

TEG Client Connection

- HR News and Best Practices for our Valued Clients

February 2012 Volume 3, Issue 1

Client Spotlight

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Madison (RMHC-Madison) is this month's TEG Spotlight Client! RMHC-Madison is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to advancing the well-being and health of children. Their programs are grassroots-driven to enable the Charity to offer help where children need it most – right in our own communities. RMHC-Madison makes an immediate, positive impact on children's lives through two core programs: the Ronald McDonald House® and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile®.

Helping kids heal. They provide a “home away from home” for families whose children (18 and under) are undergoing treatment at Madison area health care facilities. The House allows families to stay together during an often very difficult time.

Keeping kids healthy. Through the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, they provide free dental services in south central Wisconsin and free medical and dental services in northern Illinois. Over the past four years, the Care Mobile has served more than 5,800 children who had no access to medical or dental services.

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® is a 40-foot, 26,000-pound mobile unit specifically designed for the delivery of pediatric health care. It houses two patient exam rooms and a sterilization area.

This program is intended for children who would otherwise not be able to obtain medical or dental care. A child is considered eligible if they qualify for Medicaid, BadgerCare (Wisconsin) or KidCare (Illinois), or if they have no insurance and cannot afford to pay for health services. Since 2003, they've treated almost 11,000 children aboard the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile.

Along with the two core programs, RMHC-Madison has implemented several additional programs for families utilizing their facilities to help make their stay in Madison as comfortable as possible.

Thank you Ronald McDonald House Charities of Madison for choosing The Employer Group!



RONALD MCDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES
MADISON

Legal News

Payroll Tax Holiday Uncertainty Continues

Did you know that The Employer Group monitors and tracks laws and pending legislation which may impact its clients and employees? In fact, The Employer Group has been closely watching the controversy surrounding the Payroll Tax Holiday for more than a year. Many of you may be familiar with the Payroll Tax Holiday. If however, this is an issue that has not been on your radar, here is a refresher:

The Payroll Tax Holiday was first introduced in 2010 in an effort to put more money in employees' pockets in hopes this would increase spending and boost the economy. Normally, each employee pays 6.2% of the first \$106,800 in wages to Social Security. Employers match this amount and both employee and employer pay 1.45% into Medicare. The Payroll Tax Holiday, which was enacted by Congress at the end of 2010 for the 2011 year, reduced the amount paid in by employees by 2%, so that the employee contribution to Social Security was 4.2% for 2011. Employer contributions to Social Security remained the same and the amount that both pay into Medicare was unchanged.

As the 2011 year drew to a close, there was much controversy surrounding an extension of this Payroll Tax Holiday. While both political parties were in favor of extending the Payroll Tax Holiday, they could not agree on a way to pay for it. Democrats wanted to create a tax on those who make more than \$1,000,000 a year to pay for the tax cut; while Republicans wanted to reduce salaries and benefits of federal employees, and Medicare benefits of certain individuals of higher income. Ultimately, the parties could not agree on a way to pay for the cut, but did decide to temporarily extend the tax cut until a decision on the way in which to pay for the Payroll Tax Holiday which suited both parties, could be reached. On December 23, 2011 the IRS released a bulletin stating that the Payroll Tax Holiday had been extended by Congress until the end of February 2012.

Once again, Congress is engaged in debate over the Payroll Tax Holiday. While it seems that both parties are again in favor of extending the tax cut through the end of 2012, they still cannot agree on the way in which to pay for it. If Congress cannot reach an agreement, the Payroll Tax Holiday will expire on March 1, 2012 and employees will see the 2% increase in tax for Social Security on their paychecks. If however, Congress does reach an agreement and the tax cut is extended for the rest of the year; the average family could see an additional \$1,000 in their pockets again this year.

The Employer Group staff will continue to actively monitor this issue and provide you with relevant information and updates. If you have any questions regarding the Payroll Tax Holiday, or other questions relating to laws or legislation which may impact your business or employees, please contact our General Counsel, Rebecca Cook at rec@theemployergroup.com.

Payroll News

2011 W-2 Forms

The Employer Group has issued 2011 W-2 forms to all employees. Any employee who signed up to receive their W-2 online should have received an email notification informing them that their W-2 was available. Employees have to resign up to receive their W-2 online every year. If employees didn't sign up to receive their W-2 online by December 31, 2011 the W-2 was mailed to the address we had on file as of December 31st. If any of your employees have not received a 2011 W-2 from The Employer Group please have them contact us at 800-406-9675.

HR News

New National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Mandatory Poster

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has issued a new federal mandatory posting. The NLRB guarantees the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively with their employers, and to engage in other protected concerted activity or to refrain from engaging in any of the above activity.

The 11-by-17-inch NLRB notice will be required to be posted in a conspicuous place where other notifications of workplace rights and employer rules and policies are displayed. In addition, the regulation instructs employers to publish a link to the notice on an internal or external website if other personnel policies or workplace notices are posted there.

The NLRB poster outlines illegal actions by employers and unions and lists employee rights, which include being able to:

- Organize a union to negotiate with an employer concerning wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment.
- Form, join or assist a union.
- Bargain collectively through representatives of employees' choosing for a contract with an employer setting wages, benefits, hours and other working conditions.
- Discuss wages and benefits and other terms and conditions of employment or union organizing with co-workers or a union.
- Take action with one or more co-workers to improve working conditions by, among other means, raising work-related complaints directly with an employer or with a government agency, and seeking help from a union.
- Strike and picket, depending on the purpose or means of the strike or the picketing.
- Choose not to do any of these activities, including joining or remaining a member of a union.

The new NLRB notice will need to be posted by all employers by April 30, 2012.

The Employer Group will be providing a copy of this mandatory poster to all clients prior to the April 30th deadline. Please watch for further communication from The Employer Group regarding this poster. If you have any questions or need any other federal or state mandatory posters please feel free to contact The Employer Group at 800-406-9675.

Training

Job Descriptions: Why Job Descriptions Make Good Business Sense

Effectively developed Job Descriptions are communication tools that are significant in your organization's success. They are written statements that describe the duties, responsibilities, required qualifications, and reporting relationships of a particular job. They clearly identify and define the responsibilities of a specific job. They also include information about working conditions, tools, equipment used, knowledge and skills needed, and relationships with other positions.

So why create Job Descriptions?

- Job Descriptions provide an opportunity to clearly communicate your company direction and tell the employee where he or she fits inside of the big picture.
- Job Descriptions set clear expectations for what you expect from people. It is the first place to look if people aren't doing what you want them to do. It's important that employees clearly understand your expectations.
- Job Descriptions help you cover all your legal bases. As an example, for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you'll want to make certain the description of the physical requirements of the job is accurate.
- Whether you're recruiting new employees or posting jobs for internal applicants, employee job descriptions tell the candidate exactly what you want in your selected person.

Let us know if we can assist you in developing Job Descriptions for your organization.

Wellness Tips

This Month's Health Observance: Fight Cancer and Create a Healthy Lifestyle with Nutrient Rich Foods

A healthy lifestyle is instrumental in disease prevention, and a diet rich in certain foods can really go the extra mile. In fact, there are several foods that are extremely beneficial in the fight against cancer.

Consider incorporating these body-strengthening foods into your diet to reap their illness-fighting benefits:

Beans:

- × Beans contain a number of phytochemicals, which have been proven to prevent or slow genetic cell damage.
- × Beans' high fiber content has been connected with a lower risk of digestive cancers.
- × Research suggests beans are especially potent in preventing prostate cancer.

Berries:

- × Berries contain ellagic acid (most common in strawberries and raspberries) and anthocyanins (most common in blueberries). Ellagic acid helps prevent skin, bladder, lung, and breast cancer by acting as an antioxidant and by slowing the reproduction of cancer cells.

