

MAKE GRATEFUL PUMPKINS

Grateful pumpkins? What in the world does that mean? This time of year, pumpkins are all around us, everywhere we go. But *grateful* pumpkins?

Well, that's a term coined by Jackie Vance, R.N., senior director of clinical innovation and education for Mission Health Communities and a past national LTC Nurse Administrator of the Year.

As we move through the month of November and plan for Thanksgiving at our personal homes and facilities, Vance has a challenge for us. Here's what she recently said in a column for *McKnight's Long-Term Care News*:

"Go out and buy a pumpkin ... You can get the big ones on sale. Now, here's the challenge: If you're going to do this at your facility, which I highly recommend you do, assign a staff member to go around each day and get a resident and a staff member to say what they are thankful for in a word or a few. (If you're doing this at home, too, everyone gets to say, 'Thankful for...') Then write that at the top of the pumpkin. Each day, add your words so that they circle down from top to bottom until your pumpkin is filled up, and it's Thanksgiving Day.



"Then at your Thanksgiving dinner, read your 'thankful fors' out loud. I dare you not to smile! And when during your week you stop and have that moment of gratitude, remembering things you are thankful for. It changes your day."

I wholeheartedly endorse her challenge. We work in a profession in which circumstances daily confront us seeking solutions, and people can test us. But we have such an abundance of blessings; let's be grateful for them.

Grateful pumpkins can be a visual demonstration of the prayers of our hearts going up to God.

Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:20 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter