

# LAUGHTER YOGA

## *Cultivating Upward Spirals of Positive Emotion*

*“At the height of laughter the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of new possibilities.”*

**Jean Houston** - Scholar, philosopher and researcher in human capacities



### **What is Laughter Yoga?**

This program will introduce you to the value of laughter as a way of increasing joy in your life and releasing stress! Participants will learn about and/or experience ...

- The origins of Laughter Yoga
- Highlights from the scientific research
- Experience a selection of laughter yoga exercises
- Laughter Yoga as a vehicle to build team cohesiveness.

Program participants will be invited to experience laughter in a safe and inclusive social environment. Laughter and its associated benefits, however, need not come exclusively from jokes or comedy. If you consider Laughter Yoga, an emerging practice in which participants “laugh for no reason,” it becomes apparent that a series of simple and fun exercises in a group setting can trigger giggles that quickly turn into real and contagious laughter. Interestingly, we benefit from both “fake” and “genuine” laughter – the body does not know the difference! And when we laugh, we are afforded an opportunity to get “out of our heads” and connect with our heart-felt joy in our bodies.

Within the safety of the laughter group setting, participants can begin to make small interpersonal risks, as the exercises facilitate fun and playful interaction. We will discuss the link between Laughter Yoga and positive psychology. Positive psychology is dedicated to exploring practices and approaches that support the emergence of a flourishing and a healthy person and a healthy society (Seligman, 2004). Laughter Yoga also provides a novel and safe experience of joy in one’s body which can serve as a foundation for healing and even a transformative experience for trauma survivors, whose memories, thoughts, and feelings about their bodies may be associated with shame, violation and abuse (Hughes & Hyman, 2012; Herman, 1992). Laughter Yoga is not “therapy” but it serves as a non-stigmatizing practice that can assist trauma survivors (or anyone for that matter) to re-connect with a felt-sense of embodied joy, safety and ease “inside one’s own skin.” There is emerging research that positive mental health is enriched for adults (not just children) and Laughter Yoga provides a vehicle for playfulness

(Meyer, 2010; Brown, 2009). Laughter Yoga provides a safe opportunity to explore the edges of our vulnerability and to take interpersonal risks in a safe social container (Brown, 2010). Working on the edge of our regulatory boundaries allows each of us to gently explore new areas of positive emotions and how these emotions are experienced in our mind-body. Cultivating a sense of playfulness cannot develop if we feel the chronic presence of hypervigilance scanning for lurking threat or danger in one's environment. (Ogden, 2015). Ogden, Minton & Pain (2006) elaborate:

“Play and humour arise spontaneously and are only possible when the client is feeling safe and in charge and in command of their participation (p. 173).

Laughter Yoga offers us an accessible method to identify, confront, and gently move (and work) through our inhibitions and some of our self-limiting behaviours.

Ultimately, the primary goal of Laughter Yoga is to work toward achieving world peace! Across our global society we come from different countries and cultures, but as Laughter Yoga founder Dr. Madan Kataria has observed ... the diversity of the world's people can all understand and come together through the universal bridge of laughter. This coming together will be a contributing vector in the development of a global consciousness that is now emerging, characterized by the energies embodied in laughter, joy, equanimity, love, and peace (Nelson, 2019; Salzberg, 2018; de Corpo & Vannini, 2015; Zajonc, 2009).



**Laughter Yoga exercises are always enjoyable in a group!**

## Who can participate?

Virtually anyone can participate in a Laughter Yoga session – from young children to seniors. However, there are a few conditions that you need to take note of that may exclude you from participating at this particular point in time. See if any of the conditions apply to you – if so, check with your doctor or health care practitioner before participating. Everyone will be reminded to stay safe and to explore their edges and to gently expand the boundaries of their own comfort zone.

### **PARTICIPATION PRECAUTIONS**

Some physical exertion and a rise in intra-abdominal pressure can be expected. It is contraindicated for people experiencing conditions that are in a severe and uncontrolled stage such as, but not limited to:

- Uncontrolled high blood pressure
- Advanced heart disease
- Major surgery within the last three months
- Epilepsy
- Complications associated with hemorrhoids
- Any persistent cough
- Incontinence of urine
- Severe backache
- Any kind of uncorrected hernia
- Active psychosis / paranoid ideation

# **PROGRAM AGENDA**

- WELCOME AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW
- CHECK-IN AND INTRODUCTIONS
- PARTICIPATION PRECAUTIONS
- FUNDAMENTAL PARTICIPATION AGREEMENTS
- PRE-SESSION QUESTIONNAIRE
- CULTIVATING POSITIVE EMOTION
- LAUGHTER IN YOUR LIFE
- LAUGHTER – RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS
- LAUGHTER YOGA PLAYLIST
- LAUGHTER MEDITATION
- COMPLETE RELAXATION
- POST-SESSION QUESTIONNAIRE
- GROUP DISCUSSION
- PROGRAM EVALUATION

## **“Self-monitor yourself – No new pain!”**

The above list is for guidance only and is not meant to be exhaustive. If unsure, consult your medical professional **before** participating in a Laughter Yoga program. All participants will be supported to work within their own comfort zone!

