



Whispers from The Willows

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our newsletter for February.

We hope that you enjoyed our previous newsletters.

We will continue to bring you as much news, important facts and fun things in our upcoming newsletters and continue here with our February issue.

Hope that you our residents and your family on the outside as well as our staff here at The Willows Private Nursing Home enjoy.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

To provide optimum health care and rehabilitation in an environment which respects the rights, dignity and feelings of the residents. Our health care is given with compassion, care, love and encouragement with every consideration for privacy, comfort and the independence of our residents.

WELCOME!

february

from our
HEADOFFICE



Hello February

Finding your voice is never
Easy. It requires courage and
Belief in yourself to
Radiate confidence. Never
Underestimate the power of
Authenticity, for it brings
Resilience and strength to
Your words, actions and Journey



Hi All,

Wow - in a blink of an eye we are already at the end of January. I hope everyone had a good holiday and feel rested and ready for the year ahead. We are almost finished with our renovations; most bathrooms have been done, and all the rooms downstairs have been painted. We hope you like the new colours. In July, the Quality Standards are changing and there is going to be a new Aged Care Act. Over the next few months, I will be updating you about the changes and what can be expected. Happy Valentine's Day to all.

Maryann Inbari - CEO



from our LIFESTYLE DESK

Hello everyone!

How time flies, the first month for 2025 is over and its already February. I trust you are enjoying this summer weather; it seems last week the weather got a bit too much; in this case I hope you avoided the heatwave and stayed cool.

February will be an exciting month as it brings the fun of Valentine's Day. We will enjoy hosting a party full of fun, hearts and memories. We look forward to a happy month of many singalongs, Karaoke, good health, and happy smiles all around!

Kindest Regards,
The Lifestyle Team



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

JOHN PENNISI	3rd
CHERYL BROWN	16th
IN-JA YO	18th
CONNIE DENARO	27th
COLIN JONES	28th



myHEALTH

Understanding Cognitive Function As the Brain Ages

As you get older, you've probably noticed that your memory, recall, and attention span have all decreased. It may take a little longer to find words or come up with names, you find yourself forgetting why you entered a room, or you may have more trouble with multitasking. Everyone experiences it at some point, particularly as you enter your 40s and 50s. While this can be aggravating, the aging brain isn't entirely the enemy!

The Good

As a matter of fact, many studies have shown that older adults have a greater vocabulary, as well as a better understanding of the words they use as compared to younger adults. This is due to experience and knowledge but also how the brain changes over time. You'll also be relieved to know that certain cognitive abilities improve in middle age! The Seattle Longitudinal Study, which tracked the cognitive abilities of thousands of adults over the past 50 years, showed people actually performed better on tests of verbal abilities, spatial reasoning, math, and abstract reasoning in middle age than they did when they were young adults.

The Not-So-Good

Certain parts of the brain shrink with age, especially those that help you learn new things and control other complex mental activities, as the National Institute of Aging reports. This also comes along with less effective neurons (nerve cells) in certain brain regions, as well as decreased blood flow in the brain and increased inflammation. Even in the healthiest of adults, these changes will affect mental functioning. This doesn't mean that older adults can't learn new things, it will just take them a little more time, at which point, they'll do just as well with the new knowledge or skill.



According to Alexis Wnuk from BrainFacts.org, "Autobiographical memory of life events and accumulated knowledge of learned facts and information—both types of declarative memory—decline with age, whereas procedural memories, like remembering how to ride a bike or tie a shoe remain largely intact.

It's not only memory that is affected, however. At as early as age 30, certain aspects of attention also become less reliable. This is why you may have a harder time focusing on conversations when there is background noise, such as in a loud restaurant. Wnuk's article suggests that alterations in cognitive ability reflect changes in the brain's structure and chemistry. As you enter midlife, the brain changes in subtle but measurable ways. The overall volume of the brain begins to shrink when you're in your 30s or 40s, with the rate of shrinkage increasing around age 60.

