Laughter for Your Health

In recognition of April’s National Humor Month, we would like to share some information about Laughter Yoga. Laughter Yoga is a form of yoga’s typical quiet exhalations coupled with uncontrollable laughter rather than silence. The laughter during the session begins with any forced laughter that eventually evolves into genuine heartfelt laughter when done in the company of other mirth-minded individuals. Regardless if the laughter starts off fake, it eventually becomes real. Research shows that artificial laughter that is self-generated is as physiologically beneficial to real externally-activated laughter.

A typical Laughter Yoga session includes: easy stretches, breathing practices, as well as a variety of intentional laughter techniques that are simple to follow. The individual can choose their level of participation, from gentle to vigorous, making the experience appropriate for all ages and levels of ability.

Some of the documented benefits of laughter include:

- **Relieves stress** by reducing adrenaline and cortisol.
- **Reduces anxiety, fear and depression** by raising serotonin levels.
- **Enhances the immune system** by releasing lymphocytes (infection fighters) and boosting natural anti-viral and anti-cancer cell activity.
- **Improves respiratory and cardiovascular health** by dilating blood vessels, balancing blood pressure and increasing lung capacity and heart resiliency.
- **Relieves pain** by producing endorphins (natural opiates).
- **Improves sleep patterns.**
- **Encourages relaxation.**
- **Benefits digestion and elimination systems.**
- **Boosts self-confidence, promotes compassion and deepens creativity.**
- **Laughter “buddies” tend to form caring and supportive friendships.**

Here are several ways to enhance your sense of humor:

- Treat yourself to a comedy festival.
- Recall several funny or embarrassing moments in your life.
- Find the humor in frustrating or challenging situations.
- Read comics and cut out the ones that remind you of your life.
- Sort through family photographs and write funny captions.
- Take note of the funny things children and animals may do.

For more information about Laughter Yoga please contact Jeffrey Brair by emailing him at info@LYInstitute.org or by cell at (949) 315-5801. You can also visit www.LYInstitute.org.