Pre-Release Press 2026

Volume 30 October Issue 10

Resident Standouts

Evan Blaine



Evan Blaine (right) has received multiple praises from both residents and staff. He works hard, takes accountability when needed, and is an asset to everyone around him. As an Inmate Worker, he consistently proves his commitment to the program through his strong work ethic in carrying out his maintenance duties. He is always polite, courteous, and respectful toward staff and others. He actively engages in his treatment program and exhibits a willingness to be honest and accountable with himself and his counselors to be able to work on things and move forward. Since arriving at the Pre-Release, he has maintained a positive attitude and demonstrates his understanding of the opportunity provided to him. He views his time at the Pre-Release as a privilege and an important stepping stone toward achieving his long-term goals. He has expressed a desire to build a successful career, remain actively involved and present in his role as a father, and be a supportive partner. His unfailing effort, positive attitude, and commitment to personal growth reflect his motivation to make meaningful changes and work toward a successful future. We are so glad you are here, Evan!



Dexter Turntoes

Mr. Turntoes (left) has become a valued presence within his church and the Pre-Release Center as he consistently progresses towards his recovery. He approaches challenges with resilience and takes each obstacle in stride while maintaining a strong commitment to his overall programming. Mr. Turntoes has proven himself to be dependable, accountable, and willing to put forth the effort necessary to achieve long-term success. He has received positive feedback from his work supervisor and group facilitators, all of whom report that he is engaged and demonstrates a genuine desire to improve himself. He has embraced his faith and does not miss an opportunity to attend church; even including Church within his Community Passes. Mr. Turntoes' continued dedication to personal growth and recovery positions him well for a successful transition back into the community.



Steven Walker



Mr. Walker (left) has spent a significant amount of time incarcerated and initially was nervous about transitioning to working in the community and attending meetings. Despite his fear of adjusting, he has done incredibly well and is extremely engaged in his treatment. Mr. Walker mentioned that he would eventually like to speak with younger incarcerated individuals about his experience to hopefully prevent them from ending up in his shoes. He is very motivated, engaged, kind, and helpful to those around him.

Robert Chief Stick

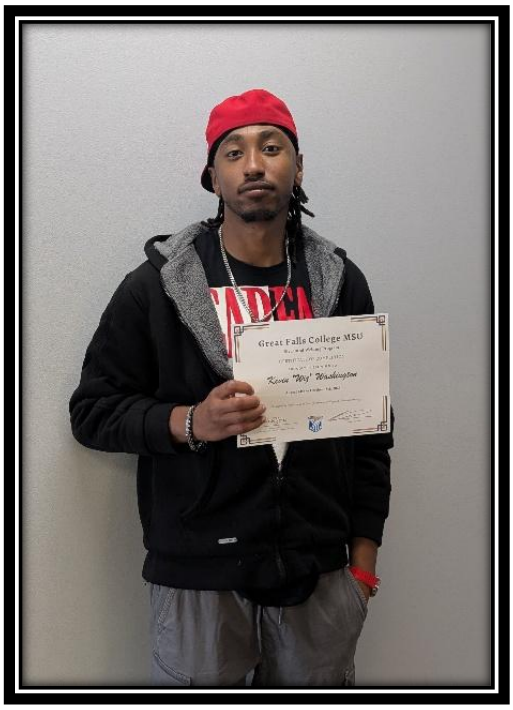


I would like to nominate Robert Chief Stick (right) as an outstanding resident. Any and all interactions I have had with Mr. Chief Stick have been respectful. He always has a smile on his face and always says hello. He has a great attitude even with his accidents. He even makes light that he is an accident waiting to happen!!



Resident Spotlight: Building a Future with Structural Welding

By Jerry Davis



Completing the Structural Welding Program at Great Falls College MSU (GFCMSU) is a massive milestone, but for graduate Kevin Washington, the true victory came with a career-launching opportunity. "It really feels good," Kevin shares, "but the real accomplishment was the Internship with ADF and getting the opportunity to become full-time at ADF."

Building the Blocks of Infrastructure

What exactly is structural welding? In Kevin's words, it is industrial welding at its most impactful. It serves as the building blocks for bridges, stadiums, and major public infrastructure. The scale of the work is massive. ADF, where Kevin now works, is currently supplying the materials for a drawbridge in North Chicago. In the past, the company has supplied structural material for iconic landmarks like the new football stadiums in Las Vegas and Atlanta.

Inside the Classroom and the Lab

The program at GFCMSU balances academic theory with intense, hands-on fabrication. A typical evening class is structured to prepare students for every aspect of the workforce:

- **First 15 Minutes:** Focused on soft skills like conflict resolution to prepare students for future workplace dynamics.
- **Next 30 Minutes:** Classroom theory covering core aspects of welding.
- **Remaining Time:** Intensive lab work dedicated to hands-on fabrication.

Kevin highly praises the faculty for their dedication. "The instructors were very helpful and made the class very personalized," Kevin says. "They paid attention to detail for all students and truly knew the strengths and weaknesses of everyone in the room."

Overcoming Challenges and Learning the Hard Way

The road to graduation wasn't without its obstacles. For Kevin, the ultimate hurdle was the final test, known as the "Root Opening."

"I am left-handed and cannot see the weld easily," Kevin explains. "I was very nervous for this test, so I practiced a lot to get it right."

Beyond the tests, the learning curve provided some unforgettable (and painful) moments. Kevin recalls a time forgetting to turn the welding gas on, which creates "porosity"—a bubbling defect Kevin describes as a "cancer to a weld" that had to be completely ground down and fixed. Another memorable lesson occurred during a fabrication shift. Unlike the school's cutting tables, ADF's setup required a different working posture. "I was in a position where the hot slag fell straight into my boot and burned my foot. Yes, it did burn me!" Kevin admits.



A Grueling Schedule Driven by Purpose

Success in the program required an incredible amount of grit. Navigating life at the Great Falls Pre-Release Center (GFPRC) alongside full-time work and late-night classes, Kevin's daily schedule was packed to the minute:

- **04:30 AM:** Wake up
- **05:15 AM:** Out the door to ADF
- **06:00 AM – 01:00 PM:** Work at ADF
- **01:00 PM – 01:45 PM:** Return to GFPRC
- **01:45 PM – 03:45 PM:** Prep for Structural Welding class
- **03:45 PM – 05:00 PM:** Walk to GFCMSU
- **05:00 PM – 09:30 PM:** Structural Welding class
- **09:30 PM – 10:45 PM:** Walk back to GFPRC

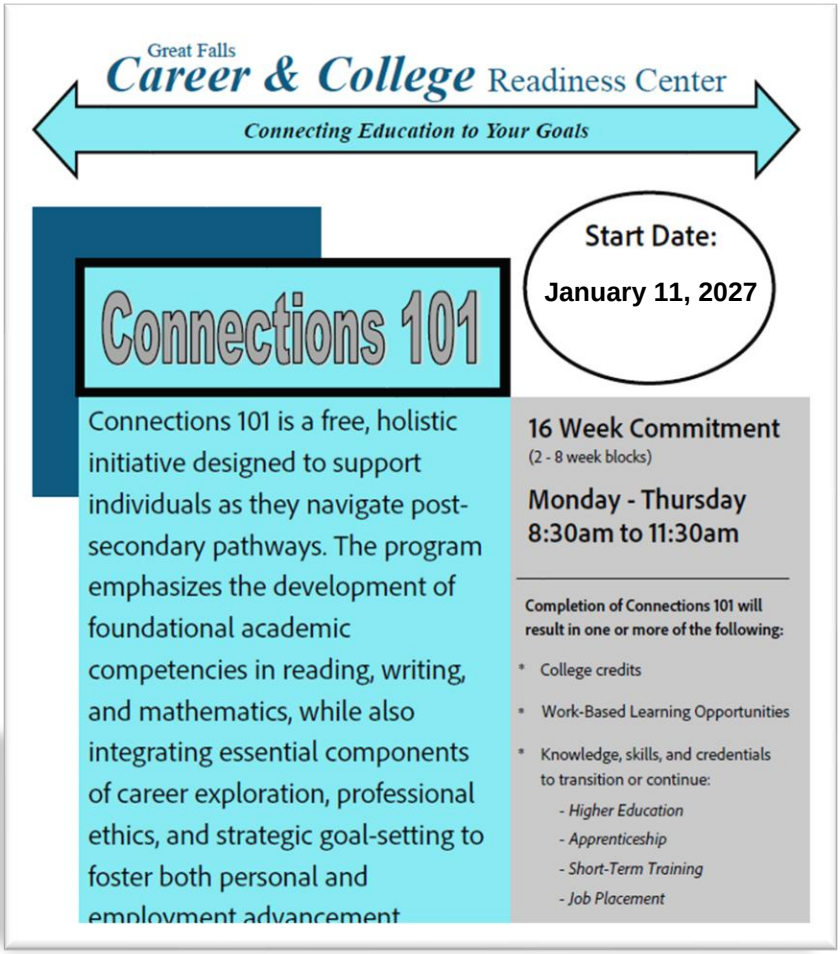


Looking Ahead

When asked if they would recommend the program to other residents at the GFPRC, Kevin's answer is an enthusiastic, "Yes, absolutely—for the internship and to help get a great job."

With a permanent, full-time career secured at ADF, Kevin has successfully turned a trade program into a long-term career path. He is planning to stay with the company for at least the next four to five years to help build the infrastructure of tomorrow.

Please see <u>The Education Zone</u> for information on the next scheduled session.



Jordan Parocai – Honors



By Sonja Roberts and Jordan Parocai

We are excited to congratulate one of our newest Honors Program members, Jordan Parocai. Way to go, Jordan, we are so proud of your progress! Jordan would like to share that her experience here at the Pre-Release has been a positive one. She's learned a lot about herself, she has grown as a person, and she has learned the importance of staying focused on her goals.

One of the hardest things that Jordan has faced on her journey with us was losing her mother. Through this experience, she has learned that it's okay to ask for help. Grief counseling and working out have helped her to work through her grief both mentally and emotionally.

With her Honors membership, she has thoroughly enjoyed being able to take passes to spend quality time with her family, such as doing activities out in the community with her daughters. She also stays active with Sober Life and attends meetings to continue to build her healthy lifestyle.

Moving forward, Jordan plans to maintain her sobriety, continue working, save money and eventually get a place of her own. She is proud of how far she has come and is grateful for the opportunities she's had here at the Center. Most importantly, she wants to keep up the momentum and continue growing so that she can build a better future for herself and her family. She has been researching what programs and training are available and she is working toward developing a skill that can help her build a career. To this end, she is considering taking classes to become a licensed esthetician so that she can pursue offering services for lashes and skin.

In the words of her treatment team, Jordan Parocai puts forth real effort to meet the expectations at the Center. She is very conscientious about taking care of her responsibilities. Ms. Parocai has faced several major challenges while at the Center and has still done well to overcome them. She is very respectful, helpful to others, and is engaged in all aspects of her treatment.

According to Jordan, being an Honors member helps to enhance her chance of success when she leaves the Center. It helps her to build better routines and become more responsible and accountable. She will use healthy coping skills when she is stressed or dealing with difficult emotions. Her community support system includes her family, especially her Dad, as well as the support she has through Sober Life and recovery based groups. Her overarching goal is to use the tools she has learned to make better decisions and continue moving forward in her recovery.

We couldn't agree more, Jordan. You have come a long way and we are your biggest champions for your continued and future success!

🩺 RN HUNTER'S HEALTH CORNER

Your Next Chapter Starts Here

A Final Message from RN Hunter

Well, here we are.

After four years at the GFPRC, this will be my **last RN Hunter newsletter article**. I have given my notice and will soon be moving on to my next chapter.

So, rather than give you one more lecture about drinking water, taking your medications, or keeping your medical appointments—although, for the record, I still highly recommend all three—I wanted to leave you with something a little more meaningful.

And maybe a little more personal.

🎒 Make Your Time Here Count

GFPRC is a transitional program. While you're here, there are things you're required to do: work, attend required classes, advance through the phases, and meet the expectations that come with each step.

But here's the secret: **Don't just complete the requirements. Use them.**

- **Your job** can become more than a requirement — it's **work experience, a skill, a reference and a positive part of your résumé.**
- **Your required classes** can be more than a seat to fill — they are tools to learn something new.
- **Advancing through the phases** can be more than checking a box — let each phase represent another step toward the person you want to be**.**

Whether you are working toward your **HiSET**, completing a certification, participating in the **Honors Program**, learning a trade, improving your computer skills, or developing another skill—take advantage of it.

When you leave here, you may only have a duffel bag or a backpack of personal belongings. But I hope you're carrying something much more valuable: **A work history. An education. New skills. Good references. Accomplishments. Confidence. And a plan.**

That's the kind of baggage worth carrying.

📝 Your Résumé Is Your Story

When someone looks at your résumé someday, it should tell them more than just where you worked. It should prove who you became:

- **I showed up.**
- **I learned.**

- **I completed things.**
- **I worked hard.**
- **I became dependable.**
- **I kept moving forward.**

Always remember: **Do the right thing—even when nobody is watching.**

That's not just a rule for GFPRC.
That's a core life skill.
Follow the rules when nobody is checking.
Show up when it's easier not to.
Do your job well even when nobody is standing over you.
Finish what you start.
Eventually, those little choices become habits—and those habits become your character.

📝 One Final RN Hunter Prescription

After four years of reminding people to take their medications, make their appointments, drink their water and take care of themselves, I'm giving you one final prescription:

Take care of yourself—and take advantage of every opportunity you have.
And don't worry…

This prescription comes with unlimited refills. 😉
Seriously, use your time here to prepare yourself for what's next.

To the Residents:

Over these past four years, I've had the privilege of working with many of you.
I've watched you struggle. I've watched you learn. I've watched you make mistakes.
I've watched you go on to make better choices, accomplish things you didn't think you could, and keep moving forward.
I've learned that people don't always realize how much progress they've made until they stop and look back.
So, when you get frustrated, **look back.**
Look at where you started.
Look at what you've accomplished.
Then keep going.
Your past may explain where you've been, but it does **not** have to determine where you're going.
Use your time here. Learn. Work. Advance. Complete your classes. Build your résumé. Build your confidence.
And when it's time to leave, don't just leave GFPRC.

Leave prepared.

🤝 To My Coworkers and the GFPRC Staff:

I also want to take a moment to thank the incredible staff I have had the privilege of working alongside these past four years. I genuinely **admire the dedication and commitment you bring to your work every day.** Working in a transitional program isn't always easy. There are challenges, unexpected situations and days that require patience, flexibility and a good sense of humor.

And believe me, over four years, I've had plenty of opportunities to practice all three! 😉
One of the things I have enjoyed most about my time here has been being the **"medical person" you could come to when you had questions or weren't quite sure what to do.** I have enjoyed answering your medical questions, helping you work through situations, providing medical guidance when needed, and simply being someone you could reach out to when something medical came up in the building.

I've also enjoyed getting to know many of you—not just as coworkers, but as people. Those relationships and conversations have been some of the most rewarding parts of my time here.
And, of course, I've enjoyed the opportunity to teach CPR, First Aid and AED training as well as help prepare staff to respond when an emergency happens. **I've been proud to be part developing the staff here and knowing that the you have the skills and confidence to potentially save a life.**

As I leave, I sincerely hope GFPRC is able to find a nurse who can step into that role and continue to be a resource for you—someone who can answer your medical questions, provide guidance, support staff education and continue the CPR and emergency preparedness trainings. I know how valuable it is to have someone in the building who understands the medical side of things and is available when questions arise. **I will miss being that person.**

Most of all, I want to say **thank you.**

Thank you for your teamwork, your support, your patience, your humor and the many interesting experiences we've shared over the past four years.
It has been an **interesting four years**—and I mean that in the very best possible way!
I've learned a lot, experienced a lot and met some wonderful people.
I am grateful that I've had the opportunity to be part of the GFPRC team, and I will carry many good memories with me when I leave.

📌 The Final Refill

- Take care of yourself.
- Take care of each other.
- Take advantage of every opportunity.
- Work hard.
- Keep learning.
- And when nobody is watching…

Do the right thing anyway.

Someday, when you look back, you may realize that the seemingly small choices you made here were actually the beginning of something much bigger.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your journey.
Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep moving forward.

And remember—

Your next chapter is yours to write.

RN Hunter



The Education Zone:

RESIDENT EDUCATION & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Brought to you by: Jerry Davis, Education Coordinator

HiSET (High School Equivalency) Certification Process

To begin your HiSET journey, coordinate directly with Jerry Davis, the Great Falls Pre-Release Center (GFPRC) Education Coordinator.

- **Step 1: Schedule Your TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) Math and Reading Tests**
  - **Where:** Great Falls Career and College Readiness Center.
  - **Time Commitment:** Up to 4 hours.
  - **Testing Times:** Mondays & Wednesdays at 0900 or 1200.
- **Step 2: Schedule an Advisement Session**
  - **Where:** Great Falls Career and College Readiness Center.
  - **Time Commitment:** Approximately 30 minutes.
- **Step 3: Schedule Free Tutoring Sessions**
  - **Requirement:** Attend at least one session per week.
  - **Availability:** Monday–Friday, 0800–1530 *(Must be on your schedule)*.
- **Step 4: Take the Tests**
  - **Test Subjects:** Language Arts Reading, Language Arts Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
  - **Testing Times:** Tuesdays at 0830, 1045, 1600, and 1815.
  - **Cost:** $5 administration processing fee + $18 per test *(3 attempts)*.

Connections 101 Program

- **Duration:** 1 semester (16-week commitment)
- **Next Session:** January 11, 2027 – May 15, 2027.
- **Schedule:** Monday–Thursday, 0830–1130.
- **Cost: FREE** (Books are provided at no cost).
- **Incentive:** Your next 6 college credits are free.

https://ccrc.gfps.k12.mt.us/students/connections-101

Financial Literacy 101

Presented by Clearwater Credit Union. Available for Phase 3 or Phase 4 residents only. Register with Jerry Davis to attend.

- **Course Schedule & Topics:**
  - **October 30:** Banking Basics
  - **November 6:** Credit
  - **November 13:** Lending
  - **November 20:** Budgeting
- **Location & Times:**
  - **Men's Class:** West Campus Board Room | 0830–1000
  - **Women's Class:** Women's Campus Great Room | 1030–1200



Short-Term Training at GFCMSU

Program	Dates / Schedule	Cost	Details
Certified Nurses Assistant (CNA)	Nov 2 – Nov 23, 2026 *(New class starts monthly)*	$1,200	4-week certification program.
Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	**Mandatory Meeting the first Monday of Month** **Next meeting: Nov 2, 2026** Theory: Mon 0800–1600, Tue–Thu 1730–2130 Drive Time: Fri & Sat 0800–1630 *(Self-scheduled)*	$2,000 – $5,000	GFCMSU provides their own truck. Can take up to 6 months to take a DMV test.
Structural Welding	Jan 25, 2027 – Mar 19, 2027 Mon–Thu, 1700–2130	$3,000	8-week intensive session.
Flooring Installer	Sept 14, 2027 – Nov 19, 2027 Mon–Thu, 0800–1600	$3,000	10-week program. Learn carpet, tile, hardwood, and alternative installation.

Great Falls Public Library Visits



The public library visits the Center once per quarter. Bring a photo ID to sign up and receive your library card on the spot.

- **Next Visit Date:** November 17, 2026
- **Location Schedule:**
  - **West Campus:** Lobby | 1700–1730
  - **Women's Campus:** Lobby | 1745–1815
  - **East Campus:** Dining Room | 1830–1900

For questions or to sign up for any of these programs, please contact:
Jerry Davis
Great Falls Pre-Release Center Education Coordinator





Vitamins C and D: What's the Difference?

Vitamins C and D are both essential for a healthy immune system, but they function as a tag-team rather than duplicates. While Vitamin C acts as a frontline defender that protects against oxidative stress, Vitamin D works behind the scenes as a hormone-like regulator to keep your entire immune system balanced. Understanding how they differ ensures you extract the maximum health benefits from both.

Here is a breakdown of how these two heavy hitters compare and how they benefit your body.

The Core Differences: Solubility and Absorption

The fundamental difference between these two nutrients comes down to how your body processes and stores them.

Feature	Vitamin C	Vitamin D
Solubility Type	**Water-soluble** (not stored by the body)	**Fat-soluble** (stored in liver and fat tissues)
How Your Body Gets It	Diet only (citrus, peppers, berries)	Sunlight synthesis, food, and supplements
Best Time to Take	Anytime, with or without food	With a fat-containing meal for best absorption
Deficiency Risk	Rare in developed countries	**Very common** (affects 40%+ of US adults)
Daily Recommended Dose	75 mg (women) to 90 mg (men)	600 to 800 IU

Distinct Health Benefits



Vitamin C: The Frontline Shield

- **Active Defense:** Vitamin C supports the production and function of white blood cells, which actively track down and destroy harmful pathogens.
- **Collagen Production:** It is a vital building block for collagen, which keeps your skin, joints, and bones structurally sound. Strong skin is your body's literal physical barrier to infection.
- **Antioxidant Power:** It neutralizes free radicals—unstable molecules that damage cells and trigger long-term inflammation.
- **Iron Companion:** Taking Vitamin C dramatically boosts your body's ability to absorb plant-based iron from foods.

Vitamin D: The Master Regulator

- **Immune Balance:** Vitamin D ensures your immune response doesn't overreact and mistakenly attack your own healthy cells, acting as a crucial defense against autoimmune issues.

- **Bone Mineralization:** Without Vitamin D, your body cannot properly absorb calcium. It is critical for maintaining bone density and preventing brittle bones as you age.
- **Respiratory Protection:** Clinical evidence shows that maintaining healthy Vitamin D levels helps protect against acute respiratory tract infections.

The Takeaway

Think of **Vitamin D as your baseline foundation**—getting your levels checked by a doctor ensures your immune foundation stays strong year-round, especially through the dark winter months. Think of **Vitamin C as your daily fuel**—since your body flushes it out every day, you need a steady daily supply through fresh foods or supplements.

When the days get shorter, your body loses its primary source of Vitamin D: natural sunlight. Unlike other vitamins that you can easily get from a balanced diet, **Vitamin D is uniquely manufactured by your skin when it reacts to UVB rays from the sun.**

When sunlight hours drop during the fall and winter, maintaining your Vitamin D levels becomes critical for several key reasons:

1. The "Winter Blues" and Mood Regulation

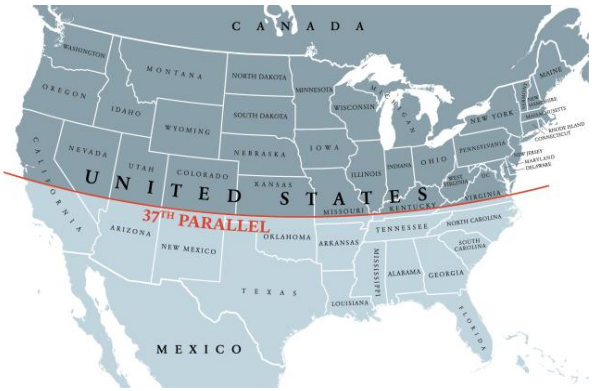
Vitamin D plays a major role in brain health and the production of **serotonin**, the hormone responsible for stabilizing your mood and happiness.

- **The Sunless Slump:** A drop in sunlight can cause Vitamin D levels to plummet, which is closely linked to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and winter depression.
- **Energy Levels:** Low levels of Vitamin D are a frequent culprit behind unexplained winter fatigue and sluggishness.