Cruciferous Vegetables:

- × Veggies like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and kale are rich in a variety of compounds linked to slowing cancer growth/development.
- × These veggies have been shown to reduce the risk of lung, stomach, colorectal, prostate, and bladder cancer.

Dark, Leafy Green Vegetables:

- × Veggies like romaine lettuce, mustard greens, chicory, and Swiss chard contain carotenoids, a form of antioxidant that removes cancer-promoting free radicals from the body.
- × These veggies are also rich in folate, which has been shown to reduce the risk of lung and breast cancer.

Flaxseed:

- × Eating flaxseed in the form of oil and meal is believed to reduce the risk of breast, skin and lung cancer because of the presence of phytoestrogens.

Garlic, Onions, Scallions, Leeks, and Chives:

- × These foods contain compounds that are believed to slow tumor growth, especially in skin, colon and lung cancer.

Grapes:

- × Grapes contain resveratrol, which is thought to prevent cell damage before it starts.
- × Choose red and purple grapes for the greatest source of resveratrol.

Decaffeinated Green Tea:

- × Green tea contains flavonoids called catechins which slow or prevent the development of colon, liver, breast and prostate cancer cells.

Soy:

- × Soy contains isoflavones that protect against bladder, cervix, lung/stomach cancer.
- × Soy is also comprised of compounds that are similar to the body's natural hormones. These may be beneficial against the development of breast and prostate cancers.

Tomatoes:

- × Lycopene, found in tomatoes, has been shown to fight prostate cancer, especially when consumed as tomato sauce, paste or juice.
- × Lycopene may also protect against breast, lung, stomach and pancreatic cancer.

Whole Grains:

- × Incorporate whole grains that contain fiber, antioxidants and phytoestrogen compounds.

Try integrating a few of these nutrient rich foods into your diet and make 2012 the year for a new happier, healthier you!

Ask Angie?



My staff seems a little "off" lately. They seem unhappy and at times have trouble getting along. I am not sure why because nothing has changed in the office and when I try to talk to them about it, they say that nothing is wrong. They are good employees and I would hate to lose them. What can I do?

Believe it or not, this is a question that comes up all the time. It can be especially problematic in the long winter months that we experience here in Wisconsin, when motivation and satisfaction can run thin. The solution is usually pretty straight forward once we can determine that there are no underlying problems. First you should try to take the time to talk to the employee/s. If possible try to take him or her out to lunch, or try to meet with that person in an appropriate, professional place which is non-confrontational and free from the pressures of work. Ask the employee again about work to make sure that there is no serious issue which needs to be addressed. If your inquiry uncovers a problem, please contact the HR professionals at The Employer Group for assistance. If there is nothing serious to worry about, and the problem is in fact motivation and job satisfaction, then there are some easy and fun things that you can try to turn office morale around.

It is important to remember that human resource professionals report that one of the biggest factors relating to job turnover is lack of encouragement and recognition. While you may think that you are giving good feedback and providing recognition for good work, sometimes a little extra effort makes all the difference. Here at The Employer Group, we have an Above and Beyond the Call of Duty (ABCD) Board. Employees are encouraged to print out emails in which clients or employees have complimented them on a job well done. Once a quarter at a staff meeting, we read emails to the entire staff so that each employee receives individual recognition and praise, and then collectively decide who has done the best job based upon the ABCD postings. The winner receives a couple of extra hours of Paid Time Off as a reward for a job well done. The process is fun and inclusive, and encourages employees to work to earn those compliments! The Employer Group also brings in quarterly lunches and plans celebrations for birthdays and professional accomplishments. All of these things in addition to the day to day words of encouragement create a more pleasant office atmosphere in which employees can feel appreciated and satisfied. Employees who feel appreciated and satisfied are much more likely to “go the extra mile” for you and your business, and will work harder to maintain that atmosphere of congeniality.

If you would like more ideas for increasing motivation and job satisfaction, please contact our HR professionals at 800-406-9675.

If you do not wish to receive future newsletters from The Employer Group, please reply to this email and type "REMOVE" in the message area. You will be removed from our mailing list.