

Happy Thanksgiving to Everyone!

Most Americans will celebrate a somewhat unique holiday this Thursday. Thinking about those early days when Europeans came to settle in North America, we know that those were very difficult times. Nearly half the people who settled the Plymouth Colony (those who came to our shores on the Mayflower) died a short time after they arrived. But those who did survive took time out to give thanks for what they had. We recall stories of how these settlers celebrated (with the Native Americans) the fact that they were alive, and had food and shelter.

How times have changed. It is too easy to forget the many blessings we have living in this country at this time in history. We are often quick to complain but slow to give compliments. Yes, it is easy to find problems if we look for them. But if we look for the positives, they are more than abundant. Some families have a tradition that each member shares what they are thankful for, before beginning the Thanksgiving meal. Take a few minutes this Thanksgiving to consider how blessed you are, and give thanks.

Thanks to WebMD, here are a few tips on how to be happier.

Six Ways to be Happier

- 1) **Give Thanks** – Happy people are not smarter or richer than their peers, but they are more grateful and often have these characteristics.
- 2) **Focus on Physical Activity** – You don't need to run marathons to reap the benefits of exercise. Even short workouts release certain brain chemical that create feelings of joy and contentment.
- 3) **Eat Feel-good Foods** – While there is no “happiness diet,” some foods – like Thanksgiving turkey – can give your mood a lift and may help ward off depression.
- 4) **Snuggle Up** – Touching and hugging can release your body's natural “feel good hormone.” Plus, intimacy and sex can boost your self-esteem and happiness, among other health perks.
- 5) **Give Back** – As little as 2 hours of volunteering a week can give you that happy glow known as the “helper's high.”
- 6) **Tune In** – Listening to music can provide an emotional pick-me-up, but choose wisely. Some songs may bring you down.

The Board is most grateful to those who have encouraged us through the challenges we have faced, and we wish to thank everyone for making this a great neighborhood to call home. Let us all be aware of the abundance of blessings that we have been granted. And may each of you be blessed with a full measure of happiness this Thanksgiving.