

Laughter the best medicine for Taoyuan veterans

天天起「笑」榮民樂活



今年八月初開始，「桃園榮民之家」的榮民開始練起「愛笑瑜珈」，讓原本沒有生氣的地方，頓時充滿歡笑聲。開張滿月、「笑」果神奇，不少老榮民變得元氣十足。

位於桃園縣八德的桃園榮家，目前安養七百多位榮民，平均八十三點三歲，當中還有五位百歲人瑞。桃園榮家負責人鄧海強表示，人老了難免病痛纏身，有些榮民甚至一個人有好幾種毛病。有人覺得自己「活夠了、不想動」，也有人就是在「等日子」。

但從八月開始，週一到週五每天上午八點半，桃園榮民之家逾四十位榮民伯伯準時開笑。他們伴隨著指定歌曲，玩「愛笑瑜珈」運動三十分鐘，跟著「笑長」做出各式「笑功」。只要大家開始發笑，原本「老」氣沉沉的榮家公園，頓時「返老還童」。

鄧海強說，大笑對健康有很多好處。笑不必學習、不用器材、安全又緩和，是最適合銀髮族的有氧運動之一。今年初調任桃園榮家之後，得知台灣愛笑瑜珈運動的引進者陳達誠，正是桃園縣八德人。於是便邀請「總笑長」陳達誠率熱心笑長們蒞「家」，全國第一個公家機關內的「愛笑俱樂部」開張大吉、天天起笑。

許多榮民說，每天大笑讓睡眠改善了，比較不會有負面思考，對自己和朋友也比較有耐性，不再動不動就發脾氣，甚至還有人因此走出截肢、病痛纏身的憂鬱。

桃園榮家也歡迎同好每天早晨一起來搞笑「摻一腳」，還宣布十月二十七、二十八日的才藝競賽，新增了「愛笑瑜珈」，讓老榮民都一「笑」置之。

(自由時報記者李容萍)

Left: Veterans yell at the camera during a laughter yoga session at Taoyuan Veteran's Home on Sept. 5.
Below: Taoyuan Veteran's Home manager Teng Hai-chiang, second row, center, joins a laughter yoga session on Sept. 5.

PHOTOS: LI LUNG-PING

左圖：九月五日，「桃園榮民之家」的榮民伯伯們練「愛笑瑜珈」時，對著鏡頭放聲大笑。

下圖：桃園榮家主任鄧海強（第二排中）跟著練「愛笑瑜珈」。

照片：自由時報記者李容萍

Since the beginning of August, residents at Taoyuan Veteran's Home have been practicing laughter yoga, filling the once-lifeless place with the sound of laughter. A month of laughter therapy has produced an almost magical effect, with some veterans rediscovering their youthful vitality.

Located in Taoyuan County's Bade City, the home looks after 700 veterans. Their average age is 83.3 years old, and five residents are over 100. Teng Hai-chiang, the home's manager, said that when people get old, it's hard to avoid getting sick, and some of the residents are plagued by numerous **maladies**. Some residents think they've lived long enough and don't want to move around, while others are just waiting for the end to come.

But since August, at exactly 8.30am every weekday morning, over 40 residents from Taoyuan Veteran's Home have started laughing. For 30 minutes, they follow their laughter leader as they practice a kind of "laughter qigong" in time to music. As soon as they start laughing, the weighty feeling of old age that hangs over the home suddenly evaporates, and the long in the tooth suddenly feel young at heart.

Teng said that laughter has many health benefits. There's nothing to learn, no equipment is needed, plus it's safe and relaxed, making laughter therapy one of the best forms of **aerobic** exercise for the elderly. Shortly after joining the home earlier this year, Teng learned that John Chen, a laughter yoga practitioner who introduced the activity to Taiwan, happened to be a Bade local. He therefore invited Chen to become the home's "laughter commander," which is how the country's first government-run laughter club was established.

A lot of the veterans say that laughing every day has improved their sleep, made them more positive, given them more patience with friends and improved their temper. In

some cases, it has even cured depression brought on by **amputation** or disease.

The laughter yoga sessions are open to the public, and a talent show featuring laughter yoga will be held at the home on Oct. 27 and 28.

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY TAIJUNG WU)



TODAY'S WORDS

今日單字

1. **veteran** /ˈvɛtərən/ n.

退伍軍人 (tui4 wu3 jun1 ren2)

例：We were invited to a fundraising event for veterans.
(我們受邀參加給退伍軍人募款的活動。)

2. **malady** /ˈmælədi/ n.

疾病 (ji2 bing4)

例：Pete always seems to be suffering from some sort of malady.
(彼特看起來總似乎有某種疾病纏身。)

3. **aerobic** /eəˈrɒbɪk/ adj.

有氧的 (you2 yang3 de5)

例：My doctor suggested I get more aerobic exercise.
(醫生建議我多做有氧的運動。)

4. **amputation** /,æmpjəˈteɪʃən/ n.

截肢 (jie2 zhi1)

例：The doctor carried out an amputation earlier this morning.
(醫生今日上午稍早進行截肢手術。)