

Art of Appreciation

With so much giving and receiving this holiday season, it only stands to reason that Thank-You Note Day falls on December 26.



To some, letter writing might seem like a lost art. To others, it feels like an outdated ritual, made obsolete by email, texting, and social media. But research in evolutionary psychology offers a different perspective. Studies suggest that expressions of gratitude and appreciation are deeply ingrained cooperative behaviors that help strengthen social ties. Even primates, for example, demonstrate a sense of reciprocity, engaging in a kind of “you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours” exchange that highlights the enduring value of saying thank-you.

Leave it to the experts at Hallmark to offer tips on writing the perfect thank-you note. A thank-you note begins long before you sit down with a piece of stationery. First comes a careful tally of names: those in attendance at your party, those who sent you a gift, and those who were particularly helpful, caring, or kind.

A good thank-you note doesn’t have to be written on expensive paper with gold-embossed filigree. Emotion shines through in the voice of your written words. Charm is in the imperfection of your unique handwriting. Excitement comes in finding a hand-addressed envelope in a stack of junk mail.

Next, think about what you’d like to say. Be sure to spell the person’s name correctly and choose a greeting that fits. Begin by expressing your thanks. Then, share a few details about what the person did and how it made a difference to you. Let them know how it made you feel. To close, repeat your thanks. *Sincerely* is always a thoughtful way to end, but you can also choose something more personal, like *With love*, *Warmly*, *Many thanks*, or *Yours truly*. Decorum requires thank-yous within a week. However, a late thank-you is always better than no thank-you at all.

December Birthdays

In astrology, those born December 1–21 are Archers of Sagittarius. Archers are exciting and independent. Their positive attitude, great sense of humor, and kind heart make them excellent friends. But get ready for an earful. Archers often speak their mind. Those born December 22–31 are Goats of Capricorn. Goats are the most stable and sure-footed of astrological signs. Reliable, economical, practical, and organized, they make good multitaskers and politicians.

- Bonnie L- 12/6
- Anis Z.-12/7
- Irene B.-12/9
- Sally H.-12/10
- Pauline N.-12/12
- Patsy H.-12/14
- Beverly C.-12/21
- Lorraine C.-12/21
- Son E.-12/25
- Paul W.-12/25
- Jack T.-12/26

Join us for our birthday party on 12/16 to celebrate all of our residents this month!

Dial a Smile



Some would argue that Ding-a-Ling Day on December 12 is a day to celebrate the kooky, off-the-wall ding-a-ling in your life. Well, those ding-a-lings probably don’t know the real meaning of Ding-a-Ling Day. According to the *Chicago Sun-Times* newspaper, the Ding-a-Ling Club was started in 1971 by Franky Hyle of Chicago, Illinois. Hyle believed that city dwellers needed to be friendlier to one another. His solution was to spread cheer through the telephone lines. The mission of the club was to pick up the phone and dial a friend you haven’t seen or spoken to in a long time. Why the name *Ding-a-Ling*? Hyle looked up the word and found the meaning to be “one who hears bells in his head.” The name stuck, and so did his heartwarming method of “ringing”.

Regency Grand

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Celebrating December

Bingo Month

Spiritual Literacy Month

Safe Toys and Gifts Month

Antarctica Day  
December 1

Mutt Day  
December 2

Lost and Found Day  
December 12

Hanukkah  
December 14–22

IFCM World Choral Day  
December 14

Christmas  
December 25

Boxing Day  
December 26

Kwanzaa  
December 26–January 1

New Year’s Eve  
December 31

Christmas the Mexican Way

In Mexico, Christmas is more than just a day—it’s a lively season filled with music, food, and family gatherings that stretches from mid-December into the new year. Instead of focusing on only December 25, the holiday season is marked by a series of festive events, each with its own customs and flavors.

One of the most beloved traditions is *Las Posadas*, a religious festival celebrated from December 16–24. Each evening, families reenact Mary and Joseph’s search for shelter in Bethlehem. They gather for nightly processions that include singing, candlelight, and, of course, breaking open a brightly colored piñata. The piñatas are often star-shaped with seven points, said to represent the seven deadly sins. Swinging at them is both fun and symbolic!

Decorations also play an important role in the season. Alongside Christmas trees, you’ll find homes adorned with poinsettias, or *flores de nochebuenas*, twinkling lights, and Nativity scenes called *nacimientos*. In many towns, community squares sparkle with paper lanterns and light displays, creating a warm, festive atmosphere.

Food is at the heart of the holiday. Families gather on Christmas Eve for *Nochebuena*, the grand feast of the season. Dishes might include tamales, stuffed turkey, or pozole, a hearty hominy stew. A mug of *ponche Navideño*, a warm spiced fruit punch, is almost always on the table, and dessert often features crisp, sugary *buñuelos* or a slice of *Rosca de Reyes* (king’s ring cake).

Music and fireworks add even more energy. Caroling, mariachi bands, and neighborhood parties keep spirits high while bursts of fireworks light up the skies throughout December. The season wraps up on January 6, *Día de los Reyes* (Three Kings’ Day), when children wake to find gifts left by the Magi. It’s a joyful reminder that in Mexico, Christmas is more than just one day—it’s a whole season of togetherness, laughter, and celebration.



