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MAKING WORKPLACE MEDITATION WORK

FEBRUARY 23, 2015 KRISTEN FRASCH LEAVE A COMMENT

Mindfulness appears to be alive and well in Fort Collins, Colo. Or at the Fort Collins Housing Authority anyway.

Just before the holidays, I came across [this release about the FCHA completing a month-long mindfulness program for its staff.](#) Seems the organization's



top leaders took its annual wellness survey seriously when a common complaint came back suggesting improvements in work/life balance and health and

general well-being were needed.

In the words of FCHA Chief Executive Officer Julie Brewen: “We are committed to implementing new programs for the health and well-being of our staff.”

In an industry that deals with tough issues such as poverty, homelessness and families in crisis, she says, the program was a step in the right direction. The program consisted of daily, hour-long sessions during work hours that blended presentations, group discussion and meditation practice.

The results? According to Brewen, lowered stress and depression, and an increase in work/life balance.

What’s even more impressive is what she shared with me just recently, that her organization’s commitment to this lives on, with additional mindfulness training planned for this year, and some added questionnaires and wellness-survey questions designed to keep a close eye on the workplace well-being meter.

“Many of the participants [intend] to continue [their] meditation and mindfulness exercises” into the rest of 2015, she says.

Of course, putting this kind of program together takes a huge and collective commitment to the idea and the practice. It needs to come from the top and be ingrained into the culture, as [this column a year ago \(to the month\) by our benefits columnist, Carol Harnett](#), suggests.

Her column also suggests the concept could use some booster shots in the business community. “In my experience,” she writes, “most employers pay scant attention to stress and defer to employee-assistance programs as check-the-box solutions — despite poor utilization of this service.”

So what’s it going to take for the Fort Collins approach to become the approach of most? Perhaps when employers start acknowledging they have nothing to lose and everything to gain, even as it relates to your brand and reputation. As Harnett writes:

” ... mind-body curriculums will please a growing portion of your employee population and improve your workers’ perceptions of the workplace culture. And that may be an employer’s greatest consideration of all.”

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