

Monday, July 17: This week is all about the five senses, so to start us off, we focused on the sense of sight, while also incorporating memory recall. We asked each of the residents to bring down a photograph of their family, a favorite memory, or picture from their past, and then we went around the room and discussed the pictures they had brought. The stories were so sweet! They took this as an opportunity to brag a little about their family and not only did I get to know them much better, the residents got to know a little bit more about their fellow residents, which they were all really happy about. After this “show and tell”, we looked at some hidden animal pictures, to really test their sense of sight. These pictures featured complicated backgrounds with animals hidden somewhere in the scene. They were surprisingly very good at finding the animals fairly quickly. Two of the residents worked together and were proud at how fast they could find the hidden figures. The residents left thoroughly impressed with themselves and really enjoyed the activity.

Tuesday, July 18: To continue the theme of testing the five senses, today we focused on sense of smell. We appealed to all the former cooks and had all the residents sniff some spices and try and guess what spice it was. I was very surprised to see that many residents could not smell the spices as well as they used to, they had quite the time trying to guess what the spice was. Some did better with the extracts, we had vanilla, peppermint, and rosemary. They had a somewhat easier time guessing what these were because the scents were stronger. One resident in particular had a lot of trouble guessing the ingredient by just smelling, so she resorted to tasting a little bit of it in order to guess what it was. It was amazing seeing how the human body compensates for one sense by using another sense. This activity’s goal was to test the resident’s senses, and that’s exactly what it did, and they had fun doing it! The subject of cooking also led to some reminiscing on the residents’ favorite foods growing up, which they really enjoyed talking about. All in all, they left this activity stimulated and interested.

Wednesday, July 19: Today we focused on the sense of touch. We threw it back to last year and brought the play-doh and the kinetic sand! Some of the residents remembered this activity from last year and we had some pretty creative things. They made snowmen, cats, flowers, and even some pots and pans! When asked what her favorite food was, one of the residents said Italian, especially all the different shapes of pasta, so she decided to make bow tie pasta and spaghetti. The kinetic sand was especially good for one of the residents because “it felt really good in her hands” as she said. The residents really enjoyed just coming out and sitting with the other residents and talking about what they did years ago.

Thursday, July 20: Today, we tested the residents’ sense of hearing by playing animal and nature sounds and having them try and guess what they were. It was a bit of a challenge because some residents had more trouble hearing than others did, but after some adjustments, the activity started. We started with animal sounds because they are easier to distinguish one from another. The residents had fun trying to guess the specific species of each animal. One resident was particularly good, and she guessed everyone spot on! Then came the nature sounds. These were a bit harder because they all sound very similar, however, the residents were able to tell the difference between waterfalls and rain and could even guess the sound of a crackling fire! They said that, that was a sound they recognized from their childhood of having bonfires. As this was my last official activity with them, at the end they all expressed how much they enjoyed this summer program and wished me to come back next year.