

Heartily Nursing Creative

Starting in 1990, the Tzu Chi volunteers have followed Master Cheng Yen's expectations and used their clapping hands to do recycling work. Since then they have saved sixteen million trees that were at least twenty years old.

The Tzu Chi nursing teams take the example of Tzu Chi volunteers' spirit and try to save energy and reduce carbon emissions to protect the earth by using their busy hands to do recycling.

They also use their time more efficiently and are creative to make nursing more humane and closer to patient's needs, and to win over their hearts.

Nursing is a science, but also an art.

They do it with their own hearts, thus nothing is difficult.

The white angels (nurses) cherish and value things and reuse things, therefore, extending the life cycles to reduce waste.

Tzu Chi nursing teams know their blessings, and they cherish them and remake them.

By doing creative good deeds, no matter how small they appear, they collect the rewards which warm their own hearts.

Environmental Protection

Tailor-made “Bib on Wheelchair”

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Grandma has been paralyzed in bed for almost six years now and with no muscles but stiff joints. Also, her eyes look hollow. She is just like any other patient who has lost the mobility and needs others to take care of her daily life. However, the only difference between this grandma and other patients at the nursing home is she keeps her clothing, beddings, and the room neat and tidy. This patient’s family is doing everything behind the scenes. They treat their family member with utmost importance and care. That is very touching to me.

Good Home Care with a Creative Bib

Grandma’s son gently and skillfully moved grandma from the bed onto the wheelchair.



After some adjustment with the grandma’s clothing, her expression in the eyes changed relative to when she was on the bed. Her stiff neck and the back made her look like a humped back. Saliva was dripping off her mouth and falling onto her lap, making one feel awkward and uncomfortable just by looking at it. Grandma’s movement afterward slowly caught my attention. He positioned a thick electric wire around grandma’s chest, and tied down to the wheelchair at



1. Take apart the hanger, and shape and stable the hanger.



2. Fold the towel in half and sew the outside edges. Then put it on the hanger and create a bib.



3. Take the bib stand and make it stable on one side of the wheelchair. After the patient sits on the wheelchair, set the bib stand. Then tuck the towel into patient's cloth collar.

both ends. He then used four clothes pegs to clamp down a dental bib padded with paper tissue to catch the fallen saliva. Grandma can then be wheeled without the worry of wetting herself. That is very effective and creative as well. The idea of a “Wheelchair with Bib” is born.

To improve the design, we use the wire from old hangers instead of electric wires to carry heavier weights. The wires are much easier to mold into the shape of a bib. Towels are used instead of paper tissues, to cut down the paper waste. Then the dental bib was sewn together with the towel, with hems along the edges for easy mounting onto the wires. These simple parts are assembled and a tailored made “Bib on Wheelchair” is created from scratch.

The product is a piece of art from the nursing staff. The process of creation is filled with obstacles and difficulties, such as the molding and mounting of hangers on wheelchair is not as easy as it seems. The hangers need to be positioned at shoulder level on the wheelchair in order to stand on its own. It has to be functional and

aesthetic in appearance. The girly nurses were unsuccessful because the tasks were just too hard for them. Finally, the facilities' brothers came to the rescue with their special tools, and successfully created a functional wheelchair with bib. An invention like this one requires lots of trials and errors, and they don't come easy. Nursing is both a science as well as an art.

Improving Rehabilitation – a Little Invention Helps

In order to convince the patient's family to assist patients for speedy recovery, home based nursing care needs to encourage patients to leave the sick bed for exercises and activities. The tailored made "Bib on Wheelchair" can stimulate patients' senses. It can also improve the willingness of patients' family to accompany their patients to travel outside. Both patients and the caregivers benefit from social activities before the pressure start to build up. It is very meaningful to increase the quality of patients' care.

Patients who have been paralyzed because of stiffness in the body or body has changed shape are hard to get off the bed and sit on wheelchairs. Many cases involve the uncontrolled dripping of saliva. They tend to lean forward rendering the proper positioning of the normal bibs ineffective. In order to keep their clothes clean and tidy, caregivers have to use tissues to clean up and to change their clothes quite frequently. Therefore, patients' families usually try to avoid the hassles of letting the patients get off the bed for activities.

The new invention enables the nursing team to become more efficient, and to reduce materials consumption. It also increases the patients' family willingness to use the tailored made bibs on the wheelchair. The tailored made bibs can keep patients' clothes dry and the towels are washable. This also reduces many packs of tissues consumption each day. Using the towels often reduces injuries on the skin due to repeated wiping and rubbing from the tissues and it is economical, also environmental friendly. It increases the willingness of families to let the patients getting off the bed for activities and avoid skin ulcer. It also increases patients' stimulation and ultimately their quality of life.

Ideas usually come from people paying attention to details. I am most thankful to the nursing team, particularly the home based nurses, for overcoming the shortcomings of their working environment, regardless of weather condition. Their compassion and persistence for patients' care, their courage and dedication; they are the angels to protect the disadvantaged patients and families.

Wheelchair Paddle Socks

Ying-Mei Liu (Head Nurse) and Shiao-Ming Yu (Associate Head Nurse), Geriatrics Department, Tzu Chi Hospital, Dalin Branch

Wheelchair is an absolute necessity to transport patients in the Geriatrics Department. However, the wheelchair paddles where patients rest their feet on are made with a cold shiny steel finish. It is uncomfortable for seniors between the ages of 75 to 90. Under such circumstances, we invented the environmental friendly “Paddle Socks.”

Seniors’ body functions are inevitably weakened because of aging, joints are stiff and skin becomes thin and delicate. Timely exercise is an effective way to slow the aging process. When patient is seated on the wheelchair, the abrasive steel paddle is potential hazard to patients, particularly those with poor blood circulation. As a result, socks are designed just for the paddles using discarded material.

The choice of fabric is critical for the paddle socks. It makes sense to use soft, moisture absorbent, warmth and fluffy material. When the socks are made, volunteers carefully guide them through the metal tubes with ropes. We did quite a few wheelchairs for the patients.

To make the socks, first we cut and sew using discarded material, followed by sewing the ends except an aperture opening with sewing machine. It is then tied with strings to avoid the socks falling off the paddles. Different colored materials are used to create an artistic feeling on the plain looking wheelchair.



Patients like the wheelchairs. During the winter season it creates a feeling of warmth and that is especially helpful for patients with chronic circulation problem. Some patients like the feeling of softness and warmth when their bare skin lay on the paddles. The socks are an additional safety measure and it has sentimental value. The expression of gratitude and thankfulness from the patients certainly motivates us to continue on our mission. It gives us a sense of accomplishment when we are greeted with smiles.

Colorful Ice Bags

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In an instant, IV bags turned into the best ice pack for osteopathy patients.

In our orthopedic ward, patients often require ice therapy for their pain management after surgery. Medical staffs are used to provide a special type of “ice pillow” to patients to relieve pain and swelling. However, the ice pillow is designed for placement on the head and neck area, to help lower body temperatures during a fever. It is inconvenient, too bulky for effective use on small areas such as joints and wounds. Also, the supply of ice pillows is often limited so not every patient can get one. In addition, the ice pillow has small opening to allow for refill, but occasionally leakage contaminate patients’ injuries.

Patients’ families sometimes purchase their own ice packs, but there are two shortcomings. They have to spend extra the money, and when no longer needed, they have to be put away or find room to store. Others pack ice cubes with

plastic bags as an alternative, but they are often less than desirable due to leakage. Some patients apologize for wetting the beds or the wounds dressing. We wouldn’t mind changing their dressing but we worry about the infection.

Eventually, we came up with a solution. A coworker happened to see janitors cleaning the used IV bags, and immediately the idea of self-made ice bag was born. He filled the bags with tap water and refrigerated them in cold temperature. The experiment worked and he was delighted with the ease of application. In addition, different sizes of IV bags (250 mL or 500 mL) could cater to individual patients’ requirements. The bags were also easily reusable.

Then the osteopathy department began worrying about the new ice packs being used mistakenly as IV supplies. To make it easier to distinguish the difference between normal IV and ice bags, colors were introduced to the latter with red and blue dyes. During the mixing of added colors, the hues of the dyes changed proportionately with the water density, creating various shades of colors, for example, purple or violet. The discovery of color changes brought many with surprises.

An effort to serve a need of the patients turned out to be an ingenious invention. The medical staff worked together to find a better and more convenient way to make ice pack, is testimonial to a patient first approach, or patient-centered nursing.