## **What do I need to bring?**

Please bring a yoga mat, beach towel or blanket – there will be a segment in the program involving us lying on the floor – don’t worry, some people can participate by sitting in a chair! Also, bring a bottle of water and an open mind to try something new!!

### **FUNdamental Participation Agreements**

- Be present!
- Unconditional Positive Regard!
- Engage Curiosity!
- Let’s have FUN!
- Gently challenge your comfort zone!
- No new pain!
- Notice joy in your mind and body!

***“A day without laughter is a day wasted.”***

**Charlie Chaplin** – English comic, actor and film-maker (1889-1977)

# CULTIVATING POSITIVE EMOTION

***“People who regularly experience positive emotions are not stagnant. Instead, they continually grow toward further optimal functioning.”***

Leslie L. Sekerka & Barbara L. Fredrickson – Positive Psychology Thought Leaders

## The Magnitude of Depression and Trauma in our Global Society

***“Optimal emotional well-being is as important as maintaining optimum physical health.”***

Andrew Weil – Integrative Physician, University of Arizona

- Depression is the leading cause of disability in Canada. The World Health Organization (WHO) predicts that depression will be the primary cause of disability world-wide by 2020.
- The number of Americans taking anti-depressant drugs doubled in the decade from 1996-2005, from 13.3 million to 27 million. Today an astonishing one in ten people in the U.S., including millions of children, is on one or more of these medications.
- Depression is clearly a “*disease of affluenza*” as Andrew Weil calls it – a disorder of modern life in the industrialized world (Weil, 2011, p. 37).
- The risk of developing major depression has increased tenfold since the Second World War.
- People who live in poorer countries have a lower risk of depression than those in industrialized nations.
- In modernized countries, depression rates are higher for city dwellers than for rural residents.
- Stress related absenteeism costs employers \$3.5 billion each year (Statistics Canada, 2003).
- Presenteeism costs employers \$15 to \$25 billion each year (Statistics Canada, 2012).
- The majority (90%) of adults and children in psychiatric treatment settings have trauma histories (Goodman, Rosenburg, et al, 1997).
- In North America, 3.5% of the population can experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) with 7.5% exhibiting sub-syndromal symptoms (Magnusson & Stefansson, 1993).

In addition to the magnitude of depression in global society, the mindful cultivation of positive emotion in our day-to-day life can serve as antidote to address the *negativity bias* that is hard-wired into our nervous system as an adaptive response to protect us from danger. The negativity bias is helpful but when “out of control” we need to find ways to self-regulate this (often unconscious) response to the world (Tierney & Baumeister, 2019; Hanson, 2013). As Rick Hanson says, “The brain is like *velcro* for negative experiences, but *teflon* for positive ones.”

## The Value of Cultivating Positive Emotions

Laughter Yoga shows promise as an accessible practice that allows one to experience and to generate laughter, humour, joy, ease, appreciation, happiness, gratitude and the full range of positive emotions. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared that by 2020 depression will be the primary disability across the globe (WHO, 2018). Laughter Yoga as a practical method to generate positive emotions can serve as a buffer to support mental health in general (Sewart, et al., 2019; Ko & Youn, 2011; Kok, et al. 2013; Beckman, et al, 2007). The healing benefits of positive emotions support the alleviation of stress associated with climate change (Berry, et al. 2010) and the insidious impact and growing prevalence of social media and young people's mental health (Lin, et al., 2016). In this context, Laughter Yoga is offered as an applied positive psychological modality supporting resilience and well-being across a number of domains - physical, psychological, emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual (Sturge, 2017; Christi, 2013).

- Barbara L. Fredrickson's "*Broaden-and-Build*" theory proposes that positive emotions serve to *broaden* an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire, which, in turn, over time, has the effect of *building* that individual's physical, intellectual and social resources (Fredrickson, 2009).
- High rates of positivity to negativity are associated with doing well, whereas low positivity ratios (lower than 1:1) are associated with doing poorly in terms of psychological flourishing (i.e. well-being).
- Positive emotions support creative problem solving (Ashby, & Isen, 1999; Isen, et. al., 1987) and enhance working memory in older adults (Carpenter, et. al., 2013).
- Evidence indicates that positive emotions play a central role in life satisfaction (Harker & Keltner, 2001).
- A sense of humour increases as clients enter the final phases of treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), while people who are more likely to suppress emotions by ruminative worry show less of a sense of humour (Davidson, et al., 2005; Kelly, 2002).
- 75% of women and men in substance use treatment report abuse and trauma histories (SAMHSA/CSAT, 2000).
- Mental illness is deadlier than a car crash – on average there are 2,500 motor vehicle-related deaths a year, but almost 4,000 Canadians die by suicide.  
[http://toronto.cmha.ca/mental\\_health/suicide-statistics/#.V5dyiKK0dhk](http://toronto.cmha.ca/mental_health/suicide-statistics/#.V5dyiKK0dhk)
- Losada (1999) found that profitable and well-regarded business teams have positivity ratios of over 5:1 in their meetings, whereas less profitable and regarded teams have ratios of less than 1:1 (the positive effect is bounded by 11:1).
- Compare Fredrickson's 3:1 ratio with the work of John Gottman, the world's leading expert on the science of marriage - among flourishing marriages, positivity ratios are about 5:1 (Gottman, 1994).

