

PROFILE

SAINT MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL

Employees Benefit When Mission Effectiveness Program Focuses Within

Healthcare facilities do not have to look far to find persons in need: If they look within, they may find employees who have lost all their possessions to fire or who have to choose between purchasing food or necessary medications. As part of its mission effectiveness program, Saint Michael's Hospital, Stevens Point, WI, has established the Christian Workplace Committee, which focuses on employee needs, as well as those of persons in the community.

A CALL FOR MISSION EFFECTIVENESS

The Christian Workplace Committee is Saint Michael's response to a call for mission effectiveness from the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, Milwaukee Province (the hospital's sponsor). With the 1979 publication of *Refocusing Our Future*, the religious institute began developing ways to help its healthcare facilities to project the institute's mission and values in their administration and operation

and to maintain their Catholic identity.

INCORPORATING GOSPEL VALUES

Refocusing Our Future guides facilities that are members of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother Ministry Corporation, Milwaukee, as they incorporate Gospel values into their services. *Refocusing Our Future* has four key concepts:

- Primary attitudes toward all people—recognizing we are all created in God's likeness
- The empowerment of many—exposing corporation employees to the value-oriented belief system by which member hospitals operate so they can relate their own values and operate accordingly
- The principle of compassionate stewardship—being responsible for resources and sharing them with all

The Helping Hand Fund helps employees with monetary needs that arise because of a crisis.

who are in need

- An awareness of the process—being aware of the effect hospitals' actions have on others

The Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother believe these concepts will help its healthcare facilities achieve:

- A greater awareness of the religious institute's history, mission, philosophy, and values
- A greater sense of belonging among the personnel of an institution and stronger unity among the sponsor's various institutions
- A shift in emphasis to include greater concern for the poor

To begin refocusing the future, each hospital within the corporation formed a Refocusing Our Future Committee. The committee offered communication programs and special employee in-services to implement the guidelines presented in *Refocusing Our Future*. The sponsor's philosophy and values have also been incorporated into new-employee orientation.

POSITIVE RESULTS

As in other Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother

Ministry Corporation hospitals, Saint Michael's pastoral care team chaired its Refocusing Our Future Committee, which had representatives from various departments. Although the integration process was slow, positive results began to occur at St. Michael's:

- An annual Thanksgiving baby shower to assist needy mothers in the obstetrics departments
- Employee collections to help famine victims in Africa
- Needed medicine sent to Saint Lucia

The Refocusing Our Future Committee changed its name to the Christian Workplace Committees to better represent the purpose and function of their philosophy and role within the hospital—that is, to plan, promote, and participate in hospital activities that support the mission and values of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother Ministry Corporation. Management team members began to chair committee meetings and give direction.

As Saint Michael's Christian Workplace Committee grew and

The Christian Workplace Committee creates an atmosphere of caring, sharing, and Christian awareness.

developed, it began to address employee needs and include retirees in the hospital's various functions. The Christian Workplace Committee established the Helping Hand Fund to help employees with monetary needs that arise because of a crisis, such as a house fire or family illness. Employees voluntarily donate money to this fund during Lent and Advent. To get retirees, who had no contact with the hospital once they retired, involved in hospital functions, we invited them to hospital picnics and Christmas dinners. Flu immunizations were also available to them.

In 1988 I became chairperson of Saint Michael's Hospital's Christian Workplace Committee. After attending sessions at the Catholic Health Asso-

ciation of Wisconsin annual conference on topics such as Gospel values in performance appraisals, statements of belief, theology of mission, and Christian effectiveness, I used the information gained to expand the vision of the Christian Workplace Committee. In 1990 the committee began to focus on new horizons.

FOCUS ON THE POOR AND EMPLOYEES

While the established programs continued, a greater awareness of and emphasis on the poor became a major focus. For example, emergency department staff recognized a need for clean clothing for many of their patients. In response, the Christian Workplace Committee began providing new and cleaned old clothing, donated by Saint Michael's employees, to patients who needed something clean to wear home from the hospital. Other examples of the committee's work include a winter coat drive for the needy and hospital garage sales to help fund committee activities.

Employees in need are assisted in a variety of ways through the efforts of the Christian Workplace Committee. Some examples include:

- Free clothing through a special arrangement with the local St. Vincent de Paul Society

- Gas and lodging for families who have a relative hospitalized at another institution

- School supplies for children of families unable to afford this expense

- Payment toward medications for those having trouble making ends meet

- Assistance in paying health insurance premiums

- Christmas and Easter baskets for families in need

"Gift Paid Days Off" is the most recent project of the Christian Workplace Committee. This program allows employees to help their co-workers during periods of financial hardship resulting from unpaid time away from work when they are ill or injured and their sick and vacation leave has been depleted. Employees may donate a portion of their own paid days off to a needy employee. The parameters and criteria for this program were developed and presented to the administration in 1990. The program, which provides a valuable service to Saint Michael's employees, began on June 15, 1990. Employees donated 417 hours in 1990, 514 hours in 1991, 254 hours in 1992, and 47 hours in the first quarter of 1993.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In addition to usual business, since 1989 a portion of the Christian Workplace Committee meetings have been devoted to committee members' spiritual growth to help enrich their spiritual awareness in their ministry. Special videos such as Bp. Robert Morneau's keynote address "On Theology of Mission Implications for Health Care Personnel," at the 1987 Catholic Health Association of Wisconsin's annual meeting, and Fr. Anthony DeMello's *Joy, Peace, Silence*, have been shown to committee members at Christian Workplace Committee meetings.

INSTILLING CHRISTIAN AWARENESS

Saint Michael's Hospital Christian Workplace Committee is a visible and active group. It exemplifies the values of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother by striving to improve the health and well-being of all people, especially persons in need. The committee's activities provide tangible evidence of this. Just as important, however, is the atmosphere of caring, sharing, and Christian awareness the committee's existence instills throughout Saint Michael's Hospital.

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CHA BOOKS

Immunizations: Building Blocks for Healthy Children

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Immunizations: Building Blocks for Healthy Children is a 75-page how-to manual that will show a healthcare facility how to implement and carry out an immunization program alone or in collaboration with other facilities.

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Copies of *Immunizations: Building Blocks for Healthy Children* are available from the CHA Order Processing Department. Call 314-253-3458.

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