaok (tee-lah-OHK)



When Rebecca brought her rooster to work, people have questions. Here are some of the staff and students' questions with Rebecca's answers.

Rooster Questions:

1. **Meredith:** What is your rooster's name?
Lamberto
2. **Peter:** Is he friendly?:
Yes
3. **David F:** What does your rooster like to eat?
Crushed corn & seeds.
4. **Rose:** What type of rooster is Lamberto?
Lamberto is an Aliquin, Rooster
5. **Rose:** Does he make lots of noise in the morning like doing his

cock-a-doodle-doo?

Yes, but it is not as loud as the other roosters you are used to.

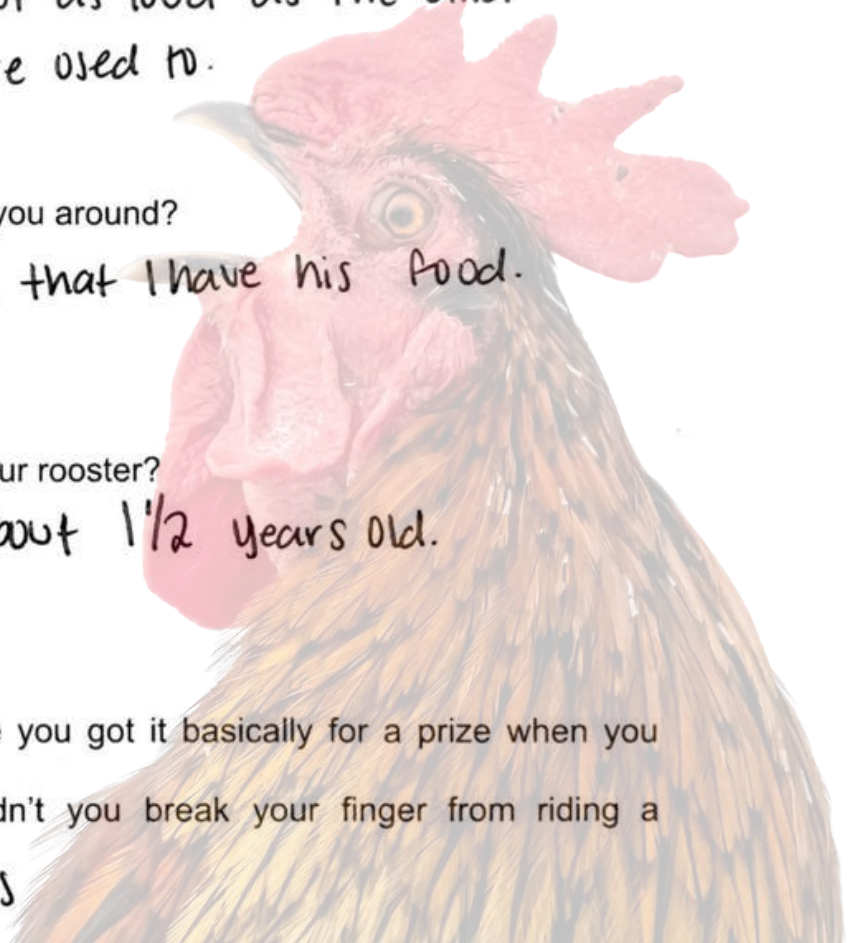
6. **Suzie:** Does he follow you around?

- Only if he sees that I have his food.

7. **Carolyn:** How old is your rooster?

Lamberto is about 1 1/2 years old.

8. **Carolyn:** "You told me you got it basically for a prize when you broke your finger. Didn't you break your finger from riding a mechanical bull?"
Yes



More Rooster Questions

9. **Carolyn:** Lamberto is so chill. Is that because of your parenting?

Yes, we make sure to handle him at least for a couple of minutes each day, so he gets used to being held.

10. **Carolyn:** Do you also have hens or any other birds?

we recently added to our family a little girl chick, she is close to a month old now? her name is Martina Macarena.

11. **Carolyn:** Where does he sleep?

He sleeps outside in the yard, along side our dog Macario, they are good friends

12. **Carolyn:** (after taking Lamberto outside in his stroller) "I also noticed he clucks when we get near a dog."

Yes, he will also do it if he sees any bird flying around (crow or seagull.)



13. **Jehann:** If your rooster could talk, what would he say?

I think he would say
"let's go for a stroll to grandmas house!"

14. **Zayde:** What do you think your rooster thinks about you?

