

ENCOURAGING POSITIVE CHANGE



The Leadership Development Program at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare

By Paul Picciurro, CHESP

A well-trained staff is the cornerstone of any Environmental Services Department. Well-developed and polished Shift Leads are even more important to the department's growth and success. For that reason, Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare in Milwaukee, Wis., created a year-long Leadership Development Program for Shift Leads to sharpen their skills and help elevate the department's level of service.

While we have existing Shift Leads enrolled in the program, we have also invited frontline "Charge" staff who expressed an interest in advancement and acquiring more responsibility. The Charges act as assistants to the Shift Leads, learning the role to cover in a lead's absence or to support the department when needed. In total, we have 16 employees from four facilities enrolled. Each of the 16 enrolled were chosen by their respective managers and received a formal invitation from the EVS director.

All of the EVS managers met and created specific prerequisites for the course, which include:

1. No corrective action within the past six months.
2. Ability to perform specific job duties including standard house-keeping tasks and basic floor care work.
3. Administrative skills such as the ability to compose and manage emails and voice mails, and the ability to create and modify the daily schedules.

The program covers basic leadership skills including conflict management, dealing with difficult situations, and time management. It also gives participants a chance to discuss their own specific challenges at each of the four facilities. Classes meet monthly and participants are given homework to be completed for the next session.

The Leadership Development Program compiles information and advice from different sources such as AHE Webinars, Sodexo trainings, other association publications, and podcasts from Mind Tools. Participants discuss the material and relate it to their daily experiences. In addition, each of the EVS managers participates in the program and teaches a session.

Ongoing testing and assessments are done throughout the program, and participants meet one-on-one with the EVS director

and their managers to identify specific needs each participant may have. Development plans are created, and participants are mentored to improve and sharpen their skills. Participants are also asked to create resumes and participate in mock interviews with EVS leadership at all levels. Once the program has concluded, graduates of the first round will participate in and help develop the next.

While we are still in the beginning phases of this program, we have already observed positive results. Many of the frontline staff have asked what it would take for them to be promoted, and in 2013, at just Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – St. Joseph, we promoted six EVS staff within the department, we saw two members of the EVS department be promoted to other departments within the facility, and we had the privilege of promoting one of our Shift Leads to a Sodexo manager position.

Along with the promotions, the Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – St. Joseph facility has seen inspection scores increase from 2.79 to 3.19 (3.0 being a passing score) over a six-month period and black-light inspection results show a 96 percent passing rate.

The overall goal of the program is not only to improve the level of service the EVS department provides, but to equip each participant with the skills needed to advance in the industry and within the organization. We are also anticipating a decrease in staff turnover as employees become more engaged and invested in their work.

Developing future leaders is also developing the future of an EVS department. Although creating and conducting a Leadership Development Program is a major time investment for EVS leaders who are already pressed for time, it is well worth the commitment. Investing time developing your staff results in internal promotions and produces future leaders not only for the department, but for the organization. ●



Paul Picciurro, CHESP, is operations manager at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – St. Joseph, in Milwaukee, Wis. For more information, he can be reached at paul.picciurro@wfhc.org.