

## The Year of the Pig



*Xin nián kuài lè!* That means “Happy New Year” in Chinese. February 5 ushers in the Year of the Pig, a very auspicious year in Chinese culture. Why does the pig represent wealth and good fortune? Perhaps

the chubbiness of the pig indicates prosperity. Or maybe it is because wild boars are known to be fearless and will run headlong into any situation, usually winning out in the end. With pigs held in such high esteem, it may be surprising to learn that the pig is the very last animal of the Chinese zodiac and the legend concerning the pig is not very flattering.

The legend states that when the Jade Emperor declared that he was selecting animals for the zodiac, all the animals rushed to his palace to be included. But the pig journeyed slowly, and when he arrived, the gates were shut. However, the other animals pleaded with the Jade Emperor to let him in. He conceded, and the pig was allowed to enter but was made the last sign of the zodiac. Perhaps the pig’s connection to good fortune stems from this tale: Despite the pig’s hardships, he still triumphed and was added to the zodiac.

The Chinese New Year’s celebration lasts not for one day, but for two whole weeks. There are many traditions and superstitions to observe. For example, on New Year’s Day, it is commonplace to set off firecrackers, yet it is forbidden to sweep because you may sweep away good luck. Two days later is the Day of the Rat, the day when rats were created. On this day, people leave out crumbs of grain or crackers to share with rats. Celebrations continue to February 19, which culminates in the five-day-long Lantern Festival. The displaying of lanterns is a major event, and one of the most popular pastimes of the Lantern Festival is guessing at lantern riddles. Riddles are written on lanterns, and the answers to these riddles often involve blessings for the family and good fortune, reinforcing the major themes of the Chinese New Year.

## February Birthdays

In astrology, those born between February 1–19 are Water Bearers of Aquarius. Water Bearers are deep-thinking intellectuals, unafraid of exploring outlandish ideas. Their strong sense of community makes them good friends and valuable team members. Those born from February 19–28 are the slippery Fish of Pisces. Selfless Pisces are very wise and empathetic, making them always willing to help others. These deep emotions also make Pisces talented artists and good friends.

### Happy Birthday!

Donna Jean C.	2/11
Ester S.	2/18
Geneva S.	2/19
Helen V.	2/26



### Chitter Chatter from the E.D.’s Desk

We are so excited at Inspirations to welcome in a new year. I have been your Executive Director for just over 1 month now. It’s hard to believe how fast time flies! As we settle into 2019, I want to assure you that my door is always open and if there’s anything you need to please let me know. My role here at Inspirations is to serve our senior population and to grow the business so that we can help more people. I encourage you to participate in any of our events offered here including our new coffee with the ED visit or our monthly Resident Council; it’s a great way to communicate with the employees and management in a productive way. Thanks again for the warm welcome and I look forward to getting to know all of you!



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## Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s Day, also called St. Valentine’s day, holiday (February 14) when lovers express their affection with greetings and gifts. The holiday has origins in the Roman festival of Lupercalia, held mid-February. The Festival, which celebrated the coming of spring, including fertility rites and the paring off of women with men by lottery. At the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Gelasius I replaced Lupercalia with St. Valentine’s Day. It came to be celebrated as a day of romance and from about the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Although, there were several Christian martyrs named Valentines, the day may have taken its name from a priest who was martyred about 270 ce by the emperor Claudius II Gothicus. According to legend, the priest signed a letter “from your Valentine” to his jailer’s daughter, whom he had befriended and, by some accounts, healed from blindness. Other accounts hold that it was St. Valentine of Terni, a bishop, for whom the holiday was named, though it is possible the two saints were actually one person. Another common legend states that St. Valentine defied the emperor’s orders and secretly married couples to spare the husbands from war. It is for this reason that his feast day is associated with love.

Formal messages, or valentines, appeared in the 1500s, and by late 1700s commercially printed cards were being used. The first commercial valentines in the United States were printed in the mid-1800s. Valentines commonly depicted Cupid, the Roman god of love, along with hearts, traditionally the seat of emotion. Because it was thought that the avian mating season begins in mid-February, birds also became a symbol of the day. Traditional gifts included candy and flowers, particularly red roses, a symbol of beauty and love.

### Management Team



**Janessa Becker**  
Executive Director

**Arleen Koontz**  
Sales Director

**Janessa Becker - Interim**  
Wellness Director

**Danielle Tuck**  
Business Office Manager

**Lisa Gilbo**  
Life Enrichment Director

**Jessie Abney**  
Food Service Director

**Paul Gilbo**  
Maintenance Director