I think he thinks of me as his mom ♡

Social Skills Class: *Each Kindness*

with Adara, Andrew M., and Carolyn

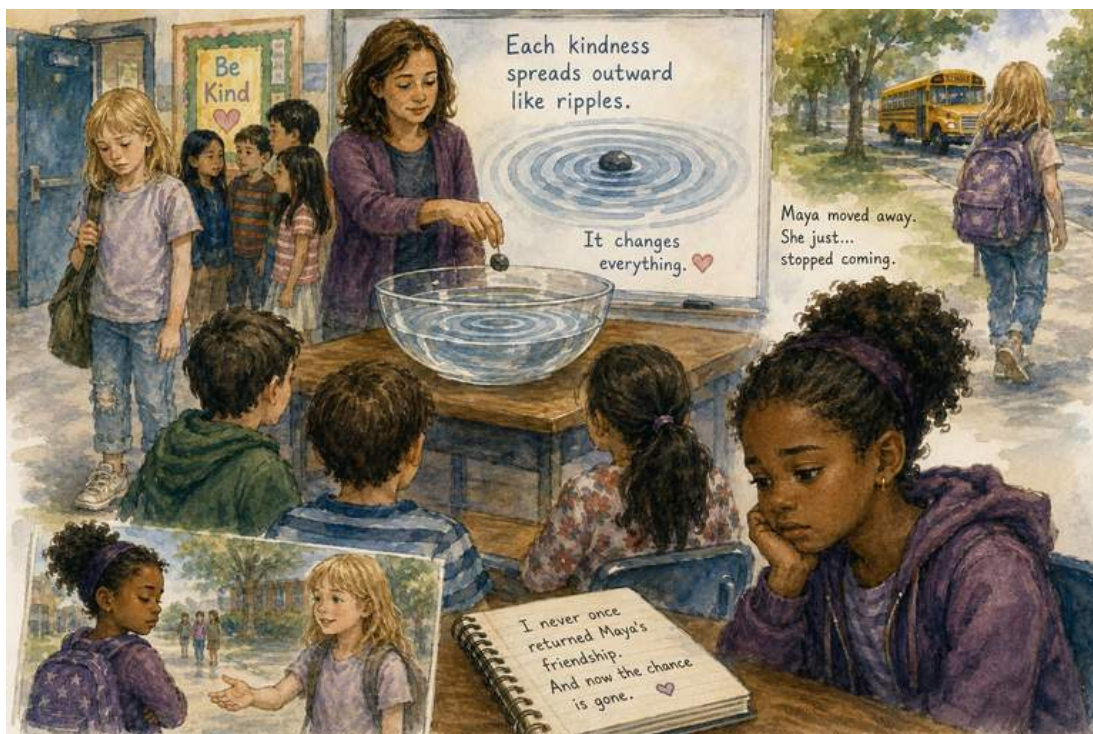
In class, we read the book *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson. It's about a girl named Maya who arrives at school with her clothes worn and her shoes are secondhand, and the other children keep their distance. When Maya tries to make friends, the narrator, Chloe, turns away from her again and again. One day Maya simply stops coming—she has moved away.

Around that time, Chloe's teacher drops a stone into a bowl of water and shows the class how the ripples spread outward, explaining that this is how each small kindness travels through the world, changing it. Chloe realizes she never once returned Maya's friendship, and now the chance is gone.

The book ends on that quiet, honest ache rather than a tidy fix.

Reading Comprehension: *Each Kindness*

1. How did Maya feel when she first arrived at school?
2. Why did Chloe and her friends choose not to play with Maya?
3. What was the significance of the stone dropped into the water?
4. How did the story end for Chloe, and what lesson did she learn?
5. According to the story, what happens when someone witnesses an act of kindness?



Talking About Kindness

Definition of Kindness: Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate towards others. It involves intentional acts of goodwill, empathy, and care, shown without expecting any reward or praise in return.

Talking About Kindness

Questions to Ask the Class:

- What does it mean to be kind?
- How does it feel when someone is unkind to you?
- How did Maya show kindness to the other students?
- Let's go around the room and have each of us share a time when they showed or gave kindness to someone.
- Now, let's go around the room and have everyone share a memory of when they received kindness from others.

Looking Inward

- Have you ever been unkind before?
- Do you wish you could correct that unkindness or make amends?
- What were the consequences of being unkind?
- What are the consequences of being kind?
- Is there something you could do to show more kindness?
- Explain how you would move forward from this class to show kindness in your daily life.
- Do you want to be a role model for kindness?

Make a list of the many things you can do to show kindness towards others.

Thank you all for your participation in class —

now go forward with kindness! 😊



Bunny Island

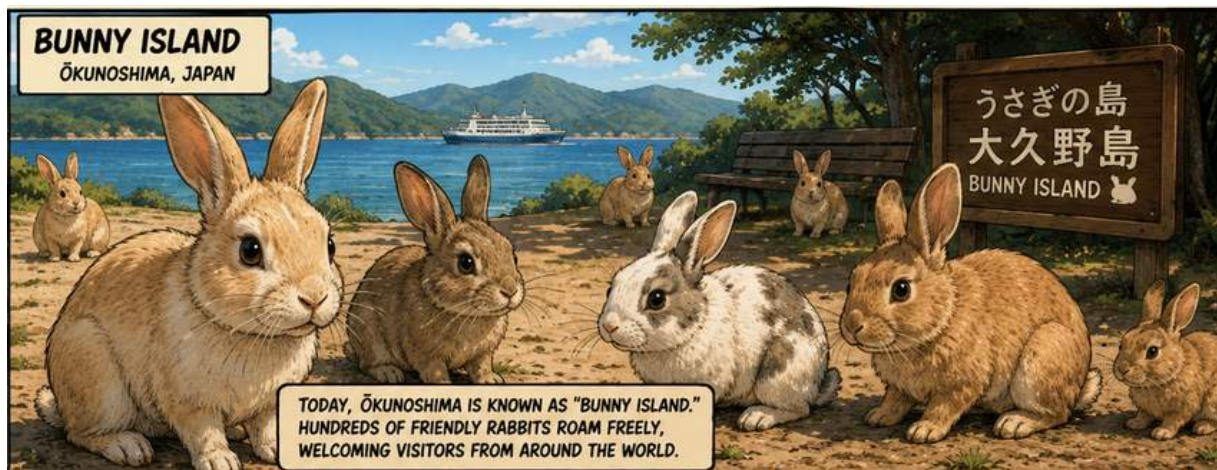
International Rabbit Day is September 26

