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The development of the Healthy Cities concept can be traced back to the WHO “Declaration of Alma-Ata” in 1978. It was hoped that the strengthening of the primary health care system would realize the goal of “Health for All” . Rapid urbanization, however, led to many health, social and ecological problems that are far beyond the capabilities of the government agencies to control. In response, the 1986 WHO “Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion” proposed five action areas for health promotion including building a healthy public policy, create supportive environments, strengthening community action, developing personal skills and re-orienting health care services. The “Healthy Cities” initiative was also launched at the same time. The main purpose of the Healthy Cities initiative is to realize health for all. The government should adopt a people-oriented policy approach with health as the target. Inter-agency and inter-disciplinary cooperation, as well as non-government organization (NGO) and community participation, should be used to reduce inequalities in health and set up a public policy for sustainable health to promote the health of the general population.

In Taiwan, many people in the government and private sector are working together to weave a story of beauty and love. More international participation and communication were needed to show the world the efforts being made in Taiwan. We also needed to learn from the success stories throughout the world. To this end, the Taiwan Public Health Association invited international experts to speak on “Healthy Cities/Communities” during its annual general meeting and conference in 1995. The conference marked the introduction of the Healthy City concept to Taiwan. During his campaign to run for Mayor of Taipei City in 1998, President Ma Ying-Jeou incorporated the Healthy City into his white paper on health. During his term as Mayor of Taipei City, he declared 2002 to be the “First Year of the Healthy City” and applied the five action areas of health promotion to launch the “100-Ton Weight Loss Program for an Energetic and Healthy Taipei City” . In 2003, the BHP began assisting local governments in promoting the “Healthy City” initiative. In 2004, the Taipei City Government made a push to take part in the WHO Healthy Cities Network and hosted the “Taipei Healthy City Symposium” . In 2005, Tainan City became the first city in Taiwan to become an official member of the WHO Healthy Cities Network. In 2007, the heads of local governments were invited to set up the “Taiwan Alliance for Healthy Cities” for promoting health cities in Taiwan and to take part in the activities of the WHO Alliance for Healthy Cities (West Pacific).

The BHP began promoting the Age-Friendly City initiative in 2010 through the Healthy City framework in response to the aging society. A total of 9 counties and cities supported the initiative in 2011. The Age-Friendly city concept follows the promotion strategies for healthy cities and adopts an Age-Friendly oriented policy approach to build a healthier and more sustainable environment for aged people. The goal is to create a supportive environment that provide aging populations with optimum health as they age. The key to the success of promoting health cities is public commitment and tangible support from the heads of local governments. We hope the stories in this book will encourage more local governments to embrace inter-agency cooperation, inter-department sharing of resources, and work with the community to promote issues that benefit people's health and improve the quality of life, as well as improve the general public's awareness and participation in building health supporting environments. Healthy public policies should also be developed to create a healthier city.



Healthy Cities



People were encouraged to ride bikes at a Beitou Healthy Green Life holiday activity.

Green and Healthy Urban Living

Taipei Beitou Health Promotion Association

“They built a nest on the light in the gallery and have had it for years. To keep the sparrow nest, I don't dare change the lightbulb. In the spring and summer when they're here, for about a year I don't even turn on the light because I'm worried I'll scare them,” said Mr. Hong, the owner of a small grocery store.

House sparrow nests filled galleries along the streets of Beitou beside the Tamsui River in recent years, making for a special site. The Beitou Health Promotion Association conducted a survey of house sparrows in the area and opened a special sparrow watching path, from the MRT Beitou Station and passing by Guangming Road, Zhongyang South Road, and Chongren Road, before reaching Qiyuan Station. Protecting the sparrows quickly became a popular activity among community members. Some people dug holes in the ceiling or removed parts of it while others even added cameras to make sure nobody damaged the nests.

Sparrow protection is just one in a series of projects conducted by the Taipei Beitou Health Promotion Association. The association was formed in 2007 by over 100 representatives of local public agencies, schools, hospitals, and community organizations. It works to build a healthy city by concentrating on medical care and hygiene, ecology and the environment, culture and industry, and social welfare and safety. An important thing to remember about the association is that the word “health” in its name refers to more than just keeping people free of disease. From the start, the association has considered preventing and treating disease to only be a small part of building a healthy city. Even more important is promoting complete health. For that reason, the association has always used its resources to promote balanced physical and mental well being. It gathers other community and development groups, arranging for members to visit places like the Beitou Incinerator, the Guandu Aquatic Bird Protection Area, and Yangmingshan National Park Headquarters. These trips give residents a better understanding of local resources while increasing the chance for public and private cooperation. In addition, the association organizes observation trips

to other communities, giving locals a chance to learn about their community building experiences.

Beitou is the perfect district for promoting healthy activities because it has been blessed with mountains, forests, and abundant hot springs. Its environment and ecology are particularly remarkable. Apart from its swallow survey and guided path, people who visit are most impressed by the installations along its hot springs walking path.

Construction of the Beitou hot springs walking path depended heavily on the work of Chinese Culture University professor Tai Hsu-chih. Tai has over 10 years experience in community health development, sports and recreation, and walking paths. At the association's request, he spent much time in Beitou Park working with community guides, volunteers, and association workers before the project was finally finished. The finished path combines culture and recreation. It is a scenic, circular path that focuses on the area's hot springs culture and is a rare splash of green in the urban jungle. The entire route is 1.42 kilometers long and takes about 20 minutes to complete. Seniors do not have much trouble walking the path and many visit at dusk. In addition, people come when they are off work and walk quickly around the path a few times for exercise before heading home.

The director of the Taipei Beitou Health Promotion Association, Chu Yu-Roo, said the success of the Beitou hot springs walking path could be attributed to four main factors: 1. People: security in the area is good and people get along well; 2. Location: there are convenient mass transit systems, plus the path is separated from cars and has good lighting; 3. Time: Beitou Park has a unique history along with abundant cultural sites and social customs; 4. Material: the overall plan and strategy for the path were very broad. It is one of just many elements that make Beitou different from other places in Taiwan, including the district's special location, its health benefits, and the space for various recreational and relaxation activities. Beitou's beautiful environment and comprehensive plan are praised by more than just locals -- on weekends and holidays, many people from other areas visit for replenishment. They may admire the environmental protection ideas on display at the Beitou library or go to Beitou Creek to see hokutolite, a special rock unique to the area. At the Ketagalan Culture Center visitors can look up to see swallows flying in, and when they are tired they can relax in one of the district's many outdoor hot springs, a perfect ending to a health excursion.

Another project the association carried out was gathering local organizations to hold a Beitou Healthy Green Life holiday activity. The event was held in 2009 and 2010, and its main message was to adopt a cycling lifestyle and provide a green environment accessible to all. People were encouraged to use their two feet to take a bike on a scenic tour of the Guandu Plain. A green living fair took place that included ecological tours, a farmers' market, nutritious meals, and talks on the health benefits of hot springs. Modern life is busy, but people can still derive great joy by immersing themselves in this environmentally sound, healthy, LOHAS-inspired location.

Healthy, green living is the goal of the Beitou Health Promotion Association, and the hard work by its members resulted in Beitou becoming a member of the Alliance for Healthy Cities in 2007. Mr. Hong, the grocery store owner and long-term resident of Beitou, said that seeing the changes in Beitou over the last several years makes him proud of his home. He encourages people from other cities to visit when they have a chance and experience the area's hot springs, take a walk, or ride a bike. Such a trip can put the mind and body at ease and gives them a chance to experience the green life that is available in Beitou. ♥



Task force members evaluated the grounds of Beitou Park to plan the walking path.

Healthy Cities



The Arts Parade Festival was a community activity that made Tamsui proud.

From Caterpillar to Butterfly

Tamsui Healthy City Association

When walking the streets of Tamsui, look around and you can see many pictures of caterpillars. These cute creatures are a symbol of the district's healthy city movement. You might wonder why caterpillars were used instead of butterflies. Ask a local, and it is almost certain you will hear an answer like this:

“It's because Tamsui's development resembles the life cycle of a caterpillar. It passes through many setbacks and failures before becoming a pupa and then breaking out of its cocoon as a beautiful butterfly.”

Tamsui's long history left behind many landmarks, and its hills, rivers, and port provide gorgeous scenery. But the area has not always been so charming. In the past pollution choked the rivers, traffic clogged the streets, and development wiped out green spaces, making life hard on local residents. Even worse, perceived stress and attempted suicide levels were high, and at one point suicide became the top cause of death. For a small place that had population growth of 2,000 to 3,000 people per year, this was a major concern.

