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DESERT CITIES AND UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF RIVERSIDE COUNTY IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY

Healthy Workplaces Receive Recognition at Annual Workplace Wellness Awards



DOHC HARC Wellness Award winner



MSA Consulting HARC Wellness Award winner

BY STAFF REPORTS

Local workplaces who prioritize health and wellness were recently recognized at the second annual Coachella Valley Workplace Wellness Awards, presented by HARC. HARC (Health Assessment and Research for Communities) is a local nonprofit that provides research and evaluation services related to health, wellness, and quality of life in the Inland Empire.

The concept for the Wellness Awards came from HARC's CEO, Dr. Jenna LeComte-Hinely, who adamantly believes that healthy work environments are a key

component of a healthy community. Dr. LeComte-Hinely stated that "With many working adults spending the majority of their waking hours at work, it's critical that we make wellness at workplace a topic of conversation. Workplace wellness programs not only benefit the individual employee, but also the community, and the organization's bottom line. Healthy employees are more productive and less absent, and have fewer injuries, resulting in fewer worker's compensation claims. In some ways, the benefits of a healthy workplace are immeasurable."

HARC recognized winners in three subcategories (Nutrition/Fitness/Health Screenings, Safety/Ergonomics, and Mental Health/Well-Being) as well as overall grand prize winners who excelled in all three subcategories.

MSA Consulting, Inc. was the grand prize winner among small organizations (fewer than 100 employees). Some of MSA's exemplary practices include health lunch alternatives, an in-office gym, regular safety trainings, standing desk options, flexible schedules, and mentorship pro-

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grams. As a result, they have high employee morale and low absenteeism, and their turnover rate is very low.

For the second year in a row, Desert Oasis Healthcare/Family Hospice Care (DOHC/FHC) was the grand prize winner among large organizations (over 101 employees). DOHC/FHC provides a wide variety of health and wellness programs for employees, including healthy meals, smoking cessation classes, walking clubs and flu shots. They have an active safety committee and provide training to diffuse difficult situations in a non-violent manner, and offer stress management courses and an employee assistance program.

Organizations representing a wide range of industries across the Coachella Valley applied for the awards. In addition to the two grand prize winners, subcategory awards were handed out to both small employers and large employers. These winners include:

Nutrition, Fitness, Health Screenings: United Way of the Desert (small organization); Coachella Valley Water District (large organization)

Safety and Ergonomics: Friends of the Desert Mountains (small organization); Desert Arc (large organization)

Mental Health and Well-being: CVEP (small organization); Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort and Spa (large organization)

The aim of the awards is to highlight the efforts of exemplary workplaces that prioritize employee health and well-being, share best practices, and to inspire others to start similar initiatives. HARC views workplace wellness as a critical component of community health in our Valley. HARC looks forward to hosting the third annual Coachella Valley Workplace Wellness Awards in June of 2018.

The awards luncheon was made memorable by the fabulous and charming Master of Ceremonies, Janet Zappala of KMIR-KPSE. The event was made possible by the event's sponsors, including Alpha Care, College of the Desert, Desert AIDS Project, Regional Access Project Foundation, Spotlight 29 Casino/Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, California State University San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus, and Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo. **TPR**

Auen Foundation sponsors dog puppies in training

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Since 1972, Guide Dogs of the Desert has graduated its program, all accredited by the International Guide breeds and has relationships with breeders of Labrador Standard Poodles, and some German Shepherds.

"By carefully maintaining a specific pedigree, we have highly qualified dogs that can truly enhance a person's life," said Auen, Director of Guide Dogs of the Desert.

"It was wonderful to see how these puppies are growing up. It's a way that has a high success rate," said Auen. "We are excited to watch our Katie and Sandy graduate with their owners that only these specially-trained dogs can provide. It's happy to be a part of this process."

Guide Dogs of the Desert is located at 60735 D information visit guidedogsofthedesert.org or call (760

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