Okunoshima is a tiny island in Japan's Seto Inland Sea. It's famous today for the hundreds of wild rabbits that live there—but it has a very dark past. During WWII, it was a secret poison gas factory, and the Japanese government actually removed it from maps to hide what was happening there.

The Poison Gas History

From 1929 to 1945, the island produced over 6,000 tons of mustard gas and tear gas, much of it used against China. Workers were kept in the dark about what they were making—some only knew the two gases by color: red for sneezing gas, yellow for mustard. When the war ended, all the documents were burned, the factory was destroyed, and no one was ever held accountable.

In 1988, part of the old factory was turned into the Poison Gas Museum to teach people about what happened there. It has artifacts, equipment, and photographs—some are quite graphic. The sad irony: 93% of tourists come just to see the rabbits. The museum director estimates only about 10% of visitors come to learn the history.



Where Did All the Rabbits Come From?

Nobody knows for sure. One story says they're descendants of rabbits used to test the gases. Another says a group of schoolchildren released eight pet rabbits on the island in 1971. Either way, with no predators on the island, they multiplied. There are now between 700 and 900 rabbits there.

Rabbit Romper Room

Marin Humane Society's Rabbit Romper Room

Every Wednesday, Marin Humane sets up Rabbit Romper Room in the education room of the Whittell building. A dedicated volunteer named Paula Spencer runs the whole thing—from 11:00 am setup to 5:30pm cleanup—and teaches other volunteers about rabbit health and behavior. People thinking about adopting a rabbit can also come in to spend time with the animals and learn what rabbit ownership actually involves.

Our Student Daniel Volunteers at the Rabbit Romper Room!

Daniel's gentle petting work fits right into this. The research is pretty clear: rabbits that get regular, calm human contact become friendlier and more adoptable. Short, gentle handling sessions from an early age help rabbits get comfortable with people and reduce their stress. It helps when people crouch down rather than loom over the rabbits because to a rabbit, something swooping from above looks like a predator. Also move slowly, speak softly, and avoid sudden loud noises,

One study found that rabbits adopted from shelters tended to score lower on friendliness—and so did rabbits that were never let out of their cages. But owners who understood the importance of early socialization had the friendliest rabbits. That's exactly what volunteers at the Romper Room provide.

One useful nuance: research suggests that picking a rabbit up can actually be more stressful than simply sitting near it and letting it approach you. When the goal is getting a rabbit comfortable with people, letting the rabbit come to the human tends to work better than grabbing it and petting it.

We are proud that CH&S student Daniel is doing real, evidence-backed work on Wednesdays. Quiet, patient, on-the-floor petting is one of the best things a shelter volunteer can do to socialize a rabbit and get that rabbit ready to find a home.



AMY'S BOOK REVIEW: *BUNNICULA*

As you know, **International Rabbit Day** is the fourth Saturday of September, and this year, it is on September 26.

On the topic of rabbits, Amy told Darnell about reading the book *Bunnacula* which is a rabbit-tale of mystery, perfect reading for International Rabbit Day. After reading about the real rabbits of Bunny Island, Amy wanted to discuss a very different kind of rabbit—a fictional bunny who may or may not be a vampire.

"*Bunnacula* is a mystery book by husband and wife writers Deborah and James Howe— it came out in 1979," said Amy. *Bunnacula* is told by Harold, the family dog. One rainy night, the Monroe family finds a little bunny at a movie theater showing a Dracula film, so they name him *Bunnacula* (Dracula + bunny = Bunnacula).

Chester the cat notices strange things: the bunny sleeps all day, has odd markings like a vampire cape, and—spookiest of all—vegetables in the kitchen keep turning white, drained of all their color. Chester becomes sure Bunnacula is a vampire rabbit who sucks the juice out of vegetables at night. And then Chester gets a great idea:



A STEAK THROUGH THE HEART

Here is what Amy wants you to know about the book:

"I liked this book a lot. Harold the dog is my favorite because he is kind and he just wants everyone to get along. Chester the cat is very dramatic and he made me laugh. The bunny is cute and I did not think he was scary. My favorite part is when Chester tries to warn the family but they do not understand him. It is a good book if you like animals and a little bit of mystery. I would read it again. I give it four carrots out of five."



Bunnacula is a gentle, silly mystery — spooky enough to be fun, but never scary. It's a wonderful pick to curl up with in celebration of International Rabbit Day, whether the rabbit in your life is real, fictional, or possibly a vampire.

Happy September Birthday!