The Taipei Department of Health, the Tamsui District Office, community members, and experts from National Yang Ming University responded by joining to promote a healthy city plan. Also in 2007 they established the Tamsui Healthy City Association, combining public and private resources and working with local organizations to get more locals involved in health activities.

Early on, however, organizers learned how tough it can be to get started. To promote healthy living they tried lectures, posters, and handouts, but only had limited success drumming up support among locals. Finally association Secretary-General Huang Yue-Shiang decided to use more traditional methods. Huang was responsible for front-line work, and, with the support of Director Tsai Yeh-Wei, began to visit communities to talk with people. She quickly discovered that a top-to-bottom policy for spreading ideas does not work at the community level. Instead, existing

organizations are needed to satisfy local needs and personalize health activities to individual communities.

Another challenge Huang faced was finding a consensus among all the different voices in the community. She overcame this problem by staying enthusiastic and positive, along with gathering like-minded friends. She recruited Tsai Village Secretary-General Tsai Yin, a long-time proponent of community building, and the director of the Tunshan Community Development Association, Kuo Li-Ching. They used the motto “Tamsui residents should care for Tamsui” to encourage participation, with interest particularly strong among the retired seniors who soon filled the ranks of association discussions and volunteer efforts. Family members of these seniors were thrilled by an unexpected effect of their participation--the disappearance of lingering depression symptoms. It was like Tsai Yin said: “Taking care of the elderly is about more than just giving them something to eat. You also need to make them feel respected and let them know that their life has meaning ... After joining community health development projects, when they leave their homes, they feel like they're part of the community. This gives them a chance to rediscover the value of living.”

Considering the needs and desires people have toward health along with suggestions from scholars and members, association members devised three main goals: 1. Walking every day is the healthy way, 2. Everyone plant a tree to make the environment beautiful and green, and 3. Neighborhoods that care make Tamsui a LOHAS home. In less than two years, Tamsui's style changed dramatically. Trash on historical streets was reduced, traffic has improved, community green areas and activity spaces increased, safer school crosswalks were added, and the number of students walking to school rose. Also, the cases of burglaries decreased, the health of new families in the community improved, and the suicide rate dropped significantly. In 2008, these achievements led to Tamsui being accepted as a member of the Western Pacific's Alliance for Healthy Cities.

Earning such an honor only added to the district's desire to improve. Next the association planned seven walking paths. On one of the paths in anticipation of the 2009 Huwei Cherry Health Walk it added signs with information on burning calories, so people were able to admire flowers while improving their health. The association was most proud of its Arts Parade Festival and the theatrical production of the Legend of the Tamsui Sino-French War. These innovative activities integrated community involvement and healthy living while encouraging seniors to leave their homes and try acting. They also brought tourists to Tamsui, serving as an excellent model for future healthy city projects.

If you work hard, you can make a difference. Tamsui's experiences are reminiscent of the setbacks and failures experienced by a caterpillar undergoing metamorphosis. Having emerged from its cocoon, Tamsui is like a beautiful butterfly, spreading its wings to fly... ♥

The association invited community members to work toward a consensus.



Healthy Cities

County
Commissioner
Liu Cheng-Hung
supported the
walking initiative.

Making Miaoli a Great Place to Live

Miaoli Healthy City Association

Only by riding a bicycle around Miaoli can you experience the county's true beauty. To promote healthy activities and the beauty of Miaoli's villages and mountains, for years the county government has been holding its Cycling Miaoli 100k Challenge. Participants travel through many villages, townships, and cities, including Miaoli, Gongguan, Dahu, and Jhuolan, along with scenic areas like Houlong Creek, Liyutan Reservoir, and the towns of Yuanli and Tunghsiao. The total distance of 100 kilometers makes for a challenging ride, but every year thousands of people register and join. Cyclist Tsuo Wei-men said:

“The route's interior is very large and the traffic signs are well done. There are 4,000 or 5,000 people, but you don't feel crowded. If you have the chance you should come and ride to discover the beauty of your home, and as a bonus you're doing something that's healthy. It's like killing two birds with one stone.”

