



## INVENTOR ACTIVITIES

May is National Inventors Month, which means it's time to celebrate the innovators, tinkerers and creative thinkers that have enhanced our quality of life with their brilliant ideas.

**Alexander Graham Bell** [Alexander Graham Bell](#), a Scottish scientist born in 1847, invented the telephone. Reminisce with your residents about their first experiences with a telephone. Did they have a telephone in their home as a child? How have phones changed over the years? What are their experiences with cell phones? If possible bring in a collection of old phones to help with the reminiscing.



**Alfred Butts** [Alfred Butts](#) was an American architect famous for inventing the board game Scrabble. Most of your residents are probably familiar with the game; if not, provide a quick lesson. Host a Scrabble tournament for residents and guests. They might also enjoy playing in teams or [online](#).



**George Washington Carver** [George Washington Carver](#) was an American botanist and inventor who developed hundreds of products from peanuts, potatoes, pecans, and soy beans. Celebrate the peanut by baking batches of classic peanut butter cookies with the residents. There are few things more comforting than the smell of fresh baked cookies.



**Samuel F.B. Morse** Samuel F.B. Morse, an inventor and painter, built the first American telegraph in 1835. [Morse Code](#) uses dots, dashes and spaces to send messages. Have fun sending and deciphering Morse Code messages with your residents.



**Charles Richard Drew** [Charles Richard Drew](#) was a medical doctor who started the idea for a blood bank. His ideas revolutionized the medical profession and saved many lives. Contact the Red Cross and arrange for a blood drive at your community. Invite staff and guests to donate. Residents can serve snacks and keep donors company while waiting.



**George Eastman** George Eastman was an American inventor who made many improvements in photography. Reprint some iconic photos from the Internet. Share and discuss the impact these images might have had at the time. Give your residents the opportunity to show off their photographic skills using digital cameras and the Internet. Invite guests for a slideshow presentation.



**Thomas Alva Edison** [Thomas Alva Edison](#), well known for his work improving the incandescent light bulb, is also the inventor of the phonograph, among other things. Discuss with your residents some of their favorite recordings. Did they own a record collection? Do they remember their first record? Vinyl albums have made a comeback recently. Get a hold of a record player and some of your resident's favorite records. Reminisce with a listening party.



**Frank Epperson** The Popsicle was invented by an 11 year-old [Frank Epperson](#). He left a fruit drink with a stirrer outside in the cold. Take your residents back to their childhood with an old-fashioned Popsicle party with classic popsicles, creamsicles and fudgesicles.

**Robert Goddard** [Robert Goddard](#), a physicist and inventor, was known as the father of modern rocketry. Discuss with your residents the history of rockets and space exploration. Invite a local rocketry club to meet at your community to share their hobby with the residents.



**Levi Strauss** [Levi Strauss](#) was an entrepreneur who invented and marketed blue jeans. Name one day in May Blue Jeans Day. Allow your staff to wear jeans to work for the day. Invite residents and guests to also wear blue jeans. Discuss the many changes that have been made to blue jeans over the years and what has remained the same.



**Lewis E. Waterman** Lewis E. Waterman was an insurance salesman who developed a relatively leak proof fountain pen. Before his invention, pens had to be dipped into ink after every few words. Most of your residents grew up in a time when hand written notes were the most common form of communication and proper penmanship was important. Young people today don't spend much time practicing their penmanship. As an intergenerational activity give your residents the opportunity to help a young student with letter-writing.



**Noah and Joseph McVicker** Play-doh, the popular children's modeling clay, was invented by [Noah and Joseph McVicker](#). Although Play-doh is made for children, adults find experimenting with the colors and texture relaxing and enjoying. Provide your residents with some fun "play time" with Play-doh.