9/1 Ray

9/2 Steve

9/4 James

9/9 Matthew

9/13 Jehann and Patrick

9/16 Ian

9/23 Pam

9/26 Iris

9/29 Billy

9/30 Frank



SEPTEMBER 2026 NATIONAL DAYS

Self-Care Awareness Month, Disease Literacy Month, Suicide Prevention Month, Whole Grains Month, Classical Music Month

9/1 - World Letter Writing Day, American Chess Day

9/2 - World Coconut Day

9/3 - Skyscraper Day

9/4 - Wildlife Day, Foodbank Day

9/5 - International Bacon Day, Hummingbird Day, World Beard Day

9/6 - Read a Book Day

9/7 - LABOR DAY-HOLIDAY

9/8 - International Literacy Day, Star Trek Day, World Ampersand Day

9/9 - Wonderful Weirdos Day, Teddy Bear Day

9/10 - TV Dinner Day, Swap Ideas Day

9/11 - National Day of Service and Remembrance, Make Your Bed Day

9/12 - Hug and High 5 Day, Video Game Day

9/13 - Yom Kippur, Grandparents Day, Positive Thinking Day, Bald is Beautiful Day

9/14 - Live Creative Day

9/15 - Greenpeace Day, Online Learning

9/16 - Guacamole Day, Play-Doh Day, Working Parents Day, Stepfamily Day

9/17 - International Country Music Day, Apple Dumpling Day

9/18 - Air Force Birthday, Cheeseburger Day

9/19 - Talk Like a Pirate Day, Love Your Lunch Day, World Bamboo Day

9/20 - International Coastal Cleanup Day, World Red Panda Day

9/21 - World Gratitude Day, Chai Day

9/22 - Autumn Begins, Hobbit Day, Elephant Appreciation Day, World Rhino Day

9/23 - Dogs in Politics Day, Great American Pot Pie Day, Int'l Day of Sign Languages

9/24 - Punctuation Day, Cherries Jubilee Day, World Maritime Day

9/25 - Comic Book Day, Save the Koalas Day, Lobster Day, Quesadilla Day, One Hit Wonder Day

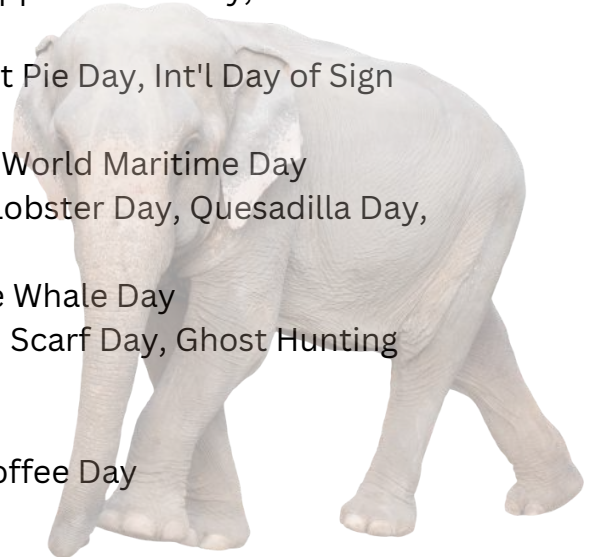
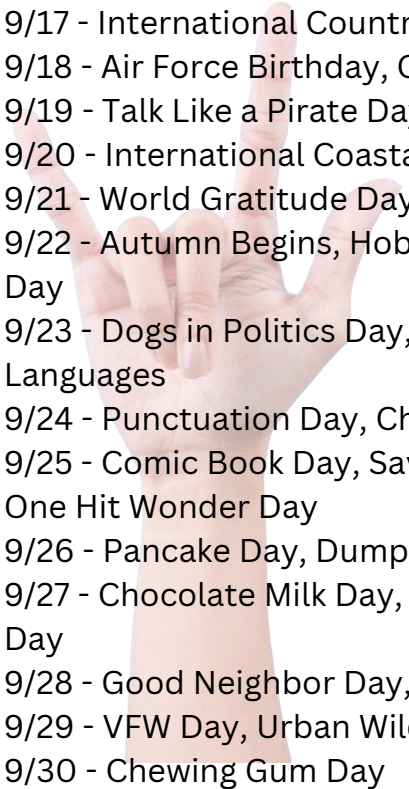
9/26 - Pancake Day, Dumpling Day, Shamu the Whale Day

9/27 - Chocolate Milk Day, Day of Forgiveness, Scarf Day, Ghost Hunting Day

9/28 - Good Neighbor Day, Family Day

9/29 - VFW Day, Urban Wildlife Refuge Day, Coffee Day

9/30 - Chewing Gum Day



Zachary Mani

CH&S STUDENT PPP

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a star in our midst!

Zachary Mani is a singer, a movie aficionado, and a rip-roaring, rollicking goodtime of a comedian.

When it comes to comedy, Zachary can always bring it and he can always get it.

Zachary knows a lot about a lot of things and has an ever growing list of interests and talents, including art, writing, and sports. He is a lover of good music, especially rock & roll, hip hop, pop, and movie soundtracks, and he is a born performer!



You are lucky if you have a friend like Zachary.

He speaks fluent movie quotes,
has a fascinating way with objects,
and is, himself, occasionally a piece of wood.

Zachary is laser-focused and he is proud of his accomplishments, and for good reason:
he is doing great! As if that list wasn't long enough already, Zachary is also:



Very busy
A family man
A hard worker
Looking good
A quick learner
A sports enthusiast
A theatrical entertainer extraordinaire
A gentleman and a professional
One cool guy!



Watch Zachary's PPP video on our Instagram account
<https://tinyurl.com/ms376eaf>

The Last Supper, Reimagined

When Art Meets the Work We Do Every Day

This summer, while traveling in Portugal, our Clinical Director came face-to-face with a work of art that stopped her in her tracks. Hanging on the walls of the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art in Porto was a massive five-panel photographic work titled *The Last Supper*. It depicted the familiar scene from Leonardo da Vinci's famous mural: Jesus and his twelve disciples gathered around a long table. The lighting was beautiful and the composition familiar, but the people in the photographs were adults with Down syndrome.



The work was made by Raoef Mamedov, an Azerbaijani-born, Moscow-based artist and filmmaker. Before becoming an artist, Mamedov worked as an orderly in a psychiatric institution in Azerbaijan.

When we look at this piece of art, what is striking is not just the beauty of the photographs — the Caravaggio-like (*chiaroscuro*) shadows, the warmth and depth of the fabrics, the bread and wine on the table — but the seriousness with which the participants were treated.

These were not people being used as props or curiosities. Each person was photographed individually and in an interview, Mamedov has said of the people he works with: "I never call them ill. They're just other people to me. Their otherness, their encounters with the outside world — that's what is interesting."

That word — *otherness* — is worth sitting with for a moment.

Participants in a Story

At CH&S, we spend our days working with adults who have been labeled, categorized, and too often defined by what they can't do. The systems that fund our work — necessary as they are — sort people by diagnosis, by level of need, by what kind of support they require. And those systems serve an important purpose. But they can also, if we're not careful, flatten the people inside them into something smaller than who they actually are.

What Mamedov's *Last Supper* does is something radical in its simplicity: the people in the photographs are participants in the story — people worthy of the same dramatic lighting, the same compositional grandeur, the same emotional complexity that artists have granted other human subjects for hundreds of years



The Last Supper recognizes who is already in the room — that the human story belongs to **everyone**.

Mamedov's gallery describes his overarching artistic vision as "embracing the Other — an act that gives one courage to love and answer the question of who are we to each other." That question lives at the heart of what we do at CH&S every single day. Every interaction between a staff member and

Everyone Belongs at the Table

a student, every skill-building session, every moment of patience or connection or laughter in our day program is a small answer to it.

We don't often get to see the work we do reflected back to us from the walls of a European art museum. But there it was, in Porto, Portugal — a five-panel photograph that says what we already know:

the people we serve belong at the table.



The Last Supper by Raoef Mamedov is currently on view at the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art in Porto, Portugal, as part of the exhibition "Vexation of Spirit: The Duerckheim Collection x Serralves."

ROSE'S DOG ZEUS

with Rose, Carolyn, and Zeus

Zeus, one of our beloved day program mascots, has been making the rounds, visiting both our Enterprise and Life College campuses to the delight of everyone he meets. Recently, Rose decided it was time for Zeus to have an adventure of his own!



With a goal of trying something new, Rose took Zeus on the SMART Train for the very first time. Since a big adventure requires a big appetite, the duo made a special stop at In-N-Out Burger. If you aren't in the know, a 'Scooby Snack' at In-N-Out is a plain, unseasoned hamburger patty—the perfect gourmet treat for our four-legged friend. Zeus enjoyed one for lunch and saved another for dinner, proving he's a true connoisseur.

The trip took an unexpected turn when they encountered a group of workers picketing for their cause. Ever the ally, Zeus decided to join in on the solidarity, posing proudly with a strike sign!

If you're wondering why Zeus has been enjoying his travels from the comfort of a stroller, it's because he's been navigating some health challenges. We're all sending him lots of love and positive vibes for a speedy recovery. We hope you enjoy these photos of our dapper mascot's big day out as much as we do!



Goodbye Hoopty: We Need a Van!

Way back in 1998, before there were any students, CH&S consisted only of Chas & Gail Abate, Juliette Pegueros, Carolyn Walker, and our very first prize possession, a beautiful, blue, brand new Ford Windstar, later to be named Hoopty.



Hoopty's tour of service went on to span 28 years and 350,000 miles... so many characters, such rich storylines, so much adventure, some spectacular mishaps, and a few miracles too... by no means, your average minivan!

Over the years, Hoopty became more and more rusty, but never less trusty, and all the more lovable. This year, sadly, while still chugging along, ol' Hoopty simply could not pass the smog test and, as of July, we had to say good-bye.

Needless to say, Hoopty cannot really be replaced. Nonetheless, (especially since our other vehicles are becoming similarly long of tooth) we are seeking to replenish our fleet. **If anyone has a nice, spare vehicle lying around or is in a position to help otherwise toward the cause, give us a call. Of course, all donations are tax-deductible. Thank you!**

Letter Writing with Former Instructor Joe

Here is part of a letter from Joe with a lesson in food differences between the Bay Area and West Virginia.



Hello!

How's everyone doing? Good, I hope! It's only been a little over a month since I got here, but dang it feels like a lifetime. Lots of cultural differences, of course - the worst of which is the Mexican food (they put this thin cheese sauce on everything. I liked it at first, but now I've had enough). Also no one here knows how to pick out a good avocado, so they leave behind the good ones and take the under ripe. We like that. Nobody likes hot sauce, either! It's easier to get a home cooked feeling meal at a restaurant, but that's a double edged sword. You wouldn't want to eat food from just anyone's house, you know?

Words that Rhyme with Van

van

Let's RHYME!

How many words can you think of that rhyme with **van**?

1. tin can
2. x-man
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

BE CREATIVE!
BE SILLY!
HAVE FUN!

RHYME VAN

BIG WORDS,
SILLY WORDS,
ALL WORDS
COUNT!

Rhyming is a great brain exercise. When we search for words that sound alike, we're using memory, listening skills, and word-finding all at the same time — and because it feels like a game, it keeps things fun while our brains do the heavy lifting!

The Women's Pro Baseball League's Inaugural Season

with Rose and Carolyn

The inaugural 2026 season of the Women's Pro Baseball League (WPBL) has been a landmark achievement in American sports. This year heralded the long-awaited return of professional women's baseball to the United States for the first time since 1954, showcasing an extraordinary level of athleticism and competitive spirit that has captivated fans nationwide.

Beyond the professional stakes, the season has sparked a friendly rivalry between your authors. Rose, a Bay Area native, is a devoted supporter of the San Francisco Firebells, while Carolyn has been enthusiastically rooting for the Boston Hunters, a nod to her East Coast roots. This personal connection to the teams has only deepened our appreciation for the league's impact.

The four founding franchises—the San Francisco Firebells, Boston Hunters, Los Angeles Queens, and New York Heights—delivered a summer of high-intensity competition at the storied Robin Roberts Stadium in Springfield, Illinois. The atmosphere at the ballpark has been electric, proving that the appetite for women's professional baseball is stronger than ever.

WPBL League Standings at time article was written on 8/13/26

The league consists of 4 teams playing a 30-game regular season schedule, running from August 1 to September 6, 2026.]

Rank	Team	Wins	Losses	Winning %	Games Behind (GB)	Run Diff
T-1	 Los Angeles Queens	3	2	.600	—	+6
T-1	 San Francisco Firebells	3	2	.600	—	+7
3	New York Heights	2	2	.500	0.5	+1
4	 Boston Hunters	1	3	.250	1.5	-14

San Francisco Firebells and Red Hats

A particular aesthetic highlight has been the San Francisco Firebells' vibrant branding. Their team colors and signature red caps evoke the classic style of the Red Hat Society, creating a visually striking presence on the field that we are incredibly proud to celebrate.

Individual League Leaders at time article was written on 8/13/26

- **Batting Average: Denae Benites** (New York) leads the league with a remarkable **.824 AVG**.
- **Home Runs: Denae Benites** (New York) holds the top spot with **5 HRs**, closely trailed by top draft pick **Kelsie Whitmore** (San Francisco), who recently delivered a historic **3-HR** single-game performance to reach a total of 4.
- **Runs Batted In: Denae Benites** (New York) paces the field with an impressive **15 RBIs**.
- **Stolen Bases: Denae Benites** (New York) also tops the rankings with **6 stolen bases**, followed by Ashton Lansdell (Los Angeles) with 3.
- **Earned Run Average (ERA): Jill Albayati** maintains dominance on the mound with a flawless **0.00 ERA**.
- **Strikeouts: Ayami Sato** currently leads the league with **8 strikeouts**.

How to Watch

As the season approaches its dramatic conclusion, fans are encouraged to witness the culmination of this historic year. The championship final is slated for September 06. We invite everyone to join us in supporting these phenomenal athletes who are rewriting the playbook for women in sports.



To view the full schedule and find out how to watch the remaining broadcasts, visit the official league website:

<https://www.womensprobaballleague.com/schedule/>.

Connor's Thoughts on Watercraft

Connor is genuinely interested in many things. Lately his thoughts have turned to watercraft—not boats in a general sense, but the specifics: what kind, how fast, how big, and what it's like to be the one in charge of a boat or ship.