It's Going To Be Okay

Don't let this information get you down! While there are plenty of downsides and challenges that come with an aging brain, there are more positives than you may expect. The adult brain seems to be capable of rewiring itself well into middle age, incorporating decades of experiences and behaviors. Research suggests, for example, the middle-aged mind is calmer, less neurotic, and better able to sort through social situations. Some middle-agers even have improved cognitive abilities.

While it is true that your memory and perception speed begin to decline at middle age, verbal abilities, spatial reasoning, simple math skills, and abstract reasoning skills all improve! "There is an enduring potential for plasticity, reorganization, and preservation of capacities," says cognitive neuroscientist Patricia Reuter-Lorenz, PhD, of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.



Please discuss with a professional to better understand your concerns.

POWER OF WORDS

Messages to send someone who is grieving

When you feel at a loss for words, use these prompts to help craft a compassionate message to let a loved one know you're there for them

I'm so sorry to hear about [X] passing away. I know this must be such a hard time, but just know we're thinking of you.

I've spent the past few days since the news thinking back over so many memories with [X]. If you ever want to reminisce, or just have a good chat about it all, call me any time.

I can't begin to tell you how sorry I am for your loss.

I heard once that the tears and pain we feel when we lose someone, is a reflection of all the unexpressed love we didn't get to share with them. Often we hurt so deeply, because we loved so deeply – and trust me, they know how much you cared.

Sending you so much love right now.

I know that you and [x] had a very complex relationship, and I can't imagine how it feels to lose them. But I'm here if you ever want to talk about it

I can't imagine how heartbreaking this must be for you. Know that I'm here if you need anything.

Please don't feel any pressure to respond, but I wanted to say how truly sorry I am about [X] passing away.

I know this time of year can bring up a lot of memories, so I thought I'd just check in. How are you holding up?

Your February star signs



ARIES - focus and win



TAURUS - good vibes only



GEMINI - always be honest



CANCER - change your thinking



LEO - make yourself proud



VIRGO - grace under pressure



LIBRA - feed your



SCORPIO - live life daily



SAGITTARIUS - get over it



CAPRICORN - all is well



AQUARIUS - change is good



PISCES - life won't wait

QUOTE

it's important
to have a
twinkle
in your wrinkle



OUR EYES AS WE AGE

We were all young once. As we age, the risks of vision and eye diseases increase. Such problems may only be found with a comprehensive eye examination.

Eye problems to be aware of with ageing include:

• **CATARACTS:** your natural lens becomes cloudy, causing blurry or foggy vision and glare problems, especially while driving at night, as well as difficulty seeing in low light. Surgery is the answer. This involves removing the cloudy lens and replacing it with a clear, artificial intraocular lens. With modern lenses, vision from 33cm to infinity may be achievable.

• **AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION:** this affects the macula – the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. Although there's no cure or prevention, treatments such as intravitreal injections, laser and lifestyle changes can help slow its progression and preserve vision.

• **GLAUCOMA:** a group of conditions that damage the optic nerve, potentially leading to permanent vision loss if untreated. It often involves raised intraocular pressure. Sufferers may have significant vision loss before realising there is a problem. Family history is one of the key risk factors, along with age and diabetes.

 **Love your eyes. Get them checked.**

Happy Valentine's Day
14 FEBRUARY

Cash is King

especially for seniors



Cash has long been king for many seniors across Australia. And it's high time that the younger generations give our elders a pat on the back – because they were indeed right.

Think about the last time you paid for your goodies with a credit card/debit card. There's a good chance you had to pay a surcharge on top of the cost of your item(s) too. According to the Reserve Bank of Australia, cash usage has generally been replaced with card payments. But that means added surcharges for consumers.

