



- CANADIAN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY ASSOCIATION -
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE PSYCHOLOGIE POSITIVE

2021 Canadian Workplace Well-Being Awards Application

PART 1: CONTACT INFORMATION

Employer name MarcelineYouth Shelters

Mailing address 220 Marceline Lane

Peterborough, Ontario, K9J, 1E6

Telephone of contact person 705 447 3324

Website URL

Please provide details on your social media sites (eg. Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook etc. if available)

Person responsible for the application - (a) Contact name and title Daphne Forest

(b) Your direct email address daphne@marcelineyouth.com (c) Your phone number 705 502 2000

(a) **Alternate contact and title for this application** Daisy Green

(b) **Alternate contact's email address** daisy@marcelineyouth.com

(c) **Alternate contact's telephone** 705 600 2121

PART 2: ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION (*Maximum 100 words*)

Please provide a brief summary of your organization

Marceline Youth Shelters has been a vital community service in the Peterborough Ontario region since 1953. It runs 5 Youth Shelters in the Peterborough region and runs 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

It provides a full range of services to assist homeless, street involved youth by providing temporary shelter, access to health services; vocational counselling and assessment; resume preparation; job interview preparation workshops: job search skills; navigating the health system with respect to mental health resources; outreach to find permanent accommodation. In addition, Marceline Youth Shelters provides one to one counselling to assist with a range of issues including substance abuse prevention resources and counselling.

PART 3: ABOUT YOUR WORKFORCE

Number of employees working in Canada on June 1, 2021 Full time 300 Part Time 75

PART 4: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WELL-BEING PROGRAM OR INITIATIVES

1. **Initiative Name-** *We Care- Healthy Workplace Initiative*
2. **Position responsible for employee well-being** – Rose Synclair, Director HR
3. **Executive Summary** *(Please provide a brief executive summary of what your organization has achieved through this program. This may be used for the winner information for the event and website. Please do not include any confidential or sensitive information. (Maximum 150 words)*

As a nonprofit scarce organizational resources and energy was focused on meeting the needs of the Youth that they were serving.

The Healthy Workplace Program was able to decrease turnover from 13% in 2016 to 10% in 2020; decrease sick days from 11% to 6%; increase the scores on the employee engagement survey from 75% to 85%

Through the assistance of a Healthy workplace committee employees were able to feel that the Marceline Youth Shelter cared about them as individuals

(Please respond to any or all applicable to your program)

Tips and Hints

Based on a positