



Main building of the Eden Senior Sanitarium Center

Photo courtesy of Eden Senior Sanitarium Center.

Eden Senior Sanitarium Center

HYUN-CHEOL JEONG

Hyun-Cheol Jeong graduated from Ajou University Graduate School of Business Administration and Sahmyook University Graduate School of Health and Welfare. He served as an army captain in South Korea for 11 years, and then worked as a teacher at Dongseong Sahmyook Middle School for 6 years. Since 2001, he has been director of Eden Senior Sanitarium Center.

The Eden Senior Sanitarium Center (ESSC) is an elderly care facility belonging to Sahmyook Welfare Foundation. The center, located at 36-52, Biryong-ro 1742beon-gil, Sudong-myeon, Namyangju-si, Gyeonggi-do, operates with 100 facility beneficiaries and 65 employees as of 2021.

Development That Led to the Establishment of the Center

The operation of the Eden Senior Sanitarium Center began with the special guidance of God. In 1998 the Ministry of Health and Welfare of Korea established a policy to establish at least one care facility for the elderly

at every city level. So Namyangju-si decided to run a sanitarium in Sudong-myeon. At first Geunhwa Welfare Foundation was selected by the city to construct and operate the sanitarium center, but the project was suspended since the foundation was on the verge of bankruptcy.

At that time, Namyangju-si noted that the Korean Union Conference (KUC) was building Eden Adventist Hospital (EAH) in Sudong-myeon. The city contacted Il-Kwon Yang, who was the director of the EAH and also in charge of its construction, and suggested that Korean Union Conference run the sanitarium center in partnership with the city.

As Il-Kwon Yang reported the suggestion to the leaders of KUC, he faced a lot of opposition during the internal review. At that time the KUC had little experience in the field of elderly welfare, which made the board members cautious in approving the decision. South Korea was also in an economically unstable status due to the 1997 financial crisis, and a countless number of companies were going bankrupt. Moreover, the ongoing Eden Adventist Hospital construction was the largest project in the history of the KUC with an investment of more than fifteen billion won. Members of the board were concerned that the operation of care facilities for the elderly would put another financial burden on the KUC.

In spite of various opposition conditions, Il-Kwon Yang persuaded the board members by emphasizing the importance of the project for the church mission, and thus to be carried out with the power of prayer, no matter how difficult the situation may be. In the effort to establish Eden Senior Sanitarium Center, he believed that the senior sanitarium was necessary in the mission to spread the love of Christ and the hope of His second coming in the modern society, and dreamed to contribute to the nation's elderly welfare work and to accomplish the mission in the field of social welfare.¹

Founding of the Center

At last the administrative committee of KUC decided to establish Eden Senior Sanitarium Center, and the KUC took over the elderly nursing home business from Namyangju-si. In particular, the KUC acquired a nursing center for senior citizens built by Namyangju City and purchased 8,000 pyeong (6.5 acres) of forest and 2,000 pyeong (1.6 acres) of land for 3.18 billion won (\$2,810,000). Namyangju-si provided 2.08 billion won, and the KUC paid 1.1 billion won. Namyangju-si also subsidized 400 million won to purchase medical equipment and equipment needed to open the center. Thus, on August 17, 2000, the ESSC, which can take care of 100 people aged 65 or older living in Namyangju-si, was officially opened.² The property rights of the building were given to the SDA church, and the salaries and operation fee were to be fully supported by the government.

History of the Center

At the time of its establishment, the motto of the ESSC was "Eden's home overflowing with love and happiness." Over the past two decades or so of history, the ESSC has done its best to realize this founding motto.³

As an auxiliary project as the center develops, Eden Senior Sanitarium Center established and operated a caregiver education center since April 2008 and established Eden Senior Home Welfare Center for the community care recipient of Long-Term Care Insurance for Senior Citizens in November of the same year.⁴ Long-term care insurance for the elderly is largely divided into home-based benefits that visit recipients' homes to provide services and long-term care facility benefits. And the main personnel are long-term care workers. Long-term care workers may acquire a long-term care provider qualification granted by the state after completing a prescribed training course at an educational institution that trains nursing-care professionals and passing the national examination.

The center also worked on community welfare projects. Physical therapy volunteer service was provided to local residents, and the staff volunteer group was organized to repair 55 houses of underprivileged households in Namyangju-si since April 2005. Because of its contributions, the center received the group sector award twice from the Gyeonggi-do governor and Namyangju-si Volunteer Center in 2008 and 2010.⁵

The ESSC expanded the building in 2012. Existing buildings did not meet the scale of the revised Elderly Care Act. In response, the center raised construction costs of 1.3 billion won (\$1,150,000) to extend the building to 1020.69 square meters. The building has additional hospital rooms, flashback treatment rooms (for dementia patients), and volunteer rooms. Some of the funds used to build the building were supported by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and Namyangju-si.⁶

The ESSC has gained fame as the most exemplary care center for the elderly. The center was selected as the best institution (Grade A) for six consecutive years from 2009 to 2015 in the National Health Insurance Service's assessment of long-term care institutions.⁷ Therefore, the ESSC became a benchmarking institution of the sanitarium centers nationwide, as it was recognized for its contributions in heightening the standards of senior sanitarium institutions by creating and distributing a sanitarium center operation manual twice.

Since 2019 the center is actively leading the promotion of senior sanitarium projects such as "telemedicine pilot projects," "skilled nursing facility pilot projects," and "pilot projects for expeditionary dental care," greatly influencing the improvement of the Long-Term Care Insurance for Senior Citizens policy.

The ESSC is currently conducting various specialized projects. Firstly, it is a company certified as "family-friendly management." The center was certified in 2013, the first welfare facility in the nation to receive certification by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, under the "Act on the Creation and Promotion of Creation of Family-Friendly Social Environment," and has been certified to date. Second, it offers auxiliary jobs as caregivers to the developmentally disabled. Since 2013 it participated as a pilot institution for a national project for the people with developmental disabilities and played a major role in changing the project to a governmental policy. Since

2013 the center has prepared auxiliary jobs for the developmentally disabled-contributing to their welfare to date. Third, it is a cooperative institution for executing community service orders. After signing an agreement with the Ministry of Justice in 2017, the center is working as a rehabilitation institution for probationers⁸

Historical Role of the Institution

On May 26, 2001, the Eden Adventist Church was officially organized within the Eden Senior Sanitarium Center. And ever since its opening, Eden Senior Sanitarium Center has been conducting its own worship services every morning, on Tuesday and Friday nights, and on Sabbath for the purpose of introducing Christ to the members of the Eden Senior Sanitarium Center.

Now Eden church has grown into a midsize church in Korea as of 2019, with a congregation of 70 taking part in services every Sabbath, reporting a tithe of 145,000,000 won (\$128,000) a year, more than a dozen baptisms every year, and providing more than 4,000,000 won (\$3,538) for relief efforts for the underprivileged in the local community every year.

What Remains to Be Done to Fulfill Its Mission

Eden Senior Sanitarium Center is facing a crisis of competition among facilities due to the increase in elderly welfare facilities since Korea entered an aging society. Above all, serious challenges are continuing to operate as a nursing facility based on the words of Ellen G. White and the New Start Health principle.

To overcome this problem, Eden Senior Sanitarium Center is carrying out a strategic task to be selected as the best nursing facility by government agencies with the goal of providing the best welfare, best care, and best service.

Eden Senior Sanitarium Center celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2020.⁹ As it has been successfully managed so far by God's grace, the center is willing to enhance itself as an institution that serves both the church and the local community.

List of Leaders

Il-Kwon Yang (April 2000-March 2003); Jong-Ki Park (April 2003-February 2005); Hyun-Cheol Jeong (March 2005-).

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NOTES

1. "A Report of EAH," Minutes of the 31st General Meeting of Korean Union Conference (Seoul: Korean Union Conference, 2000), 40.

2. Ibid.

3. *Korean Adventist News Center*, October 18, 2020.

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4. *Korean Adventist News Center*, March 13, 2008.

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6. *Korean Adventist News Center*, January 25, 2012.

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7. *Korean Adventist News Center*, December 11, 2015.

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8. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family grants certification through screening to companies and public institutions that are exemplary of family friendliness. Family friendly projects seek to create a family friendly workplace culture so that employees can harmonize work and

family life. The Eden Senior Sanitarium Center is the first and only nursing facility to receive family-friendly certification as a long-term care institution for the elderly.

9. *Korean Adventist News Center*, October 8, 2020.

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