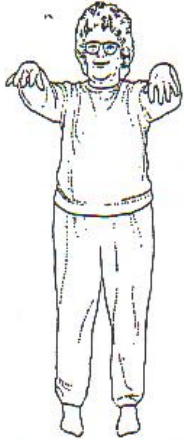
- Because of the negativity bias in our culture – researchers have learned that positivity ratios must be demonstrably increased if we intend to develop upward spirals toward optimal functioning in the workplace (Fredrickson, 2009).
- The social pain associated with rejections, isolation, and marginalization (all forms of bullying) are associated with higher risks for both depression and suicide (Lieberman, 2014, pp. 69-70).
- Studies have shown that positive emotions are associated with helping individuals establish positive meaning in their job and organizational role (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).
- Employees who report more positive than negative emotional states receive higher performance ratings (Wright & Staw, 1999).
- More satisfied workers are more cooperative, helpful, punctual, and time-efficient, take fewer absences, and stay longer with their organizations (Spector, 1997).
- Psychiatrist and neuroscience researcher, Daniel J. Siegel comments on an encounter with the Dalai Lama ...
  - “I once was at a meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who was asked by participants how he could be so full of laughter and joy when the world is in such turmoil. The Dalai Lama’s response was incisive and insightful. He said that it wasn’t just *in spite* of the world’s suffering that he laughs and finds joy in each day, but rather *because of* the suffering. If we don’t cultivate our innate capacity for joy and laughter, then the suffering of the world will have won” (Siegel, 2018, p. 355).
- “Laughing feels good and is good for you. Humour actually opens us up to new learning, it enhances neuroplasticity and makes learning last longer as the brain grows new connections in that open state, it builds trust, and it joins us to each other. Not bad for a good chuckle” (Siegel, 2018, p. 355).

The ultimate vision is to bring more laughter into our life on a daily basis, and as such, each of us will become positive attractors for joy, love, and peace and transmit these qualities out into the world (Jinpa, 2013; Ram Dass & Das, 2013; Baraz & Alexander, 2010).





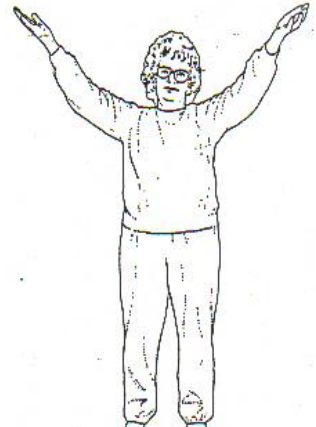
# TAI CHI BREATHING SET



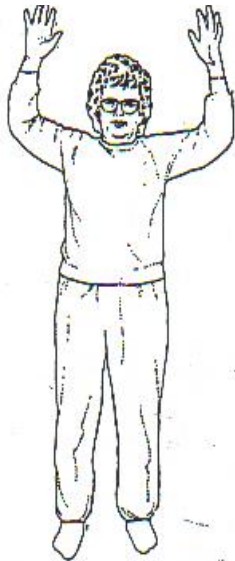
Breathe In  
Arms Float  
In



Breathe Out  
Push Away Any  
Negative



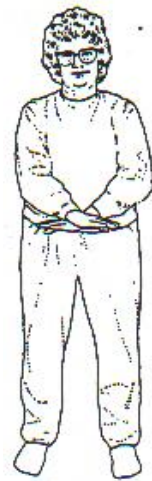
Breathe In  
Create a Ball of  
Positive Energy



Breathe Out  
Spread the  
Energy Around



Breathe In All  
That You



Breathe Out  
Push the Energy Down

# LAUGHTER

## *Research Highlights*

***“Our findings lead us to believe that by seeking out positive experiences that make us laugh, we can do a lot with our physiology to stay well.”***

**Lee Berk** – Laughter Research Scientist, Loma Linda University

The generation of positive emotions has been shown to contribute to a wide range of health promoting qualities for individuals. Barbara Fredrickson, a positive psychologist from the University of North Carolina describes how positive emotions help to broaden our attention and thinking, overcome the stresses of negative emotions, build our resilience and skills, and trigger an upward spiral toward enhanced well-being.

