As 2019 gets into full swing, we hope you have a wonderful start to the year. There is no better way to start a new year than to create a happy mood through the simple act of smiling.

Smiling has well documented social benefits. A genuine smile can make you seem more likeable, attractive, and even trustworthy. But did you know that smiling more often—regardless of your mood—can improve your health and help you live longer? Each time you smile, you throw a little feel-good party in your brain. The act of smiling activates neural messaging that benefits your health and happiness. The article on “Smiling Our Way into a Good Mood”, will give you more tips on how to put a big smile on your face.

COMPLIMENTS FROM OUR RESIDENTS

The CVS is very blessed to have three residents who were willing to pay tribute and compliments to their visitors in writing. Their words and reflection were put on display on easels at the 25th Anniversary celebration. Rarely do we get the chance to know how our residents feel or think about receiving a volunteer visitor.

We understand that all residents are very happy to be visited by their special friends. However, not every resident has the capacity to express their gratitude and appreciation to their visitors. The compliments from these three residents is a good representation of what other residents would like to say to their friends.

Their words are once again being shared with you in this newsletter.

LETTER from PROFESSOR JOHN CULLEN

Last month, Professor John Cullen, Director of Aged, Chronic Care and Rehabilitation, sent a letter to all CVS visitors, thanking YOU for your support of the CVS program, and your ‘singular attention and patience’ to the resident/s you are visiting.

Due to the new funding arrangements, more frequent reporting is required from the organization. The CVS would therefore appreciate your cooperation in submitting a quarterly report and achieving a minimum of 20 visits per year. There is no maximum number of visits, so volunteers are welcome to visit more frequently. For queries, please do not hesitate to contact the CVS office.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE

As a regular visitor to aged care facilities, you might have seen dedicated staff working tirelessly for the residents. On the other hand, you might have experienced otherwise.

The establishment of the Royal Commission into the Aged Care sector on 8 October 2018, is aimed to address all the issues and concerns regarding the quality and safety of aged care. It will determine what needs to be done in the future to ensure the expectations of consumers are met, and older Australians are being looked after in a dignified manner.

Interested members of the public and institutions are invited to make their submissions online, by post, email or telephone. Your submissions will assist the Royal Commission to identify issues and trends. To find out more, please go to the website: www.agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au

There are also some questions to assist you to start your submission.

MAY WORKSHOP

The upcoming workshop has been scheduled for Saturday, 18th May. We look forward to seeing all of you there.

In the meantime, please take good care as the temperature slowly cools, and the influenza season is about to begin. It is best practice to wash your hands before and after visiting your ‘friend’ to reduce the risk of infection.

All the very best,
Valerie CHU & Jeannie TAM
Reflections from Residents

The CVS is very grateful to have three residential aged care home residents, wishing to express their gratitude to their visiting volunteers in writing. Their photographs and written words were displayed at the 25th anniversary celebration.

Hoda KHALLA joined the CVS in 2013 and has been visiting Hapet since 2014. Her regular visits to Hapet have enriched his life in the facility. And they enjoy very much the time together. Hapet used to be a prominent musician who has performed to many Heads of States in various countries around the Mediterranean. Hapet's amazing skills in playing various musical instruments, is as impressive as his ability to speak 5 different languages and sing in 7 languages. Check what Hapet would like to say about his visitor, Hoda KHALLA.

How simple it is to bring happiness to another person – be a good listener. It is not just what you give, but the care and attention that make the real difference. The relationship between Hoda and Hapet is genuinely mutual as both are ‘givers’ and ‘receivers’. Hapet rediscovers his ‘value’ in helping Hoda to improve her English. An amazing match!

Hermine WU has been with the CVS since 2007. She had been visiting 6 different residents before meeting Mr. Lung in 2012. Among those residents, Mr. Lung is definitely the smartest one! He is like an encyclopedia.

At the age of 93, he can remember all the historical events in modern China in great detail, all the things he did in his past years and all the people around him in the past 93 years.

He has endless topics to share with Hermine. Every time we ask him how he feels about Hermine, he will tell you thousands of good things about her.

“Hoda visits me twice a month. Her visits make me happy and I look forward to her next visit. Every time I ask her when she will come the next time because she talks with me about everything in life, my family, my Quran and my health. She listens to any stories I tell her and that makes me happy to find someone who listens to me. Also sometimes, we talk in English and that is good for Hoda because it helps her to improve her English. Hoda is a very kind person: when I ask her for any favour she does it for me with no delay and she always tries to help me. Thank you very much for this service.”

(PS: Hermine resumed her visit to Mr Lung after a two-week break in Nov 18)

The minute we invited Mr Lung to put his gratitude to Hermine in writing, without hesitation, he got hold of a pen and finished the writing in less than 5 minutes!

The bond between Mr Lung and Hermine is their common cultural background - they both have spent many years in Hong Kong. Their memories are the thing that they enjoy sharing very much. Friendship is never anything but sharing. Without relevant knowledge/experiences and time, friendship hardly flourishes. Having something in common with your friend is one of the cornerstones to a successful relationship.

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Make smiling a habit and see the difference it will make to your life!

Smiling keeps you in a good mood which, in turn, will help you move more breezily through the day.

It is a simple and skillful strategy to help you live lightly, peacefully and cheerfully. The smile is a statement of your intention to live in that way.

In fact, the world always looks brighter from behind a smile. So, in this way, we are actually propping up each other’s mind state.

2. SMILING lowers stress & anxiety
Life is hard. People are struggling daily to cope with all the stress, responsibilities and challenges in life. A kind, warm and friendly attitude will help cheer others up. A smile or kind word can, as the proverb goes, keep a person warm for many winters, while a harsh word can cut to the bone and be rued for life.

3. SMILING releases endorphins – the ‘natural painkiller’ & ‘happy hormone’
Every time you smile, you immediately feel good or better. You cause the brain to release endorphin, a neurotransmitter, which lowers stress levels and triggers a positive feeling in the body.

These endorphins also interact with the receptors in your brain that reduce your perception of pain, similar to that of morphine.

4. SMILING boosts our productivity
The happy experience and emotions that we get from smiling, helps us to be more productive due to a better mindset.

5. SMILING makes us look younger
When we smile, it can naturally lift our face and fend off any frown lines. This helps us to look younger.

A mood is important as it is something that persists and lingers. It is wise to cultivate and maintain a good mood throughout the day. Life is much more manageable when the mood is light and cheery.

1. A SMILE is a sign of friendliness and goodwill
It puts people at ease. They find us more approachable. The moment we smile at another, we unconsciously brighten up their day. They are likely to perk up and flash us a smile in return. So, in this way, we are actually propping up each other’s mind state.

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Make smiling a habit and see the difference it will make to your life!

Begin your day with a smile
The moment you wake up, smile to welcome the new day, and you have already got on to a good start. How wonderful it is that you can begin the day in such a positive way! Then continue to think positive and motivating thoughts to help you set the mood for the day.

Cultivate the habit of greeting others with a smile
Be in the habit of greeting others with a smile. Cultivate a warm and friendly attitude towards beings. Let your smile be accompanied by words of good cheer and friendliness.

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Some research has shown that smiling can actually trick our brain into thinking that we are happy. This is also the case whether our smile is authentic or not, it can have the same result.

Smiling and laughter are beneficial for your mind, body and overall well-being. Even if you’re feeling blue, crack a smile and reap the numerous health benefits of smiling.

A smile is a window through which you can see if the heart is home.

The world always looks brighter from behind a smile.

“Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.” — Thich Nhat Hanh

A smile is the universal language of kindness.
Everyone smiles in the same language.
A smile is the shortest distance between two persons.
I have never seen a smiling face that was not beautiful.
A smile is the prettiest thing you can wear.
You’re never fully dressed without a smile.
A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.
Be the reason someone smiles today.
When all else fails, smile!
Humans have always wondered about how to improve their happiness, but for a long time thought they had no control over it.

Research shows that while genetics plays a large part, accounting for half our happiness, what we do each day accounts for 40%, with just 10% down to our life circumstances.

“We have the potential to acquire happiness even when we were not born happy,” says Emiliana Simon-Thomas, Director of the Greater Good Science Center at Berkeley.

Three things that are meant to improve happiness:
1. Social interaction with people, even strangers, makes you feel happier
2. Being grateful for what you have improves how we feel
3. Feeling our lives have a purpose has been linked to a healthier, longer life

OTHER TIPS
- Make more time for social connection even if it’s with a stranger.
- Do nice things for others, even small things like making someone a coffee will improve your happiness.
- Count your blessings - think about what you are grateful for.
- Get enough sleep.
- Stay in the moment - when our mind wanders we are less happy.
- Stop criticising yourself - it makes you feel worse and you will achieve less.
- Don’t keep chasing more money - after you reach US$75,000. Studies showed earning more won’t make you any happier.

TIPS FOR HAPPINESS

Extract from “Is the secret to happiness at the top of this mountain?”
by Katie Hope BBC News, Davos

Questions
All the answers start with the letters MAR...

Answers
1. Small ball of baked glass used in a children’s game
2. Australian animal that carries its baby in a pouch
3. Wonderful
4. A harbour for sailing boats and yachts
5. Spaghetti sauce made of seafood
6. Long distance foot race
7. Open space where people meet to sell and buy items
8. A golden flower
9. Cooking herb with fragment leaves
10. Butter made from vegetable oils
11. Type of jam
12. High-ranking officer
13. Party tent
14. Planet closest to Earth
15. Paste made with ground almonds
16. Sweet made of sugar and gelatine
17. Substance found inside bones
18. Indian hemp
Who are our Visitors?
(March 2019 Statistics)

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CVS Requirements for Visitors

As many of you are aware, SLHD CVS was successful in a recent funding round, and will continue to operate until June 2021. However, there are tighter measures attached to the new agreement. SLHD CVS must achieve the following for the funds to be granted.

New arrangements are as below:
- Community visitors must visit a designated aged care home resident on a regular basis, approximately once a fortnight.
- Visitors must achieve a minimum of 20 visits per year.
- SLHD CVS management must submit a 6 monthly performance report indicating that the above has been delivered, for the funding to be granted.

To achieve the above, SLHD CVS would appreciate the cooperation of our volunteers to:
- Submit a quarterly report (end of March, June, September & December).
- Make a commitment to visit 10 times or more in six months.
- Inform SLHD CVS coordinators of your travel plans, sickness events, family commitments etc. if you are going to miss some visits.
- Inform SLHD CVS coordinators if your resident has been hospitalised, transferred or died.
- Inform SLHD CVS coordinators if there are any changes at the facility such as lock-down, renovation, closure, etc.