Take for example your morning newspaper, if you like purchasing a physical copy. Say it's \$5.50 – add on a 1.5% surcharge and it will be around \$5.58. A nice morning tea these days can cost up to \$25. Add on a 1.5% surcharge, and then it's about \$25.38. These surcharges might look small, but the cost certainly adds up.

There's another factor to consider too. Many local businesses now only allow transactions via card, rather than cash. This of course proves a challenge for many local seniors. And although online facilities are convenient for many of us, digital systems also pose risks during outages, storms and natural disasters, highlighting the importance of cash being an option during emergencies.

Recently, National Seniors Australia (NSA) launched their Keep Cash campaign, which is focused on this very issue. NSA has welcomed the federal government's proposed mandate for businesses to accept cash for essential items to support those who need to and prefer using this valid form of currency.

NSA Chief Executive Officer Chris Grice said:

"When retailers refuse cash, it inconveniences customers and can lead to genuine hardship for those who rely on cash."

"Not all seniors are comfortable using debit or credit cards, or banking online, because they're not tech savvy, they're fearful of potential scams and cash is what they've always known."

Wellbeing

You know you've grown when...

10 subtle signs that you've made progress with your mental wellbeing



You don't feel guilty for listening to your body and what it needs



Saying 'no' doesn't scare you anymore



Your self-worth isn't determined by the opinions of others



You can separate thoughts from facts



You view mistakes as opportunities to learn, rather than punishing yourself for them



You feel comfortable asking for help, instead of fearing judgement for it



You can acknowledge and address difficult emotions, and no longer bottle them up or hide from them



You have a deeper understanding of what truly matters to you, rather than following the crowd or what society suggests you 'should' care about



You are focusing on the quality, rather than quantity, of relationships in your life

*from our
kitchen to
yours*



SUMMER SURPRISE *with Maggie Beer*

One of Australia's most
well-known and best-loved cooks,
Maggie Beer has been on an
important mission – a food mission
for older Australians that is.

For more than five decades,
we have grown to witness
and experience her unbridled
passion and joy around
food. Maggie's grassroots,
no-nonsense approach to
wholesome and local
produce has been the
catalyst for creating

hundreds of mouth-watering
recipes which have been
embraced in homes all
around Australia.

To learn more about her
online training modules,
please visit The Maggie
Beer Foundation website at
maggiebeerfoundation.org.au



Spinach

FRITTATA

A quick and easy recipe that gifts beautiful flavour and a vibrant green colour.

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOKING TIME: 30 minutes

SKILL LEVEL: Easy

SERVES: 10

INGREDIENTS

4 Eggs

165ml Cream

125g Spinach frozen, defrosted,
excess water squeezed out

85g Onion, diced

15g Butter, salted or unsalted

5ml Extra virgin olive oil

15g Parmesan, finely grated

60g Ricotta cheese

1g Pepper, white

1.5g Salt

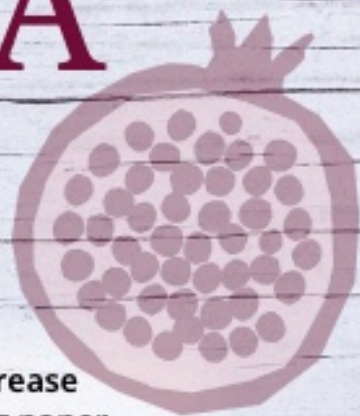
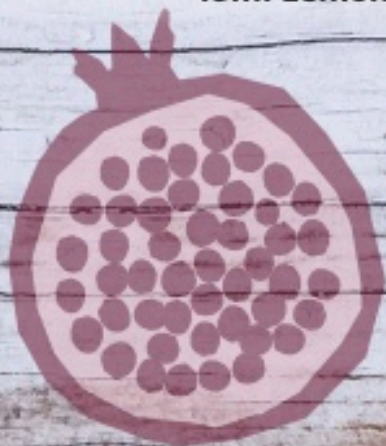
15ml Lemon juice

