

Healthy winners



Organizations in the Rochester area are getting creative about promoting wellness, going beyond simply helping employees shed a few pounds or quit smoking.

From organizing office Olympics and growing fresh produce to boosting civic involvement and morale, employers are pushing for a well-rounded approach to healthy living.

Twelve local organizations will be honored for doing just that. They will receive the 2011 Wealth of Health Awards, presented by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, Rochester Region, and the Rochester Business Journal. The award now is in its sixth year.

The honorees were judged on employee involvement in health initiatives, the creativity of these activities to reach specific targets, sustainability of programs promoting healthy lifestyles, and measurable outcomes of these efforts. They were grouped by size, determined by the number of full-time and part-time employees.

The Wealth of Health Awards luncheon is scheduled for noon to 1:30 p.m. June 3 at the Hyatt Regency Rochester. Tesia Woodworth, director of employee health and productivity at Relph Benefit Advisors, will be the guest speaker.

Following is a closer look at each honoree's commitment to fostering health.

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Employees stay committed to healthy living



Dixon Schwabl Advertising Inc.

Wellness permeates the work culture at Dixon Schwabl Advertising Inc., a Victor-based marketing communications firm with 87 employees.

It starts at the front door, said Karen Sims, vice president of people and development, who has been with the company for nine years.

Forget a candy dish in the reception area; guests are greeted by a bowl generously filled with fresh fruit and a pitcher of iced water and fruit slices.

Windows throughout the agency can be opened to let in fresh air and encourage cross ventilation.

And that knocking sound just outside the office? It is probably just a friendly game of bocce, enjoyed by staff members on a break.

While employees benefit from wellness initiatives introduced in the office, so do their loved ones. Not only did Sims recently lose 15 pounds by using healthy cooking tips offered at work—but her husband lost four pounds, too.

“Wellness efforts are sustainable and reinforced as line-item, budgeted tactics and as part of the overall agency philosophy and strategy,” Sims said.

By offering an increasingly diverse selection of wellness options and activities, she says, Dixon Schwabl has achieved 100



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

On-site yoga instruction is available to Dixon Schwabl Advertising employees.

percent participation in wellness programs—sports teams, weight loss, healthy eating—demonstrating a significant impact on employee health and tremendous enthusiasm for these efforts among employees at the agency.

The firm is so serious about promoting healthy and engaging activities that it even has a line item titled “Fun” in its annual budget.

Activities include on-site yoga instruction and a Weight Loss for Wellness pro-

gram, with a combined staff weight reduction of nearly 300 pounds this year to date, as well as organized bocce, softball, indoor and outdoor soccer, bowling and Wii bowling athletic teams.

The agency’s health coverage plan includes dental, vision and prescription drug care; subsidized health club memberships, and coverage of acupuncture and homeopathic and chiropractic care.

Wellness programs and activities also are extended to employees’ families. The softball team’s coach and several key players are members of staffers’ families. They are encouraged to participate in free skiing and snowshoeing, followed by a cookout, on Thursday nights at Hunt Hollow Ski Club.

The company demonstrates its commitment to building a healthy community by offering “Make It Happen Day,” during which employees are given a paid day off to volunteer at a non-profit organization of their choice. Dixon Schwabl has offered an on-site defensive driving program, and routinely brings in experts to speak on topics related to stress reduction and healthy lifestyle choices.

“Fun and wellness are core values of our company, and they have a tremendous ripple effect throughout our employee community and among our family members as well,” Sims said. “Sometimes the benefits are the intangibles, such as the fun, competitive spirit within our athletic teams. Wellness initiatives offer another way for us to celebrate and to improve the lives of our individual employees and their families.”

—Debbie Waltzer

LunchByte Systems Inc.

Craig Major credits the wellness pro-



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Activities that peel employees away from their desks are central to wellness efforts at LunchByte Systems.

gramming at LunchByte Systems Inc. in Rochester with whittling down his waistline and reconnecting him with one of his first loves—lacrosse.

Having played the sport in high school and college, the quality assurance technician now officiates junior-varsity boys’ lacrosse games, and in general he feels as if he has more bounce in his step.

“It used to be (at) 3 o’clock that I’d kind

Continued on next page

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of hit the doldrums," said Major, a Penfield resident who has worked at LunchByte for 10 years.

Founded in 1989, LunchByte supports clients' efforts to plan healthy menus through its school food-service management products and activities. Caring about how its own workforce eats has turned out to be a logical extension for the company, which employs 63 staffers locally and has a presence in more than 8,400 school districts.

Activities that peel employees away from their desks have helped the company move forward. In 2010, LunchByte entered five teams in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge road race, coordinated kayaking and indoor rock-climbing excursions, and organized an indoor soccer team. Even on the job, staffers made an effort to be less sedentary by tracking their steps during two rounds last year of the Eat Well, Live Well Challenge.

Education also has helped motivate employees. The company's wellness coordinator has presented programs on heart health and goal setting, and newsletters from the Wellness Council of America and other sources are distributed regularly.

To encourage employees to give up tobacco, LunchByte offers a reimbursement of up to \$100 every six months for smoking-cessation counseling or nicotine replacement therapy. The company also provides information about support resources offered by New York State and local groups.

Participation in the wellness efforts is climbing, company research shows. Some 63 percent of employees have taken part in some aspect of the programming, and 35 percent have earned rewards such as gift cards and additional paid time off.

Responses from the company's surveys are encouraging: 56 percent of respondents say they have improved their exercise habits; 84 percent say they eat a balanced diet; and 70 percent say they deal with stress in a healthy way.

Joyce Fountain, a senior project coordinator for point-of-sale programs at LunchByte, said wellness has become a year-round priority for her. Having undergone gastric bypass surgery in 2003, the East Rochester resident now swims, gardens, walks her dog and watches what she eats.

"I always plan the meals around half portions and lots of veggies and fruits with high protein," she said.

Fountain said she is eager to see what other challenges the company's wellness coordinator has up her sleeve.

"As long as I can, I will do them," she said.

—Sheila Livadas

Pathfinder Engineers & Architects LLP

At least three times a week, Keith Ashley laces up his sneakers to run along the Genesee River with his co-workers at Pathfinder Engineers & Architects LLP in Rochester. Ashley finds that the 40-minute midday escape provides more than just a chance to break a sweat.

"I think it's a good way to build camaraderie," said Ashley, a Pathfinder designer who lives in Churchville and founded the firm's running club.

Employees who may be working on separate projects especially enjoy connecting with each other, he said.

Besides giving employees the time to get their hearts thumping, Pathfinder provides various wellness services and promotes healthy living through company policies. The employee assistance program, for instance, offers free or low-cost confidential counseling, and paid leave is available for



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Pathfinder Engineers & Architects has bike racks and shower facilities for employees at its headquarters in Corn Hill.

illness, routine medical care and emergent-care needs.

To help employees keep an eye on their waistlines, Pathfinder hosts a Weight Watchers at Work program and pays half of staffers' membership costs. Thirteen of the firm's 34 employees participated in the program's initial round and ultimately lost more than 250 pounds altogether.

Sharon Herrmann, a senior architect at Pathfinder, said joining the Weight Watchers group jump-started her fitness regimen. The Honeoye Falls resident now uses her treadmill at home on weekdays and recently started a running group that meets on weekends.

Lunchtime walks with her colleagues give Herrmann an extra jolt to tackle the second half of the workday, she says. Overall, the mother of two believes paying attention to her health has boosted her confidence on the job.

Other efforts at Pathfinder lessen the stress of finding time to exercise. The firm has bike racks at its Corn Hill headquarters for pedaling commuters and provides shower facilities for employee use.

Civic involvement makes workers feel good too, so Pathfinder fully or partially underwrites employees' registration fees for events such as the American Diabetes Association's Tour de Cure. The firm also has a Sunshine Club that coordinates employee participation in community service projects.

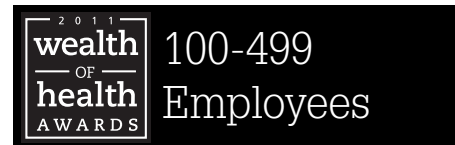
As a firm routinely involved in projects that aim to maximize energy efficiency, Pathfinder applied many green building solutions to the design of its headquarters on South Fitzhugh Street. The 9,200-square-foot building, which had its official ribbon cutting in 2009, underwent extensive renovations so that it could have improved ventilation, day lighting and high-efficiency heating and cooling.

Indoor paint, floor finishes, insulation and other materials with low content of volatile organic compounds were carefully selected to avoid poor indoor air quality. Maintaining air quality inside and out now involves using green cleaning products, contaminant-reducing floor vacuums, tea-based fertilizer and manual weeding.

The environmentally friendly measures Pathfinder took at its headquarters resulted in the firm earning gold-level Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. Herrmann said the building has paid off in another way: Since the company moved in, employee sick leave has

fallen 33 percent.

—Sheila Livadas



Lawley Insurance

"Lawley Strong: Live Well, Work Well, Be Well" is a fitting moniker for Lawley Insurance's comprehensive wellness program.

Committed to a culture that promotes health and wellness, Lawley, which operates as Lawley Andolina Verdi in Rochester, hired a full-time wellness coordinator last year to coordinate and execute programs to reach the firm's nearly 300 employees. Lawley Insurance has headquarters in Buffalo and has six other satellite offices.

The wellness coordinator, working with Lawley's human resources manager, co-facilitates a wellness committee. The group discusses programming ideas, reviews aggregate health data, builds program identity, provides associate feedback and executes the insurance company's numerous wellness programs.

Events kicked off in January via a Wellness Inc. screening program that included a 36-panel fasting blood draw, blood pressure screening and health risk assessment. The company provided a \$25 gift card incentive to all associates as a way of encouraging participation, and screening fees were waived for spouses as well.

The incentive worked, said Mary Hoffman, director of clinical and client relations for Lawley Benefits Group. Some 192 individuals—167 associates and 25 spouses—participated in the screening program. All participants received a detailed, personalized report in the mail a few days after the screening. The report provided information on each person's current health status, as well as a summary of potential health risks.

Associates have voiced their appreciation for having access to this convenient, on-site screening program, which has helped avoid emergency situations, the company said.

Other wellness initiatives at Lawley include a seven-week nutrition program with weekly food group challenges, shopping tips and taste testings. Additional programming for this year includes a walking program, stress management campaign and physical activity classes.

Results show the comprehensive program is working. A comparison of screening data



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Lawley Insurance last year hired a full-time wellness coordinator who helps lead a committee focused on employee health.



Photo courtesy of LeChase

People who work at LeChase Construction enjoy cookouts and other healthy social activities year-round.

in December 2009 with data collected in January shows that 67.9 percent of participants report a positive lifestyle change, with increases in breakfast consumption, flu vaccine compliance and self-exam compliance. Desired reductions were noted in tobacco use and body-mass index measurements.

"Our company's wellness program is consistent with our corporate culture goal of taking care of our employees," Hoffman said. "We care about their well-being 24/7—not just at work. Our wellness committee has worked hard to increase employee engagement, and our efforts have paid off. ... The high engagement rate is associated with management support, a programming budget, internal talent that can devote time to programming and our own employees for responding to a survey with their programming interests."

—Debbie Waltzer

LeChase Construction Services LLC

Employees at LeChase Construction Services LLC are skilled at combining activities that improve their physical and emotional wellness with just plain fun.

Take the company's Health & Wellness Champion of the Year Award, for example. The construction company's newest incentive is designed to recognize individual wellness activities that go above and beyond the norm.

Staff members nominate their fellow employees for the award, and the top three winners are randomly selected from all names submitted. First place in 2010 was awarded to an individual who started an at-home exercise program that resulted in significant health improvements. The second-place winner was a staff member who lost more than 50 pounds while enrolled in LeChase's Weight Watchers program. And third place was awarded to an employee who successfully prepped for months to compete in—and complete—the Boston Marathon.

LeChase's health fairs also provide an incentive for employees to pay attention to their health needs and address any concerns. Screenings are offered for blood pressure, body mass index, lipid profiles and glucose levels. Events such as American Red Cross blood drives, flu shot clinics and skin screenings also are offered.

Such activities are extremely helpful to staff members, said Rita French, of-

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office manager for LeChase and health and wellness coordinator for the firm, which employs nearly 450 people.

"As a result of our most recent skin screening clinic, three employees were referred to follow-up appointments with dermatologists due to some concerning discoveries made during the clinic," said French, who coordinates most of the company's wellness activities with help from a committee. "In addition, one staff member provided feedback that the information he gleaned during our glucose and blood pressure screenings helped save his life."

French and a committee coordinate most of the company's wellness activities.

LeChase employees that participate in wellness activities can earn points and win time off from work via the firm's Health & Wellness Days Off program; in 2010, a total of 112 days were awarded. Also popular among staff members are monthly lunch-time education sessions. Launched in 2007, the programs feature outside speakers who address areas of interest including smoking cessation, ergonomic health, benefits of vitamins, healthy cooking tips, diabetes management, fire safety, stress reduction tips, an introduction to yoga and more.

Some 30.5 percent of eligible employees participated in the Excellus Healthy Rewards program in 2010 and earned a total of \$38,179 in dividends.

"We expect an even higher percentage of participation and earnings for 2011," French said.

LeChase promotes social health activities all year, including an annual ski and snow-tubing event, laser tag, a theater outing and at-work healthy cookout and baseball games. Families are included in wellness activities, and more than 200 people last fall participated in the annual family fun trip to a pumpkin patch.

Overall, health and wellness activities at LeChase yield numerous benefits, French said.

"We receive a lot of positive feedback from employees," she said. "Health and wellness programs are great morale boosters for staff members, and our planning committee receives tremendous support from upper management at our company."

—Debbie Waltzer

Rochester Midland Corp.

Just as Rochester Midland Corp.'s 430 employees care about providing good products for food sanitation, institutional cleaning and personal use, they also care about their own health and that of their co-workers and families.

That is the mission collectively embraced by the company's 13-member wellness team, managed by Wendi Thompson-Bellave, corporate manager of benefits and wellness.

"It is so important to have CEO support of wellness initiatives and a committed team of people putting it all together," Thompson-Bellave said. "Without a team, nothing works."

In fact, Rochester Midland's wellness program works extremely well. It was launched in 2010 with a free biometric screening program and online health risk assessment for all employees, and the data collected helped in the design of needed programs.

The company's wellness efforts have many aspects, such as walking programs, tips for reducing stress, an Iron Chef competition and chair massages. In addition, when corporate sites throughout the U.S. and Canada adopted a tobacco-free policy in November 2010, the wellness team offered My Smoke Free Future, a program



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Rochester Midland employees can earn days off or cash with wellness activities.

designed by the Mayo Clinic to help people who want to quit smoking.

Employees companywide have shown great creativity in devising healthy activities. One employee organized an "office Olympics" at her site. Another coordinated soccer games during employee breaks. A work group in Canada organized a 5k walk/run day, and in California, employees erected a basketball hoop for lunchtime exercise.

To encourage employees to participate in wellness efforts, Rochester Midland launched a Worry Free Day. Rochester Midland can earn a gold star for participating in each wellness activity, and once they accumulate five gold stars, they can enjoy a paid day off from work or receive \$100.

In 2010, roughly 73 percent of employees participated in at least one wellness activity. Also, the number of employees at risk because of elevated blood sugar has dropped from 47 percent in 2010 to 25.9 percent in 2011. The population of tobacco users among the employees decreased during the same period from 18.4 percent to 14.6 percent.

In addition, the participation rate for completing a health risk assessment increased from 61 percent during 2010 to 80 percent this year. During the same period, Rochester Midland experienced a 4.1 percent decrease in the number of employees at higher risk of health problems.

"We're very pleased with the results of our wellness programs to date," Thompson-Bellave said. "Our employees are extremely engaged in the process, and they fully understand how wellness activities are beneficial to them and their loved ones. Our goal is to provide tools and resources to promote healthy lifestyles. Moreover, hopefully, the actions taken today will positively affect employees' health premiums in the future."

—Debbie Waltzer



ESL Federal Credit Union

A significant number of ESL Federal Credit Union's nearly 630 employees in the Rochester area have stopped smoking. They have the company's Be Well @ ESL health and wellness program to thank for that.

With an eye toward minimizing and eventually eradicating the dangerous habit of smoking among its staffers, ESL—at its Chestnut Street corporate headquar-

ters and its 19 branch offices—instituted a smoke-free workplace in January 2010. Simultaneously, the company rolled out a comprehensive smoking cessation program, via the Great American Smokeout, to help employees adjust to this transition.

As a result, the share of employees who smoke has dropped to 6 percent. And of those remaining smokers, 42 percent have expressed a desire to change their behavior within the next six months.

This is just one example of how the company's comprehensive Be Well @ ESL program has netted effective results. The program—designed to improve employees' overall health through an emphasis on healthy habits including exercise, nutrition and education—is spearheaded by a committed group of 15 wellness champions. On an ongoing basis, these individuals respond to employee feedback and continue to offer expanded wellness opportunities.

For example, ESL's new corporate headquarters features a fully equipped fitness center, a dedicated wellness room and a locker room with showers. Lunch-time and after-work fitness activities include Pilates and Zumba.

In addition, an annual health and wellness fair offers staff members the opportunity to have free screenings of blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and vision, along with free chair massages and information from more than two dozen vendors addressing topics such as physical activity, nutrition and mental health.

ESL also offers an annual health risk assessment, a self-care management workshop series, onsite Weight Watchers programs, cooking demonstrations and staircase-climbing challenges.

In 2010, some 44 percent of employees participated in Eat Well, Live Well and Step Up challenges. Also, 37 percent attended the company's annual health and



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

ESL Federal Credit Union's downtown headquarters has a fully equipped fitness center, wellness room and locker rooms with showers.

wellness fair, while 38 percent took at least one fitness class. The participation rate in the on-site Weight Watchers program doubled last year, and participants lost a total of 634 pounds.

Positive feedback from employees is heartwarming for ESL's management team, including Francine Patella Ryan, public affairs manager.

"Wellness is important to ESL because it is in line with our company's core value of caring about our people," she said. "Wellness enhances the overall employee exper-

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ience and lets our staff members know just how much we value them.”

—Debbie Waltzer

PathStone Corp.

One of the most successful initiatives of PathStone Corp. gives employees \$500 in a cafeteria plan in exchange for participating in biometrics screening and taking an online survey.

The biometrics screening covers all the bases, including lipids, glucose and obesity, and together with the health risk assessment, it is critical in maintaining and improving the health of PathStone’s employees. In addition, the information obtained through the assessment is used to tailor future wellness programs.

“If there are a lot of employees with high blood pressure, we’ll put together a blood pressure program; if there are many employees who are overweight, we’ll create a weight-loss program,” said Lisa Zhu, senior vice president of human resources.

The online health risk assessment, affiliated with the Mayo Clinic, tracks several factors, including employee health perceptions, sleep quality, medical conditions, medications, risk factors and readiness levels. Combined with the biometrics screening, the health risk assessment helps mitigate medical costs, too.

“We had one gentleman who during the course of the biometrics screening found out his blood pressure was dangerously high. He went straight to his doctor and was treated. Who knows what could have happened without the screening?” Zhu said.

PathStone’s wellness effort extends to its offices in seven states and Puerto Ri-

co. The wellness committee conducts its regular meetings by phone over lunch, so members in all time zones can participate. When they started their work, the committee members conducted an employee survey to find out which programs would be most successful. Most recently, the committee began “The Biggest Winner,” an employee weight-loss program modeled after television’s “The Biggest Loser.”

One very popular initiative at PathStone is the Calendar Program. Employees receive points for completing wellness-related goals.

“An employee can get points for drink-

ing eight glasses of water, getting a flu shot, or losing weight,” Zhu said.

At the end of each quarter, the points are tallied and deposited as money in employees’ flexible spending accounts.

PathStone’s programs have been successful. In 2010, 70 percent of the 438 regular employees received the \$500 incentive for completing both the biometrics screening and health risk assessment. Sixty-eight employees completed just one of the two components, and only 62 employees failed to complete either.

The programs have benefited the non-profit’s bottom line as well. In analyzing the data collected from the health risk assessment, PathStone found that the average lifestyle risks per employee decreased by 4.6 percent.

More good news: The percentage of PathStone employees at risk from poor emotional health, lack of exercise and improper nutrition has decreased over the last two years. And PathStone is trending lower than the industry average in terms of blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity and tobacco use.

PathStone has placed employee health management among the 10 items on its corporate strategic agenda. This ensures that employee wellness will remain as high a priority as it is today. The wellness committee continues to meet regularly to make sure wellness programs are fresh and interesting and keep employees motivated to maintain or improve their health.

—Laura Telford



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Employee health management is one of the top 10 items on PathStone’s corporate strategic agenda.



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

The annual Health Heroes Awards recognize Thompson Health employees who make major improvements in their health and lifestyle.

One big change that has affected most of Thompson’s 1,373 employees is the availability of more healthy choices in the cafeteria. The Associate Wellness Cafeteria Subcommittee has been behind these changes, offering fresh vegetables, an expanded salad bar, a yogurt bar with fresh fruit, and whole-grain breads for sandwiches.

In 2010, the subcommittee sponsored the third annual Healthy Me Day, an on-site internal health fair. Associates and their spouses or domestic partners can have their blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels tested, be screened for cancer and obtain information about healthy eating, weight management and disease prevention. As a result of the screenings at the Healthy Me Day, more than 200 Thompson associates who had abnormal results obtained follow-up care.

“The goal of the wellness programs is to lower the risk levels of staff members,” Jacques said.

Other on-site programs include Jazzerise and Zumba classes, daily stretch breaks to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury, and two weight-loss programs, Weight Watchers and Weight Loss for Wellness. Departmental weight-loss goals have yielded huge results. In one year, 150 associates lost a combined total of 1,500 pounds.

Thompson’s initiatives do not stop there; organizers are already coming up with ideas for future wellness programs. The plan is to offer a stress management challenge this year, which will include a fitness challenge, a healthy eating chal-

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allenge and a relaxation challenge, among other components. Thompson also has made a commitment to hold Healthy Me Day fairs in years to come so that employees can track their progress and continue to receive helpful information each year.

"Once exercise, healthy eating and regular checkups are incorporated into associates' daily lives, it becomes easier to sustain healthy behavior," Jacques said.

—Laura Telford



CooperVision Inc.

It pays to move at CooperVision Inc., a company that manufactures soft contact lenses.

In 2010, Henrietta employee David Jones logged more than 23 million steps—as part of CooperVision's global wellness program, through which employees are encouraged to walk as much as possible and keep track of their progress with a pedometer.

His achievements were acknowledged at a celebratory luncheon during which CooperVision CEO Bob Weiss gave Jones a travel voucher worth \$5,000.

The company's global wellness program is just one initiative that underscores the organization's mission to "engage employees and their families to live healthier lifestyles, decrease the risk of disease and enhance their quality of life," said Janice Jones, director of human resources.

Other programs, she said, include annual health fairs with biometric screenings, consultations by diet and nutrition experts, yoga classes, chair massages, a farmer's market and more. In addition, more than half of the company's 1,000 employees in the Rochester area have completed confidential health risk assessments.

Moreover, employees have opportunities to get fit both at work and on their own time. The company's Fairport facility now has a gym with a trainer on staff. The Henrietta facility features an indoor walking route as well as vending machines with healthier food choices. Outside of work, employees are encouraged to become physically active and have fun at the same time through organized volleyball, bicycling and bowling activities.

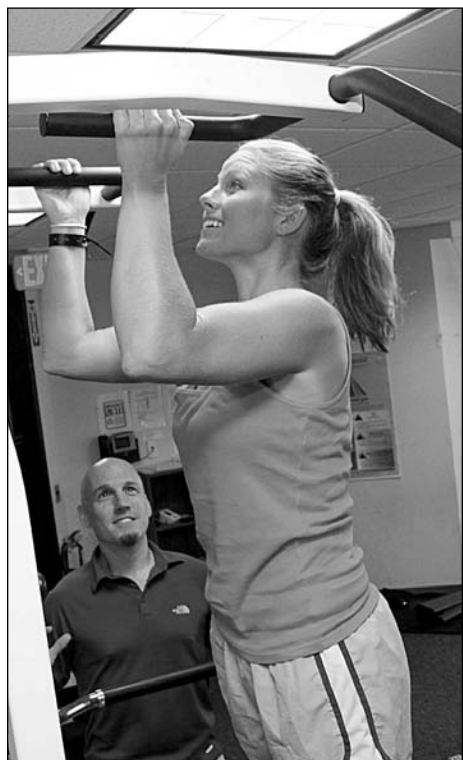


Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

CooperVision's global wellness program has helped employees find new physical and emotional strength, organizers say.

Finally, a network of volunteer wellness champions at CooperVision sites throughout the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico and the United Kingdom publishes a newsletter that highlights wellness program success stories, testimonials and activities around the globe.

Locally, a group of roughly 15 wellness champions meets monthly to discuss activities. A recent agenda was packed with items, Jones said, including upcoming presentations by weight-loss experts, a debriefing of employee participants in an American Heart Association fundraising walk, reports on informational seminars about topics including financial wellness and sound sleep suggestions, and an update on company participation in an upcoming walk to benefit juvenile diabetes research.

Three local employees' success stories have been particularly inspiring to their co-workers. Through determination and hard work, one employee reduced his weight from 378 pounds to 220 pounds last year and lowered his blood pressure significantly. Another staffer, diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure, worked with the on-site trainer in Fairport to reduce her weight significantly. A third employee was able to lower her weight from 369 pounds to 196 pounds by introducing numerous healthy diet and exercise choices in her life; in fact, she no longer needs high blood pressure medicine or insulin shots.

Jones applauds these success stories and extols the virtues of a comprehensive wellness program.

"When employees are energetic and physically and emotionally engaged, they perform at top productivity levels on the job. Then, when they return home, they have extra energy for their life outside of CooperVision, too—so it's really a win-win situation all around."

—Debbie Waltzer

Eastman Kodak Co.

Two months ago, Eastman Kodak Co. employee Catherine DeConinck entered a triathlon for the first time. Though disappointed with her performance in the water, the Spencerport resident felt proud to finish the grueling competition on the first try.

DeConinck, an information systems user provisioning technician at Kodak, might not have attempted a triathlon if she had not registered for exercise classes at Kodak Park in 1985. She now practices yoga and Pilates at one of the company's fitness centers and is considering adding kickboxing to her fitness regimen.

When DeConinck heads out to exercise at 5 a.m. on weekdays, she is not alone: Roughly 6,000 local Kodak employees have free access to three fitness centers and seven satellite fitness rooms. The larger facilities offer a variety of cardiovascular and strength-training equipment and are staffed by exercise physiologists who provide free consultations.

Some 1,550 Kodak employees now are registered at the facilities, and membership has increased 48 percent since 2009, despite a 15 percent reduction in the company's employee base.

How staffers eat on the job also matters at Kodak, said Fran Vankouwenberg, a contract manager who belongs to the company's Partners for Health wellness team. Kodak staffers meet monthly with the internal food service to monitor the availability of healthy options in the cafes, in vending machines and on catering menus, and signs and online resources spell out the nutritional values of various options.

Preventive health care is another focus at the company. To that end, Kodak covers all annual physicals, cholesterol tests, prostate screenings, mammograms, immunizations and colonoscopies. Employ-



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Access to healthy food during the work day is a priority at Eastman Kodak Co.

ees also receive reminders to stay current with routine health care.

Online tools ranging from health-risk assessments to exercise and meal planners help employees manage their health. The company also provides a digital messaging center, where employees can ask questions and get feedback from health coaches.

For instances that require traditional case management and more guidance, Kodak offers access to registered nurse case managers. Acting as personal health care advocates, they help individuals reach wellness goals and make informed decisions about health care.

To empower employees with even more information, Kodak holds health fairs staffed by local health and fitness organizations and an employee assistance program vendor. Attendees get free flu shots, healthy snacks and access to a farmers market that sells produce at a discount.

Wellness challenges also have found their niche at Kodak. The Eat Well, Live Well Challenge in the spring of 2010 attracted 500 participants, who were eligible for weekly prizes recognizing individual and team achievements.

Vankouwenberg, a Greece resident who has worked for Kodak for 37 years, said she is proud that her employer takes wellness programming seriously. She is doing her part by wearing a pedometer and eating more fruits and vegetables as a participant in this year's Eat Well, Live Well Challenge. Jumping into group exercise may be next, she adds.

—Sheila Livadas

Rochester Institute of Technology

Rochester Institute of Technology takes a creative approach to wellness, having implemented programs focused on healthy, sustainable living.

The Better Me program, launched in 2007, emphasizes a socio-ecological approach to encourage health and wellness. In addition to wellness coaching, personal training and employee fitness classes, Better Me has partnered with external sources to provide some unique benefits.

Now in its third growing season, the RIT Community Garden is thriving, with the help of faculty, staff, students and alumni. The garden is split into plots, each with a specific type of crop and a team of members dedicated to its care. One plot may

have raised beds full of strawberry plants, broccoli and carrots, while another may be growing annual or perennial flowers. At the end of each growing season, the produce is distributed evenly among Community Garden members.

But the harvests are not just for personal use. Last year, the Community Garden donated 300 pounds of produce to FoodLink Inc. Residents of RIT's Rivers Run Active Adult Community also are involved in the Community Garden, as are children at Margaret's House, RIT's on-site day care center. There a sense of multi-generational community involvement in the garden and the idea of nurturing future generations are prevalent.

"Children have a tendency to eat what they grow, so we are helping to instill healthy behaviors early on in their lives," said Midge Berfield, manager of employee health and wellness at RIT.

The institution has partnered with several local farmers to organize a weekly on-campus farmers market, which runs for six to seven weeks each fall. The idea of the farmers market, now in its fourth year, is to provide faculty, staff and students with easy access to healthy fruits and vegetables. But the program also benefits the farmers.

"The market doesn't open until the fall quarter," Berfield said, "when we have full representation on campus. We want both the vendors and the shoppers to have a positive experience."

The paying participants in RIT's Good Food Collective also receive a weekly delivery of local, fresh produce for 18 weeks. A half share, \$285, includes four to 10 different types of fruits and vegetables each week, and a full share, \$510, includes seven to 14. This type of program, called community-supported agriculture, is nothing new, but by partnering with the Good Food Collective, RIT has made participation easy, scheduling produce drop-offs on campus every Friday afternoon.

Overall, the wellness initiatives at RIT have been effective. Wellness coaching was responsible for more than 100 employees losing weight, more than 200 employees lowering their blood pressure and 169 employees increasing their exercise.

Regarding the wellness of its employees, RIT is keeping an eye to the future.

"Sustainability is directly linked to the cultural, environmental and policy changes we achieve," Berfield reported. "It's important to have a supportive environment to facilitate permanent behavior change."

—Laura Telford



Photo courtesy of A. Sue Weisler/RIT

Massage is one way staffers of Rochester Institute of Technology pursue a healthy lifestyle.



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