

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **FIVE MINNESOTA COMPANIES RECEIVE PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE AWARD**

### **Program Rewards Employers for Creating Workplaces That Foster Employee Health and Well-being While Enhancing Organizational Performance**

Minneapolis, Minnesota – Five organizations received a Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award from the Minnesota Psychological Association. Award recipients include Orion Associates, Beehive PR, Loft Literary Center, Women in Construction Training Program, and Immanuel St. Joseph's – Mayo Health System.

"In this time of high job stress and increasing demands on employees, these exemplary workplaces have made it a priority to create environments that are sensitive to the health and well-being of their workers," says Dr. Michael Brunner. "By rewarding these organizations for their efforts, we hope others will take notice and implement similar programs in their workplaces."

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award was created to recognize organizations that understand the link between employee health and well-being and organizational performance, and have implemented a variety of workplace practices in an active effort to create a positive work environment.

Each applicant was judged on criteria including: employee involvement; health and safety; employee growth and development; work-life balance; and employee recognition.

**Orion Associates** was awarded for employee involvement with its "River of Hope" project. With this project, employees are paid their salaries while they do volunteer work in New Orleans, in which employees contribute through fund raising, loading a semi tractor trailer with relief supplies, and making 10 trips to the disaster area to contribute labor. Not only did the employees serve this community, but this activity built a stronger work team at Orion. This effort led to the creation of a volunteer non-profit company called "Headwaters," with a mission to provide volunteers in the community whenever and wherever necessary. Orion Associates provides management services, such as finance, HR, and Training to many organizations, but particularly to Human Services companies serving people with disabilities. The company was founded on the core principle of service to others, both to their clients and to their community.

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**Beehive PR** was awarded for its extensive employee involvement in the company. Employee input drives many important business decisions, including the company name, location and design of the workspace, and benefits offered to the employees. Most important, all staff participate in the annual, offsite strategic planning meeting. The office is closed for the day and employees participate in decisions about where the company will focus its efforts for the upcoming year. Progress toward financial goals is communicated to all employees. Beehive PR was also recognized for its success in creating an organization dedicated to maintaining work-life balance for all employees. The company works hard to maintain a sane work place in a hectic industry. Beehive PR is a public relations company in St. Paul representing a variety of companies in retail, financial services, manufacturing, healthcare, and other areas.

**Loft Literary Center** was awarded for its flexible work schedules. Staff choose to work a 3-, 4-, or 5-day work week, starting as early as 8:00 am or even at 11:00 or 1:00 pm. Employees can telecommute and no staff member is required to be in the office during the same hours every day. Work is dictated by the calendar of Loft events, independent of the clock. Thus, employees create their personal work-life balance, resulting in high morale and greater loyalty. Employees have over 110 years of Loft experience in a staff of 18. The Loft is the nation's largest literary center, offering programs and services for readers and writers, such as writing classes, readings, and writing competitions.

**Women in Construction Training Program** was awarded for its training program, which provides enormous opportunities for unskilled individuals to earn a living wage in the construction trade. Since 2000, skilled workers mentor new, unskilled employees, who later in turn become mentors. In addition to trade skills, employees gain new confidence as they learn new skills and become crew leaders at job sites. WIC was also recognized for its practices which support work-life balance. Employees are given flexible work schedules, help with transportation, and interest free loans. Three years ago, for example, WIC helped develop 4 units of Employers-Assisted Condos for income eligible employees. The women assisted in developing their own units, helped with fundraising, and invested sweat equity in building the condo. As a result, employee turnover is low: 40% of its 20 employees have been with WIC since it started, and 47% have been with WIC more than 4 years. WIC is a construction company located in Duluth. Its mission is to provide opportunities for unskilled, low-income individuals to work in the construction trade.

**Immanuel St. Joseph's - Mayo Health System** was awarded for its "Crucial Conversation" training program, which fosters employee involvement and employee growth and development. This program began in 2004 and every employee is encouraged to complete an intensive 12-hour course on respectful communication that invite dialogue and safe communication. The intent of the program is to strengthen teams, helping staff complete professional/personal goals, and promote psychological health. About 600 employees have completed the training program. In assessing the effectiveness of this program, ISH noted that the Joint Commission cites communication

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## **Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards**

as the most consistent, root cause of safety events in hospitals. Since the adoption of Crucial Conversations in December 2006, communication as a causal factor in these safety events has dramatically dropped, contributing to a safer environment for patients. ISJ is located in Mankato and employs 2300 full and part time employees.

According to a 2004 poll by the American Psychological Association, two-thirds of both men and women say work has a significant impact on their stress level, and one in four has missed work because of stress.

The awards will be handed out on April 25, 2008, during the Minnesota Psychological Association Convention at the Minneapolis Airport Marriott.

For more information about the Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award, which is supported by the American Psychological Association, please contact Dr. Jack O'Regan, Minnesota Psychological Association at 612-414-7495 or [joregan@argosy.edu](mailto:joregan@argosy.edu).

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