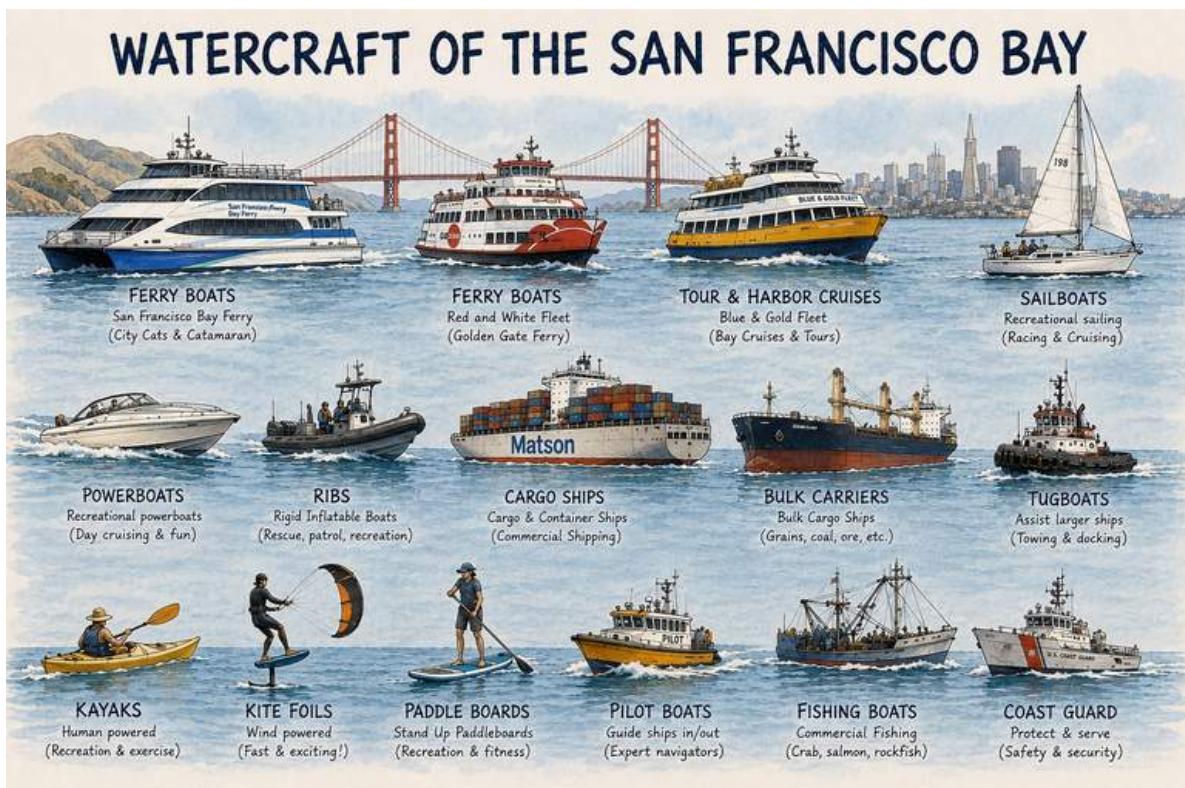
Connor does not just have preferences, he has areas of deep interest, curiosity, and expertise.

Ferries

Connor has ridden ferries in three places: The San Francisco Bay, Italy, and South Carolina. Connor sometimes takes the ferry into San Francisco. After disembarking, he heads over to the Ferry Building for chicken tenders at Gott's Roadside.



We looked up San Francisco Bay watercraft and there are all different kinds!



Rights of Way on the Bay

The Bay's Traffic Rules

Talking about ferries led into a conversation about rights of way. On the water, "right of way" means: when two boats are heading toward the same spot, one boat keeps going straight and the other one has to move out of the way. The rules just decide who moves.

The main ideas:

- Big ships win. Huge cargo ships and tankers can't stop or turn fast, so everyone else stays out of their way — even sailboats.
- Sailboats usually go before motorboats. A boat with a motor is easier to steer, so it's the one that moves aside.
- If you're catching up to a boat in front of you, you move around them. The boat ahead keeps going straight.
- When two motorboats come straight at each other, both turn to their right.
- That's really it: the rules make sure two boats don't try to be in the same place at the same time. Somebody holds steady, somebody steps aside — like taking turns so nobody bumps.

Other watercraft

From there the conversation covered a lot of ground (or should we say it covered a lot of water?) :

Connor started talking about the Blue & Gold Fleet Rocketboat which launches near Pier 39, zooms past the sea lions and rips along the San Francisco waterfront. Riders on the Rocketboat experience incredible skyline views with music blasting. Vroom! The Rocketboat has 1,200-horsepower engines, does sharp spins, and rides are 30 minutes long!



Connor Went on a Cruise

Connor told Thea about when he was 6-years-old and he got to ride on the front of a jet ski with his dad.

Connor said that he took an Oceania Alaska-to-Canada cruise, where he saw bald eagles, whales, and bears. He had fried cod when he went ashore.



As for kayaking and paddleboarding, Connor has done both.

Connor and Thea also talked about pilot boats and how pilot boat captains have to jump from the pilot boat onto a ladder on the side of a ship, climb aboard, then help the captain navigate the waters.

Connor: I piloted a ship before, on a simulator.

Thea: Wait, what??

Connor: It's like a flight simulator and you can dock a ship or navigate in the ocean.

Connor is an explorer by nature and loves to learn and experience new things and and from Connor's interest, we learn new things. Thank you Connor for stopping by to talk about watercraft!

We accept and appreciate donations of any size or kind. All donations to CH&S are tax-deductible. CH&S is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



@Communityhomesandservices
www.instagram.com/communityhomesandservices/

Remember when?



#CuteButDeadly

A World Wildlife Day Conversation

There is a lot of wildlife out there. Amy and Darnell started talking about which animals seem harmless but could actually be dangerous. Can you think of any cute but dangerous animals?

Here are 5 that made the list.

Hippopotamuses

They look so funny and harmless. But apparently they are the most dangerous animal in Africa! They can sprint at 19 mph — faster than the average human. It is said that hippos are responsible for roughly 500 human deaths per year. Lions, by comparison, account for 100 to 250. Still a lot, but it might be because people are afraid of lions and underestimate hippos.



Slow Loris

So cute and cuddly with their big eyes and sweet faces! And those little toes!



But did you know they are venomous? They lick special glands on their elbows, which mixes toxins with their saliva. If they bite, it can cause fatal anaphylactic shock.

They are cute and slow AND dangerous. Yikes!

No, Not Otters!



Platypus

They are small and silly and unbelievably cute — how could they hurt anything? Well, when you're small, silly, and cute, you need some sort of defense. It's really just the males: they have a spur on their hind legs that secretes a venom that, while not usually fatal, will definitely ruin your day so stay away!

Blue-Ringed Octopus

Small and beautiful and deadly. They look like jewels with their lovely blue rings — who could resist picking one up? Me! That's who! And hopefully you too. They carry a toxin called *tetrodotoxin*, a neurotoxin (a substance that does bad things to your nervous system — no bueno) that is many times more potent than cyanide.

Otters

This one is quite disappointing. Otters are adorable to watch especially when they wrap themselves in seaweed before taking a nap or hold hands with other otters.

But do not make them feel threatened, or they will become dangerously aggressive, with sharp teeth and claws that can do real damage.

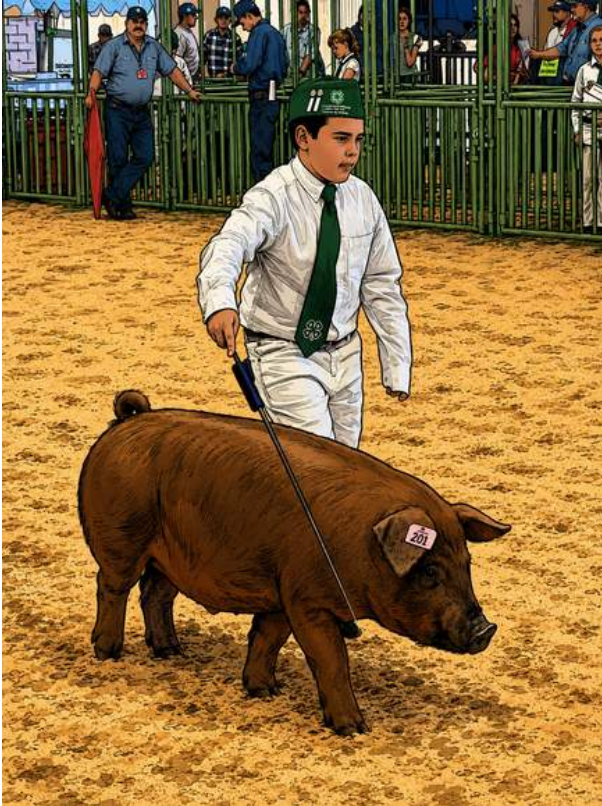
At least they aren't venomous!



When Pigs Fly!

Did you know that *When Pigs Fly Day* is September 9? This day celebrates imagination and reminds us that sometimes the impossible can become possible. The phrase "when pigs fly" has been used for centuries to describe something that is very unlikely to happen. Today, people celebrate by telling jokes, and remembering that big dreams can sometimes surprise us.

Amy had some exciting family news to share: her stepmom's grandson is raising a pig through 4-H, and Amy is proud of him!



If you've never heard of it, 4-H is a youth program where kids learn hands-on skills by taking on real projects. The four H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Members raise farm animals, caring for them, feeding them, keeping them clean, and getting them ready to show at the county fair. Raising a pig for sale is a big responsibility and sometimes a hard life lesson. Congratulations to Amy's stepmom's grandson whose pig won second place!

Here's something a lot of people don't realize: pigs are incredibly smart. Researchers have found that pigs can learn their own names, solve simple puzzles, and even play video games with a joystick. Some scientists think pigs are as smart as dogs, and maybe even as clever as a young child. Pigs are curious, social animals who like to explore and play, and they can remember things and recognize their animal and human friends.



Some Pigs Are Lovable!

A few fun pig facts:

- Pigs "talk" to each other constantly. They have dozens of different oinks, grunts, and squeals, each meaning something different.
- Pigs don't sweat, even though we say "sweating like a pig." They cool off by rolling in mud.
- Pigs have an amazing sense of smell, so good that some are trained to sniff out truffles which are a rare and fancy mushroom.



Pigs have even become famous movie and book characters. There's *Babe*, the brave little pig who dreamed of herding sheep, and Wilbur from *Charlotte's Web*, the sweet pig whose spider friend saved his life. These stories have helped a lot of people see just how lovable pigs can be.



When kids in 4-H raise an animal, they form a real bond with it. They learn about hard work, patience, and caring for another living thing. Those are lessons that last a lifetime.

Congratulations to Amy's stepmom's grandson on all his hard work, and to Amy for proudly cheering him on. We are proud of your family too!

Do you remember Amy's article about visiting China Camp when she was a kid, in our last issue?

Amy and her staff member Yvette decided to re-create the memory and visit China camp as adults. Amy had so many good memories there and she wanted to share this picture with you all.



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