## When Krampus Comes to Town



December 4 is Santa's List Day, but throughout December, children worldwide will be wondering whether old St. Nick has counted them as *naughty* or *nice*. Of

course, most fall somewhere in the middle. But tell that to Krampus. In the alpine villages of Europe, December 5 is celebrated as *Krampusnacht*, or Krampus Night. It's the eve before Saint Nicholas Day, and—says cultural historian Stefanie A. Babb—it's the night when a creature called Krampus (half Bigfoot, half devil) searches for all the children who've been naughty. This long-haired beast is thought to be Santa's twin brother and helper. The clanking chains and bells around his waist announce his arrival. The punishment for the naughty depends upon the child's degree of naughtiness. Some children are given coal or bundles of birch. But the naughtiest are said to be thrown into a sack and carried away to the Krampus' lair, where they're eaten for dinner.

Modern-day *Krampusnacht* activities involve men and women donning elaborate goatskin costumes and exquisitely carved wooden masks. Photographer Alan Taylor has traveled throughout the Alps—from Italy to Austria and Germany—capturing groups of people parading the streets in their terrifying costumes while dragging chains and carrying flaming torches. It's a common sight for homes to be decorated year-round with bundles of the Krampus' birch, painted gold, to remind children to remain well-behaved. There's even a horror movie that tells the tale of this devil beast.

It's the "nice" children who enjoy the big payoff on December 6, Saint Nicholas Day. It's named for the fourth-century bishop of Myra, famed for his secret gift-giving. Lucky children awake to find gifts and sweets, breathing a sigh of relief that there's a whole year before Krampus returns.

### "Santa had daddy's eyes"

'Twas the evening before Christmas...  
And all through the cozy upstairs flat  
Mom was stirring about with this and that.  
Little Brother and I were playing With ABC blocks  
on the kitchen floor.

When, suddenly, who was that at the door?  
It was Santa! He's never been here before!  
Awed, and perplexed, all I did was stammer:  
"Yes, I was good." "Thank you, Santa Sir." Little  
brother's smiles saved the day:

Toys and sweets governed his DNA.

After Santa left I whispered in Mom's ear:

SANTA CLAUS HAD DADDY'S EYES!

Santa Claus had my Daddy's blue eyes:  
Not the blue of Uncle Tony or Cousin Ray.

But the blue of storm-scrubbed skies.

The forget-me-not hue

Of Lake Michigan on a sunny day.

A blue that would twinkle out the tears of your pout.  
Would wrap its arms around you And hold you tight  
And whisper that all is right And tuck you in for the  
night. Such were my Daddy's eyes!

The next year we found presents under the tree.

Santa didn't come. It was all right by me.

The gifts were not from some old man keeping  
score. But from someone who loved me more.

P.S. May you all enjoy your holiday memories-Be  
they Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa

Regency grand resident,  
Jane Czajkowski



## Resolutions with a Twist



The holiday season is sometimes one of indulgence. After all, food and drink are a major part of many holiday events. By the end of the month, many people are thinking of their New Year's resolutions. Recent surveys show that the most common resolutions include saving more money, spending less, exercising more, and eating healthier. These are also often among the most broken resolutions, so this new year, think beyond the ordinary. Try a wild, wonderful, or just plain weird resolution—something fresh and fun to help you stick with it (for a few months at least).

This year, quirky resolutions are having a moment. One example: the "buy nothing" challenge, inspired by the Buy Nothing Project. Participants vow to buy only necessities, reuse and borrow items, and shop secondhand. It's a creative, wallet-friendly resolution that also builds community spirit—lending books via Libby, swapping items through local groups, or borrowing instead of buying new.

Another trend gaining traction is turning your resolutions into a bingo game. A popular TikTokker shared how she gamified her goals using a bingo card—mixing easy "base goals" and tougher "stretch goals," and rewarding herself for each completed square. The gamelike format makes resolutions feel fun, manageable, and less intimidating.

Still craving silliness? A UK study found that lots of people are embracing resolutions like laughing more, setting "no lists" instead of to-do lists, taking a monthly spontaneous adventure (like exploring a nearby town), and putting their own happiness center stage. Whatever resolution you choose—saving money, laughing more, or playing bingo with your goals—the key is to keep it playful and personal. The best resolutions are about adding a little more joy to the year ahead.

## Resident Spotlight: Laura Chavez

This month, our community is honored to highlight a truly remarkable woman—Laura Chavez, a beloved resident of Regency Grand in West Covina. Laura recently reached a milestone that few have the joy of celebrating: she turned 100 years old just a couple of weeks ago. The occasion was marked with a beautiful celebration attended by fellow residents, staff, friends, and loved ones. The event was filled with laughter, music, and heartfelt memories, and in true Laura fashion, she made sure everyone felt welcome.

She has a passion for crafting and decorating, and she takes great pride in making spaces feel warm and beautiful. Whether she's arranging seasonal décor or crafting one of her signature door wreaths, her attention to detail is unmatched. Before joining Regency Grand, Laura built a strong career working in banking, where her professionalism and precise nature served her well.

Even now, those qualities shine through everything she does—from how she carries herself to the way she thoughtfully approaches each new craft project.

Every morning, Laura enjoys receiving *The Chronicle*, which she reads with her coffee. Later in the day, she likes to sit outside and soak up the sunshine, greeting neighbors and enjoying the fresh air. These quiet moments outdoors are some of her favorites. What truly makes Laura special is her warm, kind personality. She is friendly, gracious, and always considerate of the staff who support her. Her gentle presence brings calmness to those around her, and many staff members say she brightens their day with her conversations and compliments.

We are grateful to have Laura as part of our Regency Grand family!