Of all the cities and counties in western Taiwan, the beauty of Miaoli's landscape and ecology stands out. To preserve the unique characteristics of Miaoli's land and villages, upon taking office County Commissioner Liu Cheng-Hung began working to establish the Miaoli Healthy City Association. The association's goals are to build a county that makes for a good home, raise quality of life, and implement sustainable development ideas in urban areas. Its overall plan is to construct a place that is conducive to living and turn Miaoli into a healthy, environmentally friendly, cultural region that provides for people's needs. The county government's hard work over the years has already yielded benefits. In 2010, Miaoli won three major awards from the Taiwan Alliance for Healthy Cities, including the Healthy City Outstanding Award, the Innovative Performance Award for Health Promotion Policies, and the Innovative Performance Award for Healthy Living. When the county government team and local residents shared the honor of winning the awards at a news conference, it symbolized that slogans proclaiming Miaoli to be a livable, vigorous region had been realized.

Miaoli was Taiwan's second city or county to receive subsidies for building a healthy city, and, in 2006 it won an award for best results following evaluation by scholars and experts from the Department of Health's Bureau of Health Promotion. In 2007, the county government worked to get more people involved in projects to build smoke-free and green communities along with providing additional social welfare. It also founded the Miaoli Healthy City Association, combining public policy formulation with the power of local participation and creating a mechanism for ideas to flow from bottom to top. The success of Miaoli's measures made it a third city/county in Taiwan to be named a member of the Western Pacific's Alliance for Healthy Cities, bringing it in line with international standards.



Enjoying snacks at a community activity to promote healthy cooking.

Many factors come into play when trying to evaluate a city as being healthy, making it difficult to know where to begin. In addition, county officials tend to lack the resources to dazzle or launch major publicity campaigns. Only when needs are met and there is concrete change can people know of their efforts.

One area where significant progress was made was nutrition, which was aimed at reducing Miaoli's relatively high cancer rate. Data show that eating more fruits and vegetables can reduce the incidence of colorectal cancer. To encourage people to eat the foods they need, the Miaoli Healthy City Association worked with the Miaoli County Public Health Bureau to launch the "Fruit and Vegetable 579 Program Cancer Prevention Plan." The cross-departmental program involved experts, scholars, local organizations, and nutritionists working together to encourage residents and children to eat right. Just one year after the start of the program, the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed by people in the county had increased significantly. Adults eating four servings or more of boiled vegetables per day increased from 16 to 32.5 percent, and those eating at least two servings of fruits per day increased from 7.4 to 30.8 percent. Meanwhile, 37.21 percent of adults met the 5-a-day standard, one of the highest rates in the nation.

Another example is the association's LOHAS initiative to encourage more exercise and nutritious eating habits. The plan involved teaching people about nutrition and light forms of exercise while encouraging them to apply what they learned to their everyday life. To conduct the program, the association received subsidies from the Department of Health and the county government provided NT\$2 million, with additional supports coming from education and agriculture departments, communities, workplaces, schools, and home economic classes. Three thousand people at high risk of metabolic syndrome joined a 12-week course that involved exercise and nutrition planning. Organizers held 50 walks, arranged people into 100 exercise groups, and planned 54 exercise maps, successfully raising the amount of regular exercisers from 52.68 to 62.5 percent.

Miaoli is fully committed to its healthy city program and has ideas for future work. For example, it plans to ease the hardship of severe cancer sufferers who need to travel between cities for treatment by working with the Farglory Group to build a healthcare park in Houlong Township. The park will include a major hospital that will be active in both medical care and research. Local officials promise to continue working hard to ensure that county residents stay healthy, turning Miaoli into a healthy, active location that is also a great place to live. ❤️

Healthy Cities



President Ma Ying-jeou attended the Age-Friendly City launch ceremony.

Endless Love to Link the Old and Young

Chiayi City Healthy City Promotion Association

Children at Giao Ping Elementary School were treated at the end of 2010 to a special performance by a traveling puppet troupe that warns people about the dangers of smoking. The group was formed by health care volunteers working for the Chiayi City Health Bureau. There is the terrible Tar King, who relentlessly works to harm your health: “My specialty is this exhaust pipe that has no enemies to defeat it. It gives off terrible smoke and tar, which burns until your insides are black and your windpipe is sticky. But now the government keeps telling people not to smoke, which is leading to the demise of me and my brothers...” Other puppets include the cute Stinky Stink and the terrifying Nicotine King. The amusing dialogue delights children, who end up saying things like smoking is really bad or talking about how they want to encourage their dad to quit. Otherwise, they say, Dad could end up like Stinky Stink!

