

Conveniences Are Key for Employee Health

Initiative in Brief

Home cooked meals, healthy snacks, and a well-equipped gym are a few examples of the conveniences that Pumford Construction employees have available to support their healthy lifestyle choices. Pumford's participation in the Governor's *Healthy Workplaces* project seemed like a natural fit for the worksite whose President and Controller already believe that healthy employees are more productive, satisfied employees. They have been supporting worksite health activities for four years.

Pumford implemented a unique approach to healthy eating at work 10 years ago. Home cooked meals that incorporate healthy ingredients are available three times a week for staff, and almost half of the staff regularly dines together. Though some employees are reluctant to eat the dishes made with healthier ingredients, they do recognize the health benefits of such foods and appreciate having them available.

As part of the *Healthy Workplaces* project, employees shared that they wanted more information on nutrition. A nutritionist from the local health department provided a series of presentations, which included sessions titled: *How Nutrition and Health Fit Together – What Are We Eating and What Does It Do?* and *Carbohydrates, Protein, Fats, Vitamins, Minerals and Water—The Role of Six Nutrients*. The series of presentations were well received and provided employees with information to make healthier lifestyle choices.

A second level workout room makes treadmills, a stationary bike, free weights, etc. available for employees to use. The onsite workout room brings the gym to Pumford employees, making it both convenient and cost-effective to be physically active.

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Benefits

Noted benefits of the program are:

- Providing a healthy work environment reinforces employees' healthy choices.
- Conveniences such as an on-site workout room and healthy meals provide efficient ways for employees to be physically active and eat nutritious meals while at work.
- Cost savings for employees (gym fees, fast food, gas, time).

"If there is someone in management who can head up the project, have them do it. There is more credibility, especially with new concepts, when it is coming from a person of influence . . . if management is investing time into it, people know it is "worth" paying attention to."

Julie Steffek, Administrative Associate
Human Resources

Lessons Learned

- Schedule activities during your "slow season" to increase availability of employees to participate.
- Do your homework - there are a lot of convincing facts/statistics available to help sell your wellness program to management.
- Involve staff in decision making through surveys, feedback, etc. – learn their ideas, areas of interest, and needs.

Cost: \$60 per person
Risk Factor: Physical inactivity and poor nutrition
Impact/Reach: 15
Business/Sector: Construction