The following research citations highlight some of the recent studies linking laughter and positive emotions and healthy outcomes.

- Miller & Fry (2009) a former psychiatrist at Stanford University found that laughter increases circulation, stimulates the immune system, exercises the muscles, and even invigorates the brain.
- Dr. Fry supports the contention that “fake laughter” brings the same benefits as “genuine laughter.”
- According to Panskepp (1998) the hallmark of the play action system is laughter, which strengthens attachment and social bonds. Play reciprocally pairs increased arousal with pleasure and associated with endorphin production, general well-being, and an increase in physical and mental health.
- According to Barbara Fredrickson (2001) “positive emotions signal flourishing and positive emotions also produce flourishing – they do so not simply within the present, pleasant moment but over the long term as well. The take home message is that positive emotions are worth cultivating, not just as end states in themselves but also as a means to achieving psychological growth and improved well-being over time” (p. 218).
- Happy people tend to have more successful careers and better health (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005).
- Positive emotions enhance creativity (Isen, Daubman & Nowick, 2005).
- Positive emotions have been associated with improvements in immune system functioning (Davidson, et al., 2003).
- Positive emotions have been associated with enhanced life expectancy (Danner, Snowdon & Friesen, 2001).
- Mahony, Burroughs & Lippman (2002) present intergenerational differences in the perception and role of humour – “The blatant and pervasive messages of the popular laughter movement contrast sharply with the more subtle but equally pervasive

influences of the negative evaluations of humour and laughter passed down by nearly every traditional theorist since Plato (Morreal,1983).Young adults have been exposed to the influence of the current popular movement almost their entire lives, whereas older people were first exposed to this influence in middle adulthood (p. 174).

- Mahony, et al. (2002) propose the creation of a “Laughter Taxonomy” to guide future laughter research. For example, what are the differences in health implications for mirthful laughter, titters or roars, malicious or triumphant laughter, suppressed laughter or laughter with tears running down the face (p. 180).
- Laughter and mirror neurons – this is an area of study that we are interested in exploring further as it relates to the “contagion effect” of laughter (Iacaboni, 2008).
- Physiologically, laughter gives your internal organs a workout – especially your heart and lungs. Laughter also stimulates the digestive system.
- Dr. Lee Berk (2006) from Loma Linda University in California found that when volunteers anticipated watching a humorous video, their hormones – beta-endorphins, which are chemicals that relieve depression, increased by 27% and human growth hormones, which help with immunity, by an impressive 87%.
- The same group of researchers in 2009 found that the anticipation of humour with another research group demonstrated a reduction in the potentially detrimental stress hormones: cortisol by 39% and adrenaline by 70%.



***“Peace begins with a smile.”***

**Mother Teresa** – Saint Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)

# LAUGHTER YOGA PLAYLIST

*“Play is the only way the highest intelligence of humankind can unfold.”*

**Joseph Chilton Pearce** – American researcher on human development (1926-2016)

- The Laughter Yoga Chants
- Greeting Laughter Western Style
- Greeting Laughter Eastern Style
- Aloha
- Milkshake Laughter
- Electric Shock Laughter
- Cell Phone Laughter
- Credit Card Laughter
- Copycat Laughter
- Motorboat Laughter
- Hot Sand Laughter
- Silent Laughter
- “Stop and Smell the Roses”
- Evil Scientist Laughter
- Argument Laughter
- Gibberish
- Walking on the Moon
- Lion Laughter
- Power Generator



# LAUGHTER MEDITATION

***“During Laughter Yoga Meditation – laughter may flow from us like water from a fountain – a more spontaneous and deeper experience than that achieved through Laughter Yoga exercises.”***

## Laughter Yoga Leader Training Manual

Laughter Meditation allows us to release laughter in a spontaneous and sporadic manner in a group setting while lying down. Laughter Meditation begins the transition from the social group encounter with others to a more private experience and release of laughter while still present in the group. By lying down, we lose eye contact with fellow group members and any residual inhibitions about how we are presenting socially with others, resulting in a sometimes deeper release of laughter to emerge. Following the Laughter Meditation we will transition to Complete Relaxation.



***“I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today. I can choose which it shall be. Yesterday is dead; tomorrow hasn't arrived yet. I have just one day, today, and I am going to be happy in it.”***

**Groucho Marx** – American comedian (1890-1977)

# COMPLETE RELAXATION

*“You are the sky. Everything else - it’s just the weather.” – Pema Chödrön*

For those of you that have experienced a traditional hatha yoga class, you will be familiar with the practice of complete relaxation or *savasana*. During the Laughter Yoga class we have expended a lot of physical and emotional energy in a relatively short period of time! The period of Complete Relaxation allows us to fully relax and embrace the radiant afterglow of our physical exercise. It is during this time that we digest and integrate the practice.



