

Activity: Creative Expression Goal: Social Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Stargazer Lilies at the Kentucky Oaks (Supports Breast Cancer Awareness)

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Photo by Learncreatelove.com



Materials

Live Stargazer Lily

Flower template printed in quantities 2 per person

Scissors, pink & green watercolor paints, brushes, glue, pens, markers

Pre-cut horse-shaped cards, poster board

Wipes

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will create a paper Stargazer Lily in celebration of the Kentucky Oaks horse race.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Follow verbal & visual directions; connect the use of flower with horse race & cancer awareness

Physical: Strengthen fine motor control with focus on pincer grip & finger movement; strengthen manipulation of materials using hands

Psychological/Emotional: Explore concepts of adversity, coping skills when faced with life changing moments/challenges; practice selflessness participating in a service project

Sensory: Explore sensory inputs, specifically floral fragrance; identify sensitivity to strong fragrances & positive or negative reactions

Social: Undertake a service project related to breast cancer awareness; participate in group focused activity

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials. Purchase Stargazer Lily(s). Have flowers in vase on table to begin session.
2. Facilitator begins session by presenting & describing the live Stargazer Lily. Using sensory stimulation touching, smelling & looking at the flower, participants are asked what smells & textures they are experiencing. Encourage them to think about their sensory reactions, like or dislike, beautiful or ugly, soft or rough etc.
3. Facilitator shares a few facts about the connections of the Stargazer Lily to the Kentucky Oaks horse race, its pink theme & breast cancer awareness, engaging participants by asking questions. Then transition the session to the hands-on activity of creating paper Stargazer Lilies.
4. Introducing the activity as a community service project, each person will make two (2) lilies, one for themselves & one for a social service agency, & complete a horse-shaped card to go with the lily. Ask participants who they want to share these with (Cancer Society, hospice or cancer treatment center).
5. Beginning with a pre-printed template, the flower shape is cut out, glued together & painted. Let dry.
6. Tying in the Kentucky Oaks horse race, participants are given pre-cut horse-shaped cards & asked to suggest some filly (female) horse names & words of encouragement for others. Participants' work will be shared with the service agency they have selected.
7. Ongoing discussion during the session prompts participants to think about & be sensitive to others, their health challenges & how service projects like donating paper lilies can be impactful.

Paper Flower Construction Tips: This paper activity is based on Learncreatelove.com and its free printable template of Stargazer Lilies on Pinterest. Using the template, cut the pieces of the lily first, then glue petals together prior to painting. The stamen and pollen part can be painted separately before gluing onto flower. Have a live plant and a sample paper flower available to demonstrate striations, dots and color tones that simulate the Stargazer Lily. Have several shades of pink available for participants. Wide diameter paintbrushes can accommodate people with pincer grip challenges.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: How can TH sessions instill a sense of responsibility, community service or selfless acts? By creating something of beauty, handmade by someone who does not know who the recipient will be, and the giver unknown to the recipient such as a paper Stargazer Lily. Using a celebration like the famous Kentucky Oaks horse race for female fillies, provides the opportunity for both givers and receivers to experience joy, sport, female empowerment and creative expression. For populations that are frequently provided with health services, using role reversal to cheer someone up or brighten their day can be rewarding. It can become an avenue to reflect on their own situations through the lens of others facing adversity and challenges. These can be therapeutic goals in the psychological domain relevant for most populations. The following resource link provides reference material; [adversity most will face in life, strategies to cope](#).

Breast cancer would be one example of life's unexpected adversity. This health challenge became connected to the Kentucky Oaks horse race and continues to this day. It is estimated that more than 315,000 women and 2,800 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2025. Related ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) in women is projected to number almost 60,000 (Breast Cancer.org). [The National Breast Cancer Foundation](#) provides science-based information about breast cancer as does the [National Breast Cancer Coalition](#).

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. The fragrance of Stargazer Lilies is very strong and may pose problems for some participants, particularly those undergoing cancer treatment or people with breathing issues ((i.e. chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD). Stargazer Lilies do not have toxicity for humans but are toxic to cats.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Since 1991 the Kentucky Oaks horse race for three-year-old fillies has used a garland of Stargazer Lilies, known as the Lilies for the Fillies, to recognize the winner. Also part of this race's traditions is pink, associated with the Stargazer Lily color and in recognition of breast cancer awareness. The Kentucky Oaks occurs the day before the Kentucky Derby.

The Stargazer was developed in 1978 by Leslie Woodruff. He cross-pollinated an Oriental lily and Asiatic lily bringing together the fragrance and shapely flowers of an Asiatic lily and bright colors as well as 'hardy' habits of an Oriental lily. Since the flowers open towards the sky, they were named Stargazers.

Flowers have become associated with Triple Crown horse races including the Stargazer Lily and the Kentucky Fair Oaks race. Refer to other [THADS](#) with a similar theme: Kentucky Derby's Run for the Roses & Flower Crowns, the [Belmont's carnations](#), and the [Preakness Black-Eyed Susans](#).

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

America's Best Racing (2014) [Oaks history: Lilies for the fillies](#). America's Best Racing.net.
Chan, K. (2023). [5 types of adversity and ways to overcome them](#). Verywellmind.com.
Cherry, K. (2025). [Altruism: How to cultivate selfless behavior](#). Verywellmind.com.
Learncreatelove.com. (n.d.). [Stargazer lily printable craft](#). Pinterest.com.
Mahr, S. (2025). ['Stargazer' Lily](#). University of Wisconsin-Madison Wisconsin Horticulture Division of Extension.
National Breast Cancer Foundation Inc. (2025). [About breast cancer](#).

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TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2025.