**Fall Gardening Banner with Leaf Stamping**

Submitted by Sylvia Gorham and Betty Wagner, Wake EMG

We have used this banner throughout the changing seasons to publicize our activities. Residents and their family members as well as staff have enjoyed the banner. We located ours in a main hallway, but it could be used in an activity room or cafeteria - any place that most visitors will be able to enjoy it. Participants have especially liked seeing their own pictures posted. You can easily change the theme of the pictures to match the season. We adapted the activity from Birds and Blooms magazine. (June/July 2013)

**Materials (see illustration below)**

* Rope, jute, or other material to use for hanging items
* Wooden clothespins
* Grocery bag paper, canvas, or other material for stamping (needs to be smooth)
* Paper for practice stamping
* Pictures of participants taken during previous gardening activities
* Crayons or markers
* Fall-colored acrylic or fabric paints
* Sponge brushes
* Newspaper to act as cushion and to absorb paint spills
* Small cups (to pour paint into for sharing)
* Leaves with heavy veins
* Sharpie (for writing names)
* (Optional) Seed packets or pictures of fall leaves

**Prep Work**

* Collect a variety of leaves with heavy veins. The veins make for better pattern stamping.
* Cut out any size or shape of fabric to use for stamped pennants (see illustration).

**Activity**

* Cover the table with plastic tablecloths or layers of newspaper.
* Participants choose leaves they want to use. They can have several.
* Pour a little paint of each color into cups for sharing. Give a sponge brush to each participant. Participants can share the paint cup as long as their brush has not been dipped into another paint color. If they want to use another color, it is best to get a different brush or borrow one from another participant.
* We had participants practice on paper napkins before they made their final leaf stamp on the fabric material. They improved greatly with practice. Practice proved to be very important.
* Fold newspaper so that it is thick and cushiony. Place fabric on top of folded newspaper. Paint the back side of the desired leaf, making sure not to use too much paint or it turns out gloppy. Cover the leaf with another thick layer of newspaper and gently press the leaf onto the material, being careful not to move the leaf. Press but don’t rub! Don’t press too hard or the veins won’t show as well. (We practiced ourselves so that we could demonstrate the process.)
* Carefully lift the leaf straight up to reveal the stamped fabric.
* If participants are able to, they can stamp more than one leaf shape on the fabric and can use more than one paint color. Participant ability will determine this.
* Allow the fabric to dry for a few minutes.
* Use a sharpie to write participant names on each pennant.
* Use clothes pins to attach leaf-stamped pennants to rope. We added some other fall leaves and pictures of participants taken during a previous gardening activity.

