



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Undeniable Power of Laughter

Early in my career, I had the opportunity to work with and for an exceptional mentor and friend, George Fischer. George and I became lifelong friends and he taught me many important lessons about compassion, commitment, the pursuit of excellence, humility, empathy, and so much more. He is a man of deep integrity and well respected for his work. The thing that I remember and cherish most about my time working with George, however, is that he was almost always laughing.

Don't get me wrong, George's demeanor and personal interactions always matched the situation. People never dismissed George, nor did they think him a fool. Whether visiting in the hospital, leading a contentious meeting, or pitching an idea to a potential donor, George knew how to win people over by being authentic. And he always had a joke — or a pun — or a quip — ready to go. "When people laugh," George would say, "their hearts and minds are open in new ways. The walls come down and trust is built."

The power of laughter and its impact on our health has been well documented. Studies from around the world have shown that laughter can impact our health in several ways, including:

- **Reducing our stress.** Life can be serious. And life can be hard. Laughter has been linked with reduced anxiety and stress — even, and perhaps especially, in the most challenging of situations.
- **Improving learning ability and memory.** Our mind remains sharp when we laugh. Laughter helps to fire synapses in our brain that wouldn't otherwise be active.
- **Improving our mood and self-esteem.** One study followed older adult patients undergoing cancer treatments showing a linkage between laughter and treatment effectiveness.
- **Improving our connections with one another.** Relationships are important. I believe that positive human interaction is key to healthy aging. Have you ever encountered someone who never laughed — who seemed to believe

that being negative, critical, or serious was somehow an indication of their importance? I have too. And, unfortunately, they are often isolated and lonely.

Certainly, medical professionals would agree that laughter has a positive overall impact on the aging process. Laughter affects our brains, our muscles, our lungs, our hormones, our immune system, our heart, our circulatory system, and so much more. There has to be something behind the old adage, "Laughter is the best medicine."

Here at the Princeton Senior Resource Center, we love to laugh! And we care deeply about your health. And so, we are proud to present A Night of Comedy with the Capitol Steps on Friday, October 25th at 7:30 p.m. at the Stuart Country Day School. If you've never seen the Capitol Steps — or if you've seen them 10 times before — their performance is certain to keep you laughing for weeks. Regular tickets, VIP tickets, and event sponsorships can be purchased by visiting the event page at princetonsenior.org/fall-benefit-capitol-steps/ or by calling our offices at 609.924.7108.

All proceeds from the evening will benefit PSRC — but, more importantly, buying tickets and attending the performance with a group of friends, will help you live longer!

Back to George. He was always laughing, and we spent a lot of time laughing together, but he wasn't really all that funny. In fact, every time we sat down at a meal together where chicken was served, he would say, "Does this chicken have a fowl taste to it?" and look earnestly to see if anyone caught his wit. Laughing may contribute to healthy aging — but I can't make any promises about groaning.

All the Best,
Drew A. Dyson, PhD
Executive Director