

Healthy Living

Workplaces can make it easier!

Making healthy choices should be easy. And because most of us spend hours at work, a growing number of employers are incorporating opportunities for healthy living into the work day. Hotel Dieu Hospital is one such workplace with its theft-proof bike lockers, cafeteria fare options, walking group, and healthy living sessions.

Hotel Dieu Hospital installed bike lockers in May 2008 to make it easier for staff to cycle to work. A step beyond bike racks (which are also available), the outdoor metal lockers not only prevent theft they also protect bicycles from the elements.

“We’re interested in promoting health and fitness,” said Diane Lappan who works in the hospital’s finance department, “and we also recognize that parking is an issue in this area. The lockers remove some of the barriers that prevent staff from cycling to work. And we’ve gotten great feedback from staff who find the lockers really convenient.”

Each of the 20 lockers is specifically designed to store a single bicycle (along with a helmet and other cycle gear) and is available to staff to rent year round. “Staff are able to use the lockers to store their bikes over the winter when they’re not using them,” said Diane.

Hotel Dieu Hospital also has healthy eating covered: its Brockview Cafe is one of KFL&A Public Health’s Eat Smart! cafeterias. The Eat Smart! Award of Excellence is handed out to workplace cafeterias that meet exceptional standards in nutrition and food safety—and that are in compliance with the Smoke-free Ontario Act.

For its part, Hotel Dieu Hospital’s Wellness Committee works hard to give staff lots of opportunities for healthy living. One member of the committee started leading a walking group in the fall—and due to its success they plan on continuing on with the walking group in the spring. “Along with the walking group we have a gym facility on site, and we offer bi-monthly lunch and learn sessions where staff can come out to learn more about different topics related to wellness,” said Chantal Pullen, co-chair of the Hotel Dieu Hospital Wellness Committee. KFL&A Public Health’s Motiv8 workplace series, consisting of five

one hour sessions focusing on behaviour change, physical activity and nutrition was one of the monthly featured topics in 2009 and a tai chi session is planned for the New Year.

“Also on the wellness agenda is a weekly Change for You meeting where staff hoping to lose excess pounds can meet for support and education. There will be weekly weigh-ins and we’ll share strategies and resources” said Chantal.

“Hotel Dieu Hospital is a great example for other workplaces who want to set up their environments for success,” said Debra Vine, Public Health Nurse. “KFL&A Public Health takes an active role in promoting employee health and well-being through its Workplace Wellness Program. Workplace wellness is good for business and leads to improved morale, decreased sick time, and increased productivity.”

KFL&A Public Health’s Workplace Wellness program promotes Motiv8, “we help workplaces develop nutrition and physical activity health plans,” said Debra. “This assists workplaces to develop supportive physical environments that promote healthy lifestyles such as access to bike racks, shower facilities, and well-equipped lunch rooms.”

If your workplace would like assistance, contact the KFL&A Public Health Living Well Line at 613-549-1232, ext. 1180.



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