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 140°C then grease and line a baking dish with baking paper.
2. Over medium heat, melt butter in a large frying pan, when the butter begins to bubble and turn nut brown add the extra virgin olive oil followed by the onions and cook until soft then set aside.
3. Whisk together the eggs and cream, then add the parmesan and ricotta cheese, and whisk to combine. Season with salt and pepper then pour the mix into the lined baking dish and set aside while you prepare the spinach.
4. Ensure the moisture has been squeezed from the frozen, defrosted spinach. Place the spinach in a food processor with the onions and lemon juice then blend until smooth.
5. Swirl the spinach through the egg mix to achieve a ripple effect then place in the oven to bake.
6. Remove from the oven and leave the frittata to cool for 15 minutes before cutting and serving. **ACG**

TIP

Lemon helps retain the green of the spinach.





TIP
Mix it up
with added
mushrooms or
tomatoes

MINDSET

8 EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES TO STOP SHAME FROM SPIRALLING

When one negative moment or event threatens to escalate in your mind into a disaster of untold proportions, turn to these tools and ideas to help regain perspective

NOTICE YOUR TRIGGERS.

Recognising and understanding what sets shame into motion can help you to prepare, and question the thoughts as they arise – knowing it's not always coming from a place of reason.

BE PRESENT AND PRACTICE MINDFULNESS.

If you try to stay in the present, it can help you to not get carried away with 'what ifs' and catastrophising.

GET CURIOUS ABOUT THE SHAME.

What might it be trying to tell you? Not allowing it to be this scary thing you hide from can allow you to face it head-on, before it grows, enabling you to view it from a more neutral perspective.

THOUGHTS ARE NOT FACTS.

Try visualising the thoughts as clouds passing overhead; you don't have to hold on to them, you can recognise they are there, but they will pass.

SHOW YOURSELF SOME KINDNESS.

Shame often manifests as self-criticism, and negative self-talk, which feeds into the spiral. Counter this by reminding yourself of positive things you've done, and qualities you have. Practise self-care, in whatever form suits you; that act of kindness can remind you that you're deserving of it.

CREATE A POSITIVE AFFIRMATION.

This is a statement that you can repeat to yourself when you notice your negative self-talk is taking over. Craft it as something personal (I am or my), keep it present tense so it's actionable, along with being concise.

TALK IT OUT.

As with many feelings, finding someone you trust to voice them aloud can help to work through them – even hearing the thoughts might help you to recognise they're not true, or an exaggeration.

Signs you're in a shame spiral



- Blaming yourself (even when you're not responsible).
- Displaying self-destructive behaviour.
- Isolating yourself from others and feeling alone.
- Low self-worth, a sense of humiliation, and that you deserve to feel this way.
- Ruminating on past mistakes, problems, or times your trust has been broken.

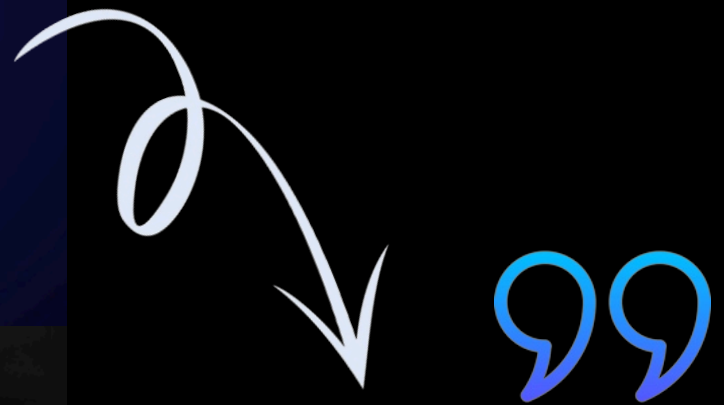
JOURNAL ABOUT IT.

If you don't feel comfortable approaching someone else, you could try journaling, as putting those thoughts on the page can help you make sense of them, and seeing them written down might allow you to recognise where you're being too harsh on yourself.

