HEALTHY NEWS

Volunteers Give Free Rides on 3700 Couch Bikes all around the World

By bestfolkmedicine · 14/03/2022 · 3 min read



An organization that started in Copenhagen, Denmark has now spread to 40 countries and boasts more than 10,000 participants.

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The organization, Cycling without Age, is giving the elderly from all over the world a breath of fresh air. They literally do it by driving them on a rickshaw.

The organization was founded back in 2012 by Ole Kassow, a Copenhagen native, and it's now spread in 40 countries and is said to be run entirely by volunteers.

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What Inspired Kassow to Embark on this Volunteering Journey?

Kassow was inspired to start this mission when he became friends with a resident from a nursing home and thought it would be nice for the man to be able to visit his community.

This is when Kassow got permission from the home to take out the resident for a ride in a trishaw, a cargo tricycle with a compartment for a passenger in the front.

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The following day, Kassow was called and asked if this could be done again and the rest is history.

From an Occasional Ride to a Worldwide Project

The trips with the residents of the nursing home became a routine for Kassow. He explains this gave the residents new mobility and provided him with a chance to gain a new perspective on his city.

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He contacted the officials of the city to ask for funding to purchase a trishaw for the nursing home. The city officials responded positively and gave him additional trishaws, five more for various nursing homes.

After this, Kassow received calls from people who wanted to volunteer as drivers. Today, Cycling without Age has 4000 volunteers in Denmark only and they've spread the initiative to 40 countries, including Singapore, Australia, Canada, and other countries in Europe.

Cycling without Age is focused on giving the elderly a chance to stay active and participate in society and their local community.

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They can experience the day fully; the volunteers drive them through the city and in nature, as well as where they used to live. They're brought back into the environment where they spend a large part of their lives and are given an opportunity to tell their story.

The volunteers want to help break down any barriers to senior citizen accessibility and mobility. Thanks to the trishaw rides, there are no unavailable areas, according to the Singapore

representative of Cycling without Age, Pernille Bussone.

He explains that unlike with a wheelchair, with a trishaw, they can easily go out and about.

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How to Become a Volunteer for Cycling Without Age?

If you can drive a bike and want to help, you can become a volunteer for Cycling without Age.

Riding a trishaw isn't the same as riding a standard bike. New volunteers will first need to ride with experienced trishaw drivers so that they learn how to handle this vehicle properly.

When the training is done, the pilot mentor will accompany the volunteer on their first ride with a passenger.

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With the expansion of the organization, the Copenhagen location has included longer rides with passengers. Back in 2017, they took a 250-mile trip from Denmark to Arendal in Norway that included 20 pilots and 17 passengers.

They discovered that these rides have a positive impact on the elderly, but also on the pilots and the staff from the nursing home.

According to Kassow, they organize reunions two or three months after. He also adds that this organization appeals to different cultures due to fulfilling several aspects that are crucial for all people, regardless of their culture or country.

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It appeals to basic human kindness and encourages community and relationships among generations that include cycling whose popularity is on the rise.

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