2. Peak Cold and Flu Season

Winter brings an increase in viral exposure just as your natural immunity dips from lack of sun.

- **Immune Activation:** Vitamin D acts as a "light switch" for your immune system. It commands your T-cells to wake up and fight off aggressive infections.
- **Respiratory Shield:** Maintaining optimal Vitamin D levels during winter has been clinically shown to reduce the risk of acute respiratory tract infections, helping you fight off seasonal bugs more effectively.



3. The "Latitude Problem" and Weak Sun Rays

Even if you go outside on a sunny winter day, you likely aren't making any Vitamin D.

- **Atmospheric Blocking:** In the winter, the sun sits lower on the horizon. Because of this angle, the Earth's atmosphere completely blocks the specific UVB rays your skin needs to synthesize the vitamin.
- **The 37th Parallel:** If you live anywhere north of Atlanta or Los Angeles (above the 37th parallel), your skin cannot physically produce Vitamin D from the sun from roughly October through March, no matter how long you stand outside.

What Happens When You Take Vitamin C and D Together? https://www.verywellhealth.com/vitamin-c-and-d-together-11861500

Vitamin C vs Vitamin D: What's the Difference? | Wellements https://wellements.com/blogs/the-well/vitamin-d-vs-vitamin-c-what-are-the-benefits

Ray's Trivia and Fun Facts to Know Spotlight

October Trivia





Birthstones:

Opal and Tourmaline

Bird:

Vulture – symbolizing resourcefulness and patience

Birth Flower:



Calendula (Marigold)

Zodiac Signs:

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22) and Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Major Holidays and Events

• **Halloween:** Celebrated on October 31, evolved from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain.
• **Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples' Day:** Observed on the second Monday in October in the United States.

History of Holloween



Halloween began over 2,000 years ago and is believed to have connections to the festival of Samhain celebrated among the Celts of ancient Ireland.

- The New Year: The Celts celebrated their new year on November 1, which marked the end of the harvest and the start of the dark, cold winter.
- Blurred Lines: They believed the boundary between the living and the dead opened on the night of October 31.
- Ward Off Spirits: People lit large bonfires and wore animal skins or masks to confuse and scare away roaming ghosts, demons, and spirits.

Christian Influence and All Hallows' Eve

- All Saints' Day: In the 8th century, Pope Gregory III moved All Saints' Day to November 1 to honor all saints and martyrs.
- Name Change: The evening before November 1 became known as All Hallows' Eve, which eventually turned into "Halloween".
- Merging Traditions: The church holiday absorbed older Celtic customs, blending religious remembrance with folk rituals.

Evolution of Traditions



• Jack-o'-Lanterns: Rooted in Irish folklore (such as the legend of "Stingy Jack"), people carved scary faces into turnips, potatoes, and beets to frighten away wandering souls.

• Trick-or-Treating: Evolved from medieval European practices like "souling" (poor people begging for food or "soul cakes") and Scottish "guising" (disguising oneself for food or coin).

• American Expansion: Irish and Scottish immigrants brought these customs to North America in the 19th century, replacing turnips with native pumpkins. Pranks and vandalism in the early 20th century eventually shifted into family-friendly community events and modern door-to-door trick-or-treating.

• Commercial Growth: Today, it has grown into a multi-billion-dollar holiday driven by costumes, candy corn, and decorations.



Ray McClelland

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

DOWN

1. Orange vegetable, often carved on Halloween.
3. A friendly ghost's greeting.
4. The color of pumpkins and autumn leaves.
7. What holds up your body and helps you move?
9. Furry pack animals that sometimes live in the woods.
8. Dress-up outfits for Halloween fun.
12. A spooky holiday with scary stories and decorations.
13. A fun prank or something funny you do on Halloween.
17. How a witch gets around in the sky.
18. Some people think these are unlucky if they're black.







PRE-RELEASE PRESS
Editor: Sonja Roberts

TRANSITION CENTER
GREAT FALLS PRE-RELEASE SERVICES INC.

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