

Carlson Craft Helps Employees Stop Smoking; Offers QUITPLAN at Work.

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NORTH MANKATO — If you're a smoker, you know that quitting can be one of the most difficult things you'll ever tackle. Carlson Craft management saw some of its employees struggling and decided to step in and help.

Carlson Craft recently applied for the QUITPLAN at Work grant through Park Nicollet Health Services, which is serviced by ClearWay Minnesota, a non-profit organization that manages the tobacco settlement money for Minnesota. In early 2008 Carlson Craft partnered with local medical provider, Immanuel St. Joseph's Hospital, to bring QUITPLAN Services to the employees of Carlson Craft.

Chris Dylla, Director of Human Resources at Carlson Craft and QUITPLAN Program Coordinator, says the company knows that supporting individuals in quitting smoking will have many positive effects on both a personal and business level. "We have a strong company culture that centers on our people," says Dylla. "Bringing this opportunity into our business was the right thing to do — for us AND for them."

The QUITPLAN at Work Program is offered to companies and their employees at no charge. It's designed to help smokers stop smoking by providing each participant with a personal plan to stop tobacco use, detailed information about nicotine replacement therapy, tools needed to learn to stop smoking, five one-hour sessions of group-led support by a trained professional, and connection to additional resources.

Carlson Craft employees were notified of the QUITPLAN at Work program through discussions, posters and pay check notices. Twenty-three employees signed up to make the lifestyle change. One employee's spouse also signed up and was welcomed into the program (research suggests that when both spouses participate in programs like these there is stronger support and commitment to quit).

Carlson Craft management provided coaching and support to employees involved in the program. Employees were also paid for the time they spent in these sessions.

As a result, says Dylla, the employees who participated in the program are now "more productive, more focused and happier at work."

Carlson Craft will continue to educate and invest in their employees. Barb Kaus, General Manager, says that employees have approached her and thanked her for "making a difference in their lives." Carlson Craft plans to seek another grant to offer the program again to employees who have shown interest. Carlson Craft is one of only a few companies in the Greater Mankato Area to offer the QUITPLAN at Work program.

Carlson Craft continues to be the nation's premier provider of customized products for celebrating and communicating life events through a nationwide network of dealers. Carlson Craft has over 1,000 team members and is located in North Mankato, MN. More information about Carlson Craft can be found at www.carlsoncraft.com.

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