The smoke-free puppet troupe is Taiwan's first group to combine traditional puppet art with a health message. The volunteers are older, but they are filled with energy and eager to teach people about health through puppetry. They use creative, interesting performances instead of conventional forms of teaching, a welcome change for their audiences.

The troupe's establishment is closely related to the Chiayi City government's longstanding effort to have seniors contribute to health efforts. The average age of the troupe members is about 60, and they have played many roles at hospitals and health departments. In these positions, however, they lacked independence. A troupe founder said: “If we can establish a troupe that gives these senior volunteers a chance to use their energy and strength and let them take the initiative to join, they can all take leading roles. I believe it will make them more vigorous and they'll feel younger.” With these ideas in mind, in 2009 a tobacco prevention task force, under the guidance of Chiayi City Health Bureau chief Sun Shu-Lung, founded the troupe. Training and performances reminded senior men and women of their own childhood. They felt younger and their hands became more nimble. In addition, the shows gave people a better understanding of the advantages to quitting smoking and information about clinical options available for assistance. Perhaps the most incredible achievement of the program is that it changed past models for teaching people about health while improving

the mental well-being of the volunteers who ran it. Results of the program since its founding two years ago have been astounding. The best part is when the performers come onto stage for a curtain call and audiences are amazed at their energy and how they seem to glow. They are like a living advertisement for Chiayi's efforts to build a healthy city.

The troupe is well known around Taiwan, and it is just one of Chiayi's many healthy city initiatives. In the second innovative achievement awards from the Taiwan Alliance for Healthy Cities, Chiayi won in the environmental health, community participation, and city safety categories. Evaluations by the Department of Health place Chiayi first in many categories, and it formally joined the WHO's Western Pacific Alliance for Healthy Cities under the name of the Chiayi City Healthy City Promotion Association. Chiayi's outstanding track record in promoting health led the Bureau of Health Promotion in 2010 to choose it as the first city to launch its Age-Friendly City pilot project. The city's accomplishments speak for themselves.

Age-Friendly Cities have been called "Second-Generation Healthy cities," describing the methods and structure used to build a healthy city with a friendly environment for seniors. To achieve its goal, the Chiayi City Healthy City Promotion Association and the city government looked at eight strategies contained in the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities Plan. For example, to encourage seniors to leave the house more, Chiayi launched the country's first bus rapid transit road demonstration, using buses with a low chassis to help seniors alight. Other infrastructure and hardware improvements include more parks and green areas, plus roads and paths with fewer obstacles. In line with the Cabinet's 10-year plan for long-term care programs, Chiayi has

opened a variety of community and senior service points. In addition, it plans to share community resources by opening community colleges and senior study centers while providing seniors with opportunities to work or volunteer. This will help increase their participation in the community and provide them with more respect and self-affirmation.

A ceremony to celebrate the launch of Taiwan's first ever Age-Friendly City took place on March 26, 2011. For the occasion, Chiayi's traveling puppet troupe performed a show called "Chiayi's Endless Love, Linking the Old and Young." The show's

message was to remind people to value the elderly. Deft skill and interesting content earned a warm round of applause from the audience. Even President Ma Ying-Jeou, who saw the show in person, praised the performance by this group of retirees who keep on working. The president and Mayor Huang Min-Hui led everyone present in promising to treat their elders in the same way they treat their own parents. With this philosophy in mind, they would be able to build an age-friendly city that respects the elderly and cares for them while being handicap friendly, easy to move around, livable, accessible, healthy, and young at heart. Everyone posted signed pledges onto a wishing tree, which became filled with hopes for building an age-friendly city that provides seniors with a high quality of living. Near the end of the ceremony, the puppet troupe formed a "friendly train" and entered the ceremony site, announcing the formal launch of Chiayi's age-friendly city. To close the event, the "Thousand-Year Dance Squad" formed by members of the Chiayi City west district senior study center led a rendition of "You Are My Flower," adding another climax. President Ma and other VIPs joined in the song and dance, with the happy and energetic performance serving as a perfect end to the ceremony. The liveliness of the event showed Chiayi City's commitment to building an age-friendly city. ♥

The smoke-free puppet troupe's performance was well received.



Healthy Cities

A former capital shed its old image for a new, healthy look.

Giving New Life to an Old Capital

Tainan Healthy City Association

One day before the Quit Smoking day on June 3rd, 2011, Tainan Mayor William Lai visited the Yongkang Exploration and Education Smoke-free Park for a sign unveiling ceremony. Yongkang is one of many smoke-free parks in Tainan. An award recipient in attendance was college student Huang Yong-Cheng, who had attended a health center smoking cessation class and succeeded in quitting. Huang said he used to smoke three packs a day, and, after he quit, was not short of breath as much and had become more energetic and stronger.

Tainan residents like Huang who quit smoking are not uncommon. Their success is a result of a smoke-free city program launched by the Tainan Healthy City Association, in conjunction with the city government. Before the new Tobacco Hazards and Prevention Act took effect, in 2009 the city government, with support from city council, passed its Tobacco Hazards Prevention Autonomous Act. The new rules banned smoking within 3 meters of public locations and called for smoke-free restaurants, streets, temples, shopping districts, parks, and monuments. It also provided the city with Taiwan's first smoke-free traditional market. Special measures included in the city's plan to implement the act led residents to show much support, giving Tainan the lowest smoking rate of any city in Taiwan.

In recent years Tainan has used health as its primary theme for enacting major reforms, bringing new life to health efforts in the former capital. Apart from its smoke-free city policies, Tainan has made progress in controlling infectious diseases and cancer, preventing suicides, and building a long-term care network. The central government has given high marks to the city for each of these efforts. It is No. 1 in the country for pap smears, No. 2 for hospital administration and poison control, it is the first city in Taiwan to become a member of the WHO's Western Pacific Alliance for Healthy Cities, and it is also a winner of a healthy city innovation award from the alliance. These accomplishments make Tainan one of Taiwan's most incredible cities.

The Tainan Healthy City Association and city government have worked since 2003 with scholars and experts, including Hu Shu-chen of National Cheng Kung University, to launch a healthy

city initiative. In these efforts, guarding city residents' health has always been of primary concern. Whether it is city residents' health, environmental health, or industrial and economic concerns, the results have been impressive. Throughout this time, Tainan has been a model healthy city for Taiwan. Its success can be attributed to cross-departmental cooperation mechanisms and participation from community members.

One area in particular where Tainan had significant achievements was controlling Dengue fever. In 2007 the city faced a major Dengue fever epidemic, with cases going above 1,000. The situation seemed to spread out of control. The city government quickly responded, however, analyzing disease trends and launched a series of prevention and treatment measures. Health centers, the Tainan Environmental Protection Bureau, and the Tainan Bureau of Education worked together to eliminate the sources of the outbreak. More than 500 workers were recruited to go door to door and educate people protecting themselves so residents could understand how to handle Dengue fever. By early 2009, the epidemic was under control, and Tainan's experience served as an example to other localities on how to handle Dengue fever outbreaks. Tainan had made epidemic control a key point of its efforts, it had set up community epidemic control stations, and continued disease education efforts. For these reasons, it was chosen ahead of other cities and counties at high risk of Dengue fever epidemics to receive an award for effectively controlling the disease.

Another important project to improve the living environment of Tainan was its “Cape of Good Hope” plan. Launched by the local Department of Urban Development, the plan involved renovating abandoned, disorderly, or occupied public land and streets. To make the plots colorful and give them a different look, the department planted African Touch-me-nots, Madagascar Periwinkles, and Wax Begonias. An added bonus of growing these beautiful plants was to foster a love of nature among residents, which was shown by the response from schools and communities. Near the Koxinga Shrine at Fuqian Road, Kaishan Road, and Jianye Street, an old police station and dormitories were turned into a park with pavilions, bamboo, and moving water. In Chongming Village, neighborhood chief Lee Ren-Ci and the city's construction department worked to turn a garbage dump into Barclay Park. During the daytime tall trees provide abundant shade for the green area, and at night the sound of bugs and the light of fireflies fill the air. The area's cool breeze and flower scents have made it a favorite urban site. An art teacher at a junior high school in Tainan said: “If you want to make the city look beautiful, you don't need many major construction projects. You just need a bit of creativity. Improving small places can really surprise and delight people.”

