

Hospital Clown Newsletter

The Gentle Art of The Caring Clown

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At the AATH, we were greeted by the most wonderful group of clowns from the Comedy Connection pictured here with their founder Leslie Gibson.

Leslie's first introduction to humor projects was at the Humor Project Conference in Saratoga Springs, New York in 1988. As a home health care worker, not yet a clown, she had a dream of bringing humor to the hospital bed site. She asked for and received a grant from the Humor Project in 1989. With grant in hand and a packet of well-organized material, she went to her employer -- Morton Plant Mease Health Care. Dr. Nancy Rue, the Director of Education at that time, had been a pediatric nurse and recognized that "when adults get sick they are just big kid." They set out together to organize the Comedy Connection.

Leslie stresses that the team work she did, involving the hospital, was what has made this program so successful. They organized a meeting at the departmental director level, with directors and/or director designated department members.



The Comedy Connection

Morton Plant Mease Health Care

323 Jeffords Street, Clearwater, Florida 34617-0210

The Comedy Connection Clown Alley is a totally committed caring clown alley. They are pictured here at the AATH Convention. Back row: Karen "Princess Goldenflake" Reynolds; Mary Ellen "Cookie" Woods; Letitia "Ruffles" Mayo; **Leslie Gibson** (Founder); Jeannie "Tillie" Gonzalez; Millie "Friendly" Kinghorn; Chic "Speedway" Berger. On the floor: John "Jolly" Kinghorn; **Ray "OK" Teasdale** (Instructor); Meghan "Macaroni" Murphy .



Why a Humor Connection? Laughter ventilates the lungs, increases circulation, clears bronchial secretions and helps release tension. There is a great deal of research being done to prove mirthful laughter sets up "healing environments" in the body which allow medication and medical procedures to work more effectively. In future issues we will report on these findings.