

NEWS RELEASE



Touchmark at Mt. Bachelor Village

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Touchmark celebrates health benefits of National Humor Month

BEND, Ore. — National Humor Month this month is an ideal opportunity to promote your health through laughter. Several local folks consider themselves quite healthy.

Laughter produces positive emotional states and can boost the immune system by elevating a person's antibody levels, according to research.

“Laughter is a physical phenomenon while humor is a perceptive belief,” says Marge Coalman, Ed.D., vice president of wellness & programs for Touchmark.

“The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference; he acquired his size from too much pi,” says Don Miller, a self-described punster and resident of Touchmark at Mt. Bachelor Village.

Miller enjoys snappy puns and frequently tells jokes with some zing. Other favorites of his include:

“Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.”

“Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other, 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'”

“A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.”

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“We're living in challenging times, and humor and laughter can play a very important role in our overall health,” says Touchmark Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Melanie Snow. “Elders are survivors. They've lived through several recessions, and some lived through the Great Depression. They know the value of a hearty laugh.”

As one would expect, jokes are popular within Touchmark's retirement community. Residents regularly communicate their favorite rib-ticklers, culled from the Internet, passed along at dinner and shared during exercise class.

Research backs up importance of humor

According to Lee S. Berk, Dr. PH, an associate professor at Loma Linda University in California, researchers have mapped brain activity during joke-telling. What they found is that

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laughter involves the entire cerebral cortex. Moreover, Berk's research has shown that the experience of laughter appears to increase the number of cells that help the body fight infections.

The Mayo Clinic, Harvard Medical Clinic and national research program of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention all have studied the positive impact of laughter, humor and positive thinking on curative outcomes for people with cancer, heart disease and other potentially terminal illnesses.

Coalman considers laughter and humor among the best and most holistic "medications" people can use to stave off illness, reduce stress and increase positive immune system responses to the hazards of living in a stress-filled world.

Make humor work for you

Coalman recommends the following tips for increasing an individual's experience of humor:

- Put fun in the fundamentals: Choose to laugh and modify your environment and habits to encourage a sense of lightheartedness.
- Spend time with people who support and care about you: Seek relationships with friends and groups full of goodwill.
- Smile: Those who look happy often feel happy.
- Be active and eat right. What's good for the body is good for the soul. You'll also sleep better and notice improved functionality.
- Simplify and choose: Emotional and physical clutter can weigh you down. Tossing out and tidying up will bring a sense of satisfaction, and lighten your schedule for things you enjoy.
- Laugh out loud: Turn a chuckle into a belly laugh. Watch and read things you find funny. Spend silly time with your friends.
- Choose joy: Strive to find people and things that bring you joy. Volunteer for a worthy cause. Have tea with a friend. Read an uplifting book. Hold a child's hand.

Coalman says Dale Carnegie had the right attitude: "If fate hands you a lemon, make lemonade."

About Touchmark at Mt. Bachelor Village

Touchmark at Mt. Bachelor Village opened in 2003, and in 2007 expanded by adding two new lodges and numerous amenities and services as well as new lifestyle options. Located along the Deschutes River, the retirement resort also offers Touchmark Home Services and the on-site Touchmark Rehabilitation & Balance Center. In 2008, Touchmark received an award from the Health Promotion Institute for Let Your Spirit Soar, a component of Touchmark's Life Enrichment/Wellness program. In 2005, it received a platinum award from the National Association of Home Builders.

About Marge Coalman and Touchmark

Coalman is an internationally recognized speaker and writer. She oversees Touchmark's Health & Fitness clubs, national award-winning Life Enrichment/Wellness program, and assisted living and memory care programs in eight states and Alberta, Canada. Touchmark was established in 1980 and is a leader in planning, building and operating communities for those 55-plus years.

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