More than 300 years ago, Tainan is where Taiwan got its start. Now it has shed its old image, and, standing at a crossroads, is ready to move ahead. In 2010 Tainan overcame many challenges to be upgraded to a special municipality, recognition of its years of hard work and achievements. Building a healthy city, however, takes constant effort. The Tainan Healthy City Association hopes that through the participation of public agencies and private organizations, it can turn Tainan into a healthy, livable city filled with vitality. ♥



Residents walked to demonstrate their resolve for building a smoke-free, healthy city.

Healthy Cities

Building a Pure and Safe Land

Hualien County Health Promotion Association

Respondents to a major survey from early 2010 on Taiwan's 24 counties and counties chose Hualien as the most livable county. For pride in one's home and happiness, the county scored above 60 and 70 percent.

When you are in Hualien, look out your window at night and you can see the ocean and stars. From your bed at dawn you can see the sun rising over the sea's horizon. It is no surprise that media outlets rank Hualien No. 1 for exercise, health, friendliness, and prosperity. It is also considered the place that people would most like to settle after retiring.

The mountains are high, the water runs fast, and typhoons and torrential rain are common, but the people of Hualien maintain a relaxed lifestyle. The area's prosperity index and feeling of security are on the rise, factors that can be attributed to security efforts by the Hualien County Health Promotion Association, with support primarily coming from the local government. "Feeling of security" is a very abstract phrase, but to achieve results, the association started from key elements of daily life, such as food, health, housing, and transportation. Concrete themes and measures to build a safe, livable city include:

Safer food: Monitoring and control of pesticide residue on foods, developing non-toxic farming, forming a system to track agricultural goods. Safer medical care: Strengthening the



Senior welfare centers let retirees live happily.

community medical system and medicine safety, establishing a reporting and referral system for individual cases related to suicide. Safer homes: Improving firefighting safety and efficiency, establishing systems to prevent domestic violence and natural disasters, continuing related monitoring and improvement work. Safer transportation: Determining dangerous sections of roads, enhancing enforcement of key violations and inspection work, improving traffic safety messages, increasing the percentage of people wearing helmets on scooters.

Besides the above measures, the Hualien County Health Promotion Association is working to achieve international safe school authentication and has launched a safe community plan. In 2007 alone, Kangle and Fengbin Elementary Schools and Hualien High School all ranked as international safe schools. Also, Fengbin and Shoufeng were recognized by the World Health Organization as safe communities.



Hualien is proud of the top quality care it provides for seniors.

Participation from school and community members has contributed to a county-wide effort to make Hualien more secure. Moreover, considering that seniors make up 12.5 percent of the total population, above the national average of 10.6 percent, the county has senior welfare centers, medical subsidies for mid- to low-income earners, and a 10-year plan for long-term care programs. To improve the residential environments of seniors, the county provides equipment to prevent falls, phone check-ups, visits for seniors living alone, and meal delivery. It offers free transportation for seniors and the handicapped that is burden-free, handicap-accessible, and close to home, a service that has already been used by more than 120,000 people. Also, on January 10, 2011, the county started a flagship program for giving free health exams to seniors 65 and older who register their home as Hualien County. Together, these programs have turned Hualien into a model county for providing seniors with widespread, quality care.

The success of these numerous programs has already surprised many, and their effects can be seen by almost 50 Japanese retirees in recent years deciding to stay in Hualien for extended stay. People from other cities and counties have also moved to Hualien to run bed and breakfasts, coffee shops, bookstores, spas, and even help local organic farmers market their products. Their goal is not to earn money but rather to live happily, adding an extra level of meaning to the county's slow lifestyle.

Hualien is like it has always been, with its majestic mountains and crashing waves, but now it is safer and people smile more. The county has more than just beautiful scenery, as one can see by its healthy and secure living environment. When you come to Hualien, do not rush through. You need to take your time to experience the happiness of local residents. Perhaps next time when you visit, instead of being a traveler, you can call Hualien home. ❤️