**Laughter Yoga Class**  
**Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**  
**June 2010**

# GROUP DISCUSSION

*"I'm a recovering serious person."*

John McCauley

- 1) What stood out for you during your participation in the Laughter Yoga exercises? Did you find the exercises easy? Not easy? Could you let go of your *inner critic*?
  
- 2) Was there a "high point" or a "low point" in the session for you?
  
- 3) Were you able to detect a transition from "fake laughter" to "genuine laughter?" What specifically, facilitated this transition?
  
- 4) Could you detect a felt-sense of joy emerging anywhere in your body ... if so, can you specifically describe its qualities and location(s) in your body ...
  
- 5) Any surprises for you?



# RESOURCES AND CONNECTIONS



*“When we inject people with positivity, their outlook expands. They see the big picture. When we inject them with neutrality or negativity, their peripheral vision shrinks. There is no big picture, no dots to connect.”*

**Barbara L. Fredrickson**

Kenan Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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# VIDEO AND INTERNET

## Celebrate What's Right with the World

Do you have a vision for your organization? More importantly, do you have one for yourself? A vision that gets you excited every morning and keeps you open to possibilities? *Celebrate What's Right with the World* teaches you what a powerful force having a vision of possibilities can be.

## Happy

*Happy*, the latest award-winning film from Academy Award® nominated director, Roko Belic (*Genghis Blues*) and Executive Producer, Tom Shadyac (*Nutty Professor*, *Bruce Almighty*, *I AM*), takes us on a journey from the swamps of Louisiana to the slums of Kolkata in search of what really makes people happy. Combining real life stories of people from around the world and powerful interviews with the leading scientists in happiness research, *Happy* explores the secrets behind our most valued emotion.

*Happy* features insights from experts in the field of positive psychology including Ed Diener, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Richard Davidson, Daniel Gilbert, Nic Marks, Gregory Berns, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, P. Read Montague, and Tim Kasser and is narrated by Marci Shimoff, best-selling author of *Happy for No Reason* and *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul* (75 minutes).

## Laughology

Albert Nerenberg frames the journey of this film with his own story. Like so many others, he had "lost his laugh" by becoming a serious adult leading a stressful life. In a desperate attempt to rediscover his inner joy, he explores the many ways in which laughter is therapeutic. Along the way, he highlights important figures in this field including Dr. Robert Provine, Norman Cousins, Dr. Madan Kataria, and Doug Collins - the man with the world's most contagious laugh. Nerenberg travels to a number of places around the globe and even goes to Africa to investigate the laughter epidemic that happened in Tanzania in the 1960s. This is a particularly fascinating piece.

*Laughology* is intelligent, informative, entertaining and hilarious. Interspersed throughout the film are great clips of people laughing contagiously, which makes it such fun to watch. Nerenberg plays the straight man so well by not laughing in the presence of laughing people. (65 minutes).

## The Laughter Clubs of India

This humorous documentary explores the power of laughter through the popular phenomenon of laughing clubs in contemporary Mumbai.

## What is Laughter Yoga?

[youtube.com](http://youtube.com)  
(2:01 minutes)

An introduction to Laughter Yoga featuring the founder of Laughter Yoga – Dr. Madan Kataria from Mumbai, India.

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

*“We have learned that one of the best ways to break out of unsuccessful patterns is by using play, creative expression, and laughter.”*

**Sandra L. Bloom** – American Psychiatrist and Founder of the Sanctuary Model

**The Caring Clown Program**  
**The Chang School of Continuing Education**  
**Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario**  
<https://continuing.ryerson.ca>

Give back to your community and help improve the quality of life of long-term care residents. Explore your sense of fun and your compassionate spirit.

The Caring Clown course series combines basic clowning skills of spontaneity, playfulness, and humour with compassion and caring. Added to the mix are music and movement. No special skills are required – just a willingness to learn and be open to new challenges!

Caring Clowns serve residents who generally have mid to advanced dementia. Many of the residents are confined to wheelchairs, and are isolated, lonely, and in need of cheer.

**Gesundheit Institute**  
**Hillsboro, West Virginia**  
[www.patchadams.org](http://www.patchadams.org)

The Gesundheit Institute is a non-profit healthcare organization, is a project in holistic medical care based on the belief that one cannot separate the health of the community, the society, and the world. Our mission is to reframe and reclaim the concept of “hospital.”

**Global Consciousness Project**  
[www.noosphere.princeton.edu](http://www.noosphere.princeton.edu)

The Global Consciousness Project (GCP) is a parapsychology experiment begun in 1998 as an attempt to detect possible interactions of "global consciousness" with physical systems. The project monitors a geographically distributed network of hardware random number generators in a bid to identify anomalous outputs that correlate with widespread emotional responses to sets of world events, or periods of focused attention by large numbers of people. The GCP is privately funded through the Institute of Noetic Sciences and describes itself as an international collaboration of about 100 research scientists and engineers.

This program explores how practices such as prayer, loving-kindness, laughter yoga, and other spiritual practices can foster global consciousness, interconnection and the emergence of planetary peace, joy, and equanimity.

**Greater Good Science Center**  
**University of California at Berkeley**  
<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

The Greater Good Science Center studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being, and teaches the skills that foster a thriving, resilient, and compassionate society.

## **Laughter Ontario**

**[www.laughteryogaontario.ca](http://www.laughteryogaontario.ca)**

Information on Laughter Yoga and events in Ontario. Laughter Yoga is a unique, fun, and engaging exercise routine to reduce stress, stimulate energy throughout the body and create a state of well-being.

## **Laughter Yoga International**

**[www.laughteryogainternational.com](http://www.laughteryogainternational.com)**

Laughter Yoga is a revolutionary idea – simple and profound. An exercise routine, it is sweeping the world and is a complete well-being workout. Developed by a medical doctor from India Dr. Madan Kataria and it has spread across 100 countries.

## **Medical Clown Project**

**El Sobrante, California**

**[www.medicalclownproject.org](http://www.medicalclownproject.org)**

The Medical Clown Project provides therapeutic medical clowning as an integrated component of care for adult and pediatric patients and their families. The medical clowns also benefit the community milieu by lightening the mood of healthcare providers and staff.

## **The Good News Network**

**[www.thegoodnewsnetwork.org](http://www.thegoodnewsnetwork.org)**

Since 1997, millions of people have turned to the Good News Network® as an antidote to the barrage of negativity experienced in the mainstream media. Because of its long history, staying power, and public trust, GNN is #1 on Google for good news.

# JOYFUL EVENTS

## **Global Belly Laugh Day – Sunday, January 21, 2021**

[www.globalbellylaughday.com](http://www.globalbellylaughday.com)

Global Belly Laugh Day is a day to celebrate the great gift of laughter. Smiling and laughing are encouraged and celebrated. How? Smile, throw your arms in the air and laugh out loud. Join the “Belly Laugh Bounce Around the World,” as people from Antarctica to Hawaii in kitchens, schools, hospitals, offices, plants and stores stop at 1:24 to have a laugh.

## **National Random Acts of Kindness Day – Wednesday, February 17, 2021**

[www.healing.about.com](http://www.healing.about.com)

The *Kindness Day* was created by the non-profit Random Acts of Kindness foundation, which calls itself the heart of the kindness movement. The holiday is celebrated annually in the United States on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

The benefits of compassion are powerful and immediate. You've seen it on the bus, when someone offers his or her seat to an elderly person: The elderly person beams with gratitude, and spectators feel happy inside just from having witnessed a simple act of kindness.

## **Red Nose Day – Friday, March 19, 2021**

[www.rednose.com](http://www.rednose.com)

*Red Nose Day* is when everyone is invited to put on their Red Noses and pull out all the stops to raise life changing money for charity. Red Nose Day is the day in the U.S. annually and every two years in the UK, when people across the land can get together and do something funny for raising money for charity at home, school and work. The event debuted in the U.S. in 2015.

## **International Day of Happiness – Saturday, March 20, 2021**

[www.internationaldayofhappiness](http://www.internationaldayofhappiness)

The *International Day of Happiness* is an annual event organized by the United Nations to promote the idea that feeling happy is a global human right. [Actionforhappiness.org](http://Actionforhappiness.org) supports and organizes the day, with support from other groups. Many of the world's leading religions and philosophies promote positive emotions as vital for the well-being of humankind.

## **International Day of Peace – Tuesday, September 21, 2021**

[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

We believe that local people have the power to find their own solutions to conflict. Our mission is to work with local communities to stop violence and build sustainable peace. The world's current approach to preventing and resolving conflicts is not working, and violent conflict continues to touch and destroy lives from Paris to Peshawar. 50% of wars restart within ten years of a peace treaty being signed. Our work has never been more urgent. By partnering with local organizations in areas of conflict, we help to support already-impactful peacebuilding projects and work to stop war and save lives.

**International Laughter Yoga Day - Sunday, May 2, 2021**  
[www.worldlaughterday.com](http://www.worldlaughterday.com)

Tens of thousands of Laughter Yoga Club members around the world have gathered together on the first Sunday in May, to laugh and pray for world peace.

**Pay-it-Forward Day - Wednesday, April 28, 2021**  
[www.payitforward.com](http://www.payitforward.com)

*Pay It Forward Day* is a global initiative that exists to make a difference by creating a huge ripple of kindness felt across the world. Of course, our hope is that people pay kindness forward every day and make each day that little bit brighter. We believe that small acts, when multiplied by millions of people can literally change the world for the better! Join us in paying it forward, and help spread the word about this important day!

Thousands of people from 79 countries participate in the annual Pay-it-Forward Day with individuals working on proclamations in 42 states and 48 cities.

**National Relaxation Day – Sunday, August 15, 2021**  
[www.nationalrelaxation.com](http://www.nationalrelaxation.com)

*National Relaxation Day* is an annual event proposed by nine-year-old Sean Moeller from Clio, Michigan, USA. It is a day to focus on ourselves and take a moment to relax!

**World Kindness Day – Saturday, November 13, 2021**  
[www.inspirekindness.com/world-kindness-day](http://www.inspirekindness.com/world-kindness-day)

*World Kindness Day* is celebrated annually on 13th November. On this day, participants attempt to make the world a better place by celebrating and promoting good deeds and pledging acts of kindness, either as individuals or as an organization.

**All American Laughter Yoga (Un) Conference**  
[www.laughterconference.com](http://www.laughterconference.com)

We've been organizing the *All America Laughter Conference* since 2006. The first few years were fully focused on Laughter Yoga, but as our collective expertise and understanding of laughter grew, we slowly opened ourselves up to other modalities and shifted our initial primary focus on laughter to a much more inclusive one.

This led us to become a unique and non-denominational platform where laughter enthusiasts and professionals from all traditions come to explore the current frontiers of knowledge on how to best use joy-filled sounds, breath, movement and intentions in healthy aging, education, health-care and self-care, work environments and more.

**Random Acts of Pizza**  
<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/sites/random-acts-of-pizza>

*Random Acts of Pizza* (RAOP) is a community on the social news website Reddit where users can ask to receive free pizza or volunteer to donate pizza to others in need. The community's slogan is "*Restoring Faith in Humanity, One Slice at a Time.*"

# GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

***“The only thing of importance, when we depart, will be the traces of love we have left behind.”***

**Albert Schweitzer** - German philosopher, theologian and physician (1875-1965)

There are many people that we would like to express gratitude for bringing the gift of laughter to more people around the world.

**Steven** would like to acknowledge the late *John Carey*. John was a good friend and was a professor of health psychology at Ryerson University in Toronto and he was the first to introduce me to the health benefits and healing potential of laughter way back in the 1980s ... years before Laughter Yoga existed.

Thanks to *Arnie Allice* of Toronto for introducing me to Laughter Yoga many years ago ... I did not know at the time how this would open up such a joyful pathway in my life! I fondly remember our morning “laughter with bagels” breakfasts!

*Marja Pires* was my inspirational and vivacious Laughter Yoga Teacher ... thanks for getting me started as a Laughter Yoga Leader! The only “laughing math teacher” I have ever known!

My Laughter Yoga Leader colleague – *Charlene Marshall*. Charlene, you have been a joy and a role model to co-lead many laughter sessions over the years ... at many times when we both needed the gift of laughter the most! Charlene has provided countless Laughter Yoga sessions to the Long-Term sector in Toronto for over a decade.

My good friend *Paul Hyman* ... what a long road we have enjoyed co-facilitating many programs over the years! Paul was instrumental in connecting Laughter Yoga to enrich an embodied practice of vibrant well-being within a trauma-informed context.

**Charlene** would like to thank ...

# PROGRAM REVIEW

“This page is Under Construction”

***“People crave laughter as if it were an essential amino acid.”***

**Patch Adams** – Founder of the Gesundheit Institute

We would like to thank the following thought leaders who took the time to provide suggestions and feedback in the ongoing development of this program.

First of all we would like to acknowledge and thank *Madan Kataria* for creating Laughter Yoga in 1995 Dr. Kataria continues to serve as the tireless leader of Laughter Yoga bringing the practice across the world and in a multitude of organizations and venues. Young children, students, corporations and workplaces, prisons, faith communities and senior citizens from diverse backgrounds from around the world have benefited from the joy of Laughter Yoga.

*Patch Adams*, founder of the Gesundheit Institute has been a role model for the healing power of humour and laughter since the early 1970s.

*Lee Berk* from Loma Linda University has been one of the first to research healing effects of humour and laughter.

*Barbara Frederickson* from the University of North Carolina, a pioneer in the role of cultivating positive emotion for building resilience and well-being.

*Rick Hanson*

*Jean Houston*

*Dacher Keltner*

*Andrew Weil*

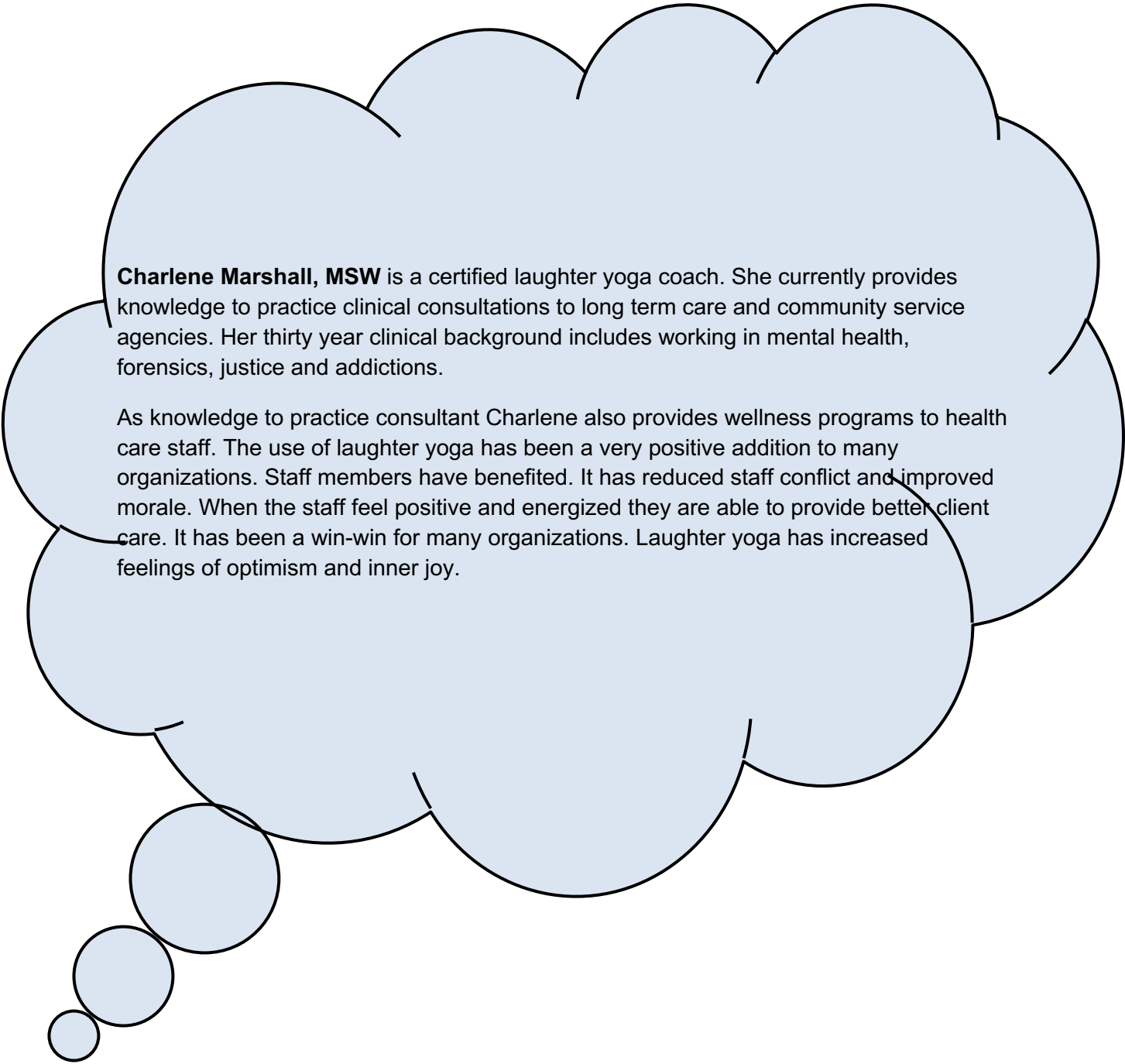


**Steven Hughes** became a certified Laughter Yoga Leader with Laughter Yoga International in 2009. Steven is an Education Specialist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto. He has served as a yoga teacher for over 35 years with a specialty in sharing trauma-sensitive yoga and mindfulness practices as a healing process to support the recovery of individuals who have encountered mental health challenges and trauma in their lives.

Steven is committed to bringing positive energy to organizations so that individuals and teams in the workplace can flourish and make their own unique and valued contributions to the world.







**Charlene Marshall, MSW** is a certified laughter yoga coach. She currently provides knowledge to practice clinical consultations to long term care and community service agencies. Her thirty year clinical background includes working in mental health, forensics, justice and addictions.

As knowledge to practice consultant Charlene also provides wellness programs to health care staff. The use of laughter yoga has been a very positive addition to many organizations. Staff members have benefited. It has reduced staff conflict and improved morale. When the staff feel positive and energized they are able to provide better client care. It has been a win-win for many organizations. Laughter yoga has increased feelings of optimism and inner joy.

# LOVING-KINDNESS PRAYER

May all Beings be Peaceful

May all Beings be Happy

May all Beings be Safe

May all Beings Awaken to the Light of their True Nature

May all Beings be Free



***“Someday after mastering winds, waves, tides and gravity, we shall harness the energies of love, and then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will discover fire.”***

**Pierre Teilhard de Chardin** – French philosopher and paleontologist (1881-1955)

***“To drop into being means to recognize your interconnectedness with all life, and with being itself. Your very nature is being part of larger and larger spheres of wholeness.”***

**Jon Kabat-Zinn** – American Mindfulness Teacher