How you can become an expert barista at home!

Making the best coffee at home is both an art and a science, blending the right ingredients, equipment and techniques to create a delicious brew.

Did you
Know...?



Those beautiful designs served up to you on your coffee froth are called latte art. Rolling your froth across the coffee, rather than letting it drop through, is the secret! With a little practice and your cup on a tilt, you can do it too.



1. First, start with high-quality coffee beans. Freshly roasted beans provide the best flavour. Store them in an airtight container away from light, heat and moisture to maintain their freshness. Grinding your beans just before brewing ensures maximum flavour extraction.

2. The grind size of beans is crucial and should match your brewing method. For example, a coarse grind works best for a coffee plunger, while a fine grind is ideal for espresso machines. Using a burr grinder instead of a blade grinder helps achieve a consistent grind size, which is essential for even extraction.

3. Water quality and temperature are vital. Use filtered water to avoid impurities that affect taste. The ideal water temperature for brewing coffee is between 90°C and 95°C. Too hot, you risk burning the coffee. Too cool, you won't extract enough flavour.

4. The coffee-to-water ratio is another key factor. A standard guideline is 1-2 tablespoons of coffee per 170g of water – but you can adjust this to taste. Experimenting with different ratios will help you find your perfect brew.

5. Investing in a coffee machine at home offers convenience, cost savings and your favourite flavours. It allows you to experiment with different beans, grind sizes and brewing methods to find your perfect cup. Automatic drip coffee makers are popular for their ease of use and ability to brew multiple cups at once. Single-serve machines or single-serve pod machines offer convenience and a variety of flavours, perfect for those who prefer a quick cup without the hassle of measuring. And espresso machines offer unique benefits for coffee enthusiasts – the ability to craft rich, concentrated shots and long blacks, ideal for lattes and cappuccinos too.

6. A quality coffee machine provides consistent water temperature and brewing time, ensuring a great cup every time. Many modern machines also come with features like programmable timers, built-in grinders and milk frothers allowing you to customise your coffee to your absolute liking.

So, if you want to be a great home barista, making the best coffee involves becoming an expert with the basics. And a good coffee machine will enhance this process, providing consistency and convenience, and ultimately leading to a delightful coffee experience every day.

What is the Lunar New Year?

A celebration for many cultures in Sydney, including the city's Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Malaysian and Korean communities, this year's Lunar New Year falls on 29 January, with the city hosting an exciting number of events from 29 January – 16 February.

Think street parades, lion dancing, huge lanterns, pop-up markets, art installations and plenty of delicious food.

Fun fact: 2025 is the Year of the Snake, the sixth character in the Chinese zodiac, which is a symbol of renewal, wisdom, abundance and prosperity in Chinese culture.

Did you know
we support and...

Shop
LOCAL



Here at The Willows, we have been supporting our local community for many years now by buying our meat, vegetables, bread and so much more from our local **'BUTCHERS, GROCERS & PHARMACISTS'.**

We know that our support to these small business owners is greatly valued by them especially over the past year when COVID hit us all that just turned everything upside down. The Willows will continue this support for many more years to come.



Did You Know?

WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING
SERVICES THAT VISIT
THE WILLOWS AND
ARE AVAILABLE TO
ALL RESIDENTS

DENTIST



PODIATRIST



DOG THERAPY



HAIRDRESSER



ART THERAPY



HOLY COMMUNION



WHAT'S ON?

DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

SPIRITUAL SERVICES

Every Sunday 11.00am VIDEO TV & LAPTOP

Catholic Mass, Italian, Arabic, Greek,
Orthodox, Tamil and Croatian Mass

BIRTHDAY PARTY

2.00pm 28th February

LADIES GROUP

2.00pm Friday 7th TEA & GLEE

KNITTING GROUP

2.00pm Friday 7th TEA & GLEE

ART GROUP THERAPY

2.00pm Monday 3rd & 17th

MENS CLUB

KARAOKE 2.00pm Friday 28th

FLOOR GAMES

2.00pm Thursdays - 6th Tenpin Bowling,
13th Lawn Bowl, 20th Golf Indoor,
27th Balloon Tennis

MENTAL STIMULATION

11.00am Every Wednesday

BUS OUTING TBA

BIBLE STUDY

11.00am Every Thursday

GENTLE EXERCISES

10.00am Every Day

HAPPY HOUR

2.00pm Friday 14th



VALENTINES PARTY



BINGO GAMES

1.30pm every Tuesday

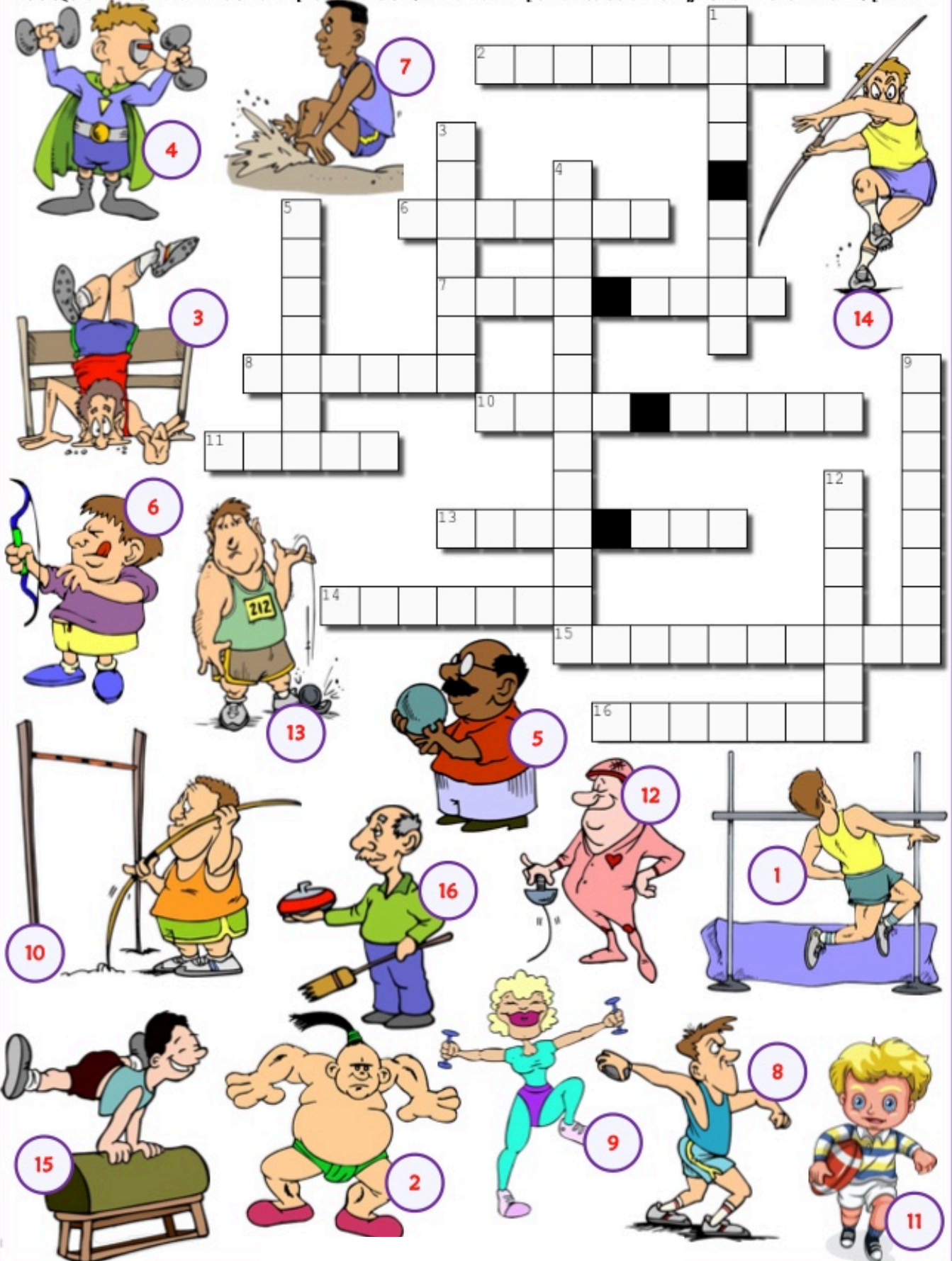
PARLOR GAMES

1.30pm Monday - 10th Banana Gram,
24th Qwirkle (Or Residents Choice)

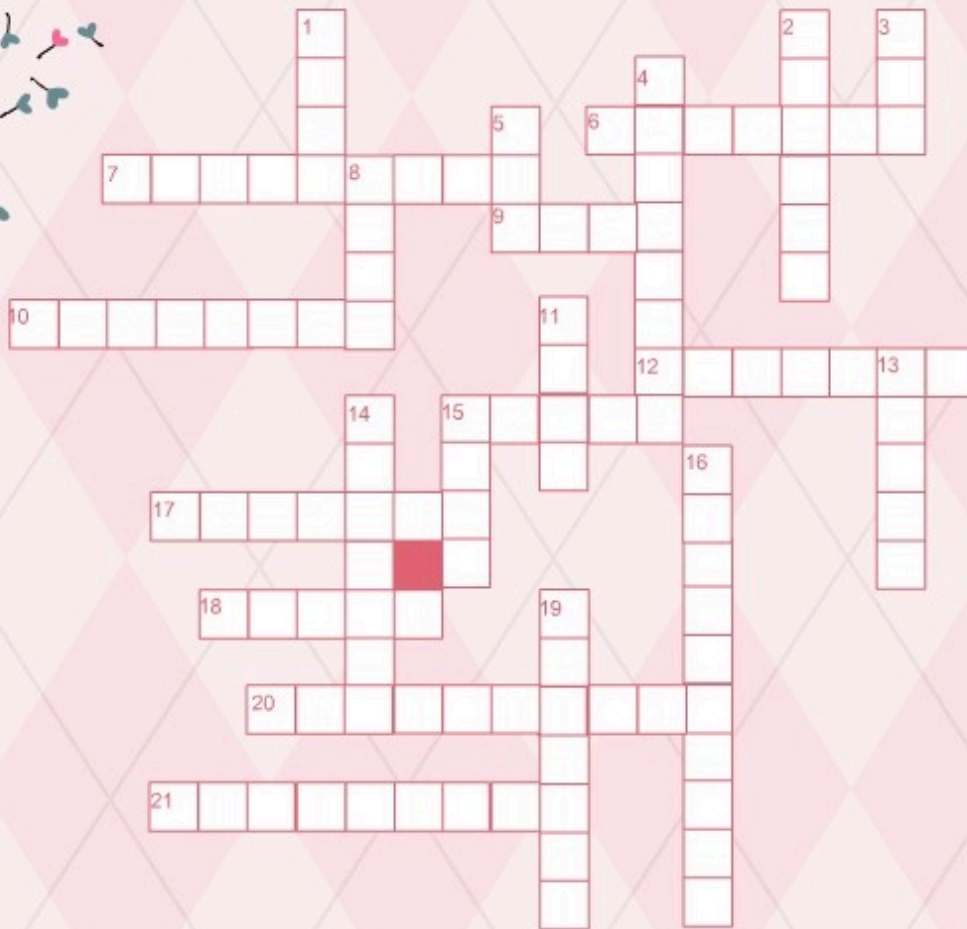


SPORTS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Look at the numbers on the pictures and write the sports vocabulary in the crossword puzzle



Valentine Crossword Puzzle



Down:

1. hugs, and kisses
2. A person with whom one has a bond of mutual affection
3. Squeeze (someone) tightly in one's arms
4. The second month of the year
5. The color of blood
8. An intense feeling of deep affection
11. A piece of paper to send greetings
13. A sweet treat
14. A declaration or assurance that one will do something or that a particular thing will happen
15. A color intermediate between red and white, like coral or salmon
16. unable to think or act normally, especially as a result of being in love
19. another word for gift

Across:

6. An emotional state or reaction
7. A treat made from roasted and ground cacao seeds
9. Regarded with deep affection.
10. A flat paper container with a sealable flap, used to enclose a letter or document.
12. A feeling of excitement and mystery associated with love
15. a social gathering of invited guests
17. Cute and colorful inflated rubber bag
18. the Roman god of Love
20. A person with whom someone is having a romantic relationship
21. A sweetheart chosen or complimented on Valentine's Day

ANSWERS ON LAST PAGE

Riddle Me Out

**A girl fell off a
20-foot ladder.
She wasn't hurt.
How?**



**What can you
hear, but not see or
touch, even though
you control it?**



**What is an answer
that can be used as
a reply to all sorts of
questions from easy
to hard?**



**What has words,
but never speaks?**



ANSWERS ON LAST PAGE

COLOUR ME IN



BONUS

COLOUR ME IN

HAPPY
VALENTINE'S



DAY



SPORTS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

2. wrestling
6. archery
7. long jump
8. discus
10. pole vault
11. rugby
13. shot put
14. javelin
15. gymnastics
16. curling

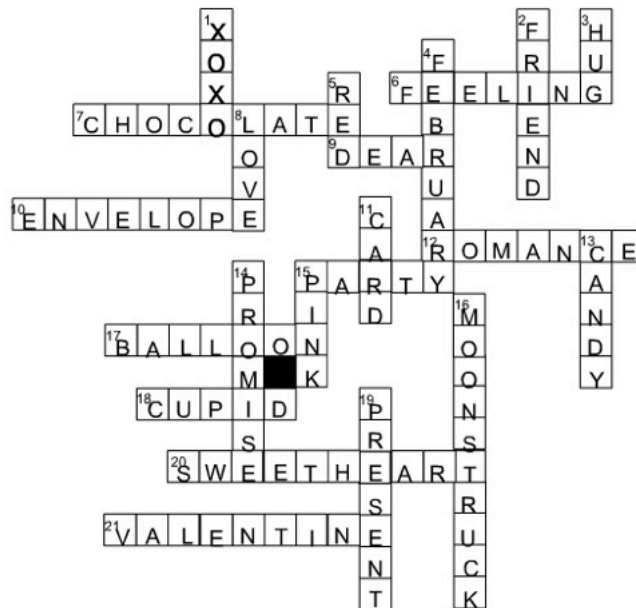
Down

1. high jump
3. hurdles
4. weightlifting
5. bowling
9. aerobics
12. fencing



1. She fell off the bottom step.
2. Your voice.
3. I don't know!
4. A book.

Valentine Crossword Puzzle Answer Key



Down:

1. hugs, and kisses
2. A person with whom one has a bond of mutual affection
3. Squeeze (someone) tightly in one's arms
4. The second month of the year
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20. A person with whom someone is having a romantic relationship
21. A sweetheart chosen or complimented on Valentine's Day

rainbow *of colour*



don't forget to eat your fruit

Hope you enjoyed our newsletter

***DISCLAIMER: THE ARTICLES IN OUR NEWSLETTERS DO NOT PROVIDE MEDICAL OR FINANCIAL ADVICE.**



All our articles, including but not limited to, text, graphics, images and other material contained herewith are for informational purposes only. No material in this newsletter is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, any treatment or financial advice. Always seek the advice of your physician, a qualified medical professional or financial advisor with any questions you may have regarding any articles herewith.