

SENIOR SURVIVOR GAME

Developed by Tracy Groene, Activity Director, Enid's Senior Care, Enid, OK

Played by Residents at Enid's Senior Care

Editor's Note: *Senior Survivor Game was a winning entry in Creative Forecasting's Annual National Nursing Home Week Contest printed in the May, 2003 issue, pages 10 - 12. Here is the game in its entirety.*

Preparation:

Purchase an inexpensive tiki torch (available at craft, discount, and home improvement stores) and eight large bamboo fishing poles which come in three pieces. Use the two larger, sturdier poles to make the "Jury Poles" which players will use to put the tiki torch out with. Make large nametags and headbands for all players. (One team can be red, the other blue, and players can wear nametags and headbands that correspond to their teams.) Borrow a portable campfire or BBQ pit and create a mailbox to hold the weekly challenge.

WEEK ONE

Choose 16 people and ask them to draw straws to determine team composition. For example, short straws can indicate red team membership, whereas long straws can mean being on the blue team. Participants should meet to choose their team's name. Distribute colored headbands according to team membership.

Send one member from each team to retrieve a challenge from the mailbox. Have that person read it to his team.

The first week's challenge is "HOW FAST CAN YOU GO?" The challenge is a wheelchair race around the facility. Staff and other residents can cheer them on as they go around the "track." Stretch crepe paper across the "finish line." The winner of the race receives an immunity necklace to distinguish him/her from the other players.

The participants meet in a resident council, bringing their jury poles with them. At this time, they elect two people to the jury (excluding the winner of the race). The jury ensures fairness and sets the guidelines that govern ties or other circumstances that affect the game. All questions are put before the jury which chooses the final winner in the end. Each player leaves the room and, in privacy, votes for two members. (Have a staff member on hand to explain and take the vote.) Tally the votes and announce the two winners. Make this into a ceremony, and the two individuals can come forward with their jury poles and put out the torch. After the ceremony, serve punch and cookies to all.

WEEK TWO

Have a player from each team retrieve the next challenge from the mailbox. This week's challenge is "SEARCH AND CIRCLE." Gather the players in the dining room and give each one a word search puzzle facedown (due to the date, we used Valentine's Day for the subject) and a pencil. Set a timer for 15 minutes and have everyone turn over his word search game and begin working. Whoever finishes first or finds the most words wins immunity. Participants meet for a resident council and vote two more people on to the jury. When their names are announced, the new jury members extinguish the torch and become part of the jury.

WEEK THREE

Have a player from each team go to the mailbox and read the next challenge, "HOW STEADY ARE YOU?" Conduct an egg toss. Take a large, rectangular, plastic storage container and fill it $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water. To make clean-up easier, set the container on top of a plastic drop cloth. Give each player five raw eggs with their names written on them. Standing one foot from the bucket, participants take turns tossing one egg at a time in the water, trying not to break or crack them. Remove unbroken eggs from the water and have players back up one foot a turn until no eggs are left. The last person with an unbroken egg gets immunity. Have players gather and vote two more people on to the jury and put out the torch. Serve egg salad sandwiches to everyone.

WEEK FOUR

Have a player from each team retrieve another challenge from the mailbox, "PLAYING IN THE SAND IS NOT JUST FOR KIDS." Put small boxes of sand on a table, one box per player. To prepare for this activity, bury individual pieces to a 12-piece puzzle in the sand. Whoever finds all 12 pieces the fastest and puts the puzzle together in its base correctly wins immunity. Again, have players vote two players to the jury during the resident council and put out the torch. Pass out refreshments.

WEEK FIVE

The two teams become one during Week Five. Together, players go to the mailbox and read the challenge, "OLDIES BUT GOODIES." Gather remaining players in a room to play "Name that Tune." Ask a piano player to play 12 songs, one at a time. Beforehand, find what the songs are and include them on a list. For each song choice, list the correct song title and two others, mixing them up. Do this for all 12 songs. Give this list and pen or pencil to each participant. Ask him to circle his choice for each song played. The player who gets the most correct answers wins immunity. (In the case of a tie, play a tiebreaker song.) Vote two more players to the jury, and they can put out the torch. The remaining players merge into one team and decide on a new team name. Offer Coke floats for all.

WEEK SIX

Remaining players can go to the mailbox to get this week's challenge, "HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE OTHER PLAYERS AND JURY MEMBERS?" Distribute sheets of paper with numbered questions and three possible answers for each question. Use questions based on information picked up during activities and the general exchange of conversation between residents and staff. For example, "Who is our facility's 'Bingo Queen'?" List three players' names, and players can choose the correct answers. Whoever has the most correct answers wins immunity, and vote two more players to the jury, and they can put out the torch. Have a Tea Party. (We enjoyed swan-shaped cream puffs and flavored teas.)

WEEK SEVEN

During this final week, only four players are left. Have them go to the mailbox and read the last challenge, "CAN YOU REALLY EAT THAT?" Conduct smaller versions of the games played in previous weeks. Once the first three contests are over, vote two players to the jury. The remaining participants must play the sand puzzle and "Name that Tune" games, plus, for the final challenge, roll a die to find out how many ounces of a particular food (provided by the kitchen) they have to eat. (We used fruit cocktail with a lot of blue food coloring in it to make it look unappetizing.) If they roll a two, they should eat two ounces of the item. You could also use pureed foods or thickened liquids. After they eat, they leave the room. Ask the jury who they think should win the contest. Have the two players return to the room, then announce the winner. Award the winner a grand prize and hold a party for everyone. (We gave our winner a limo ride with her son, as well as dinner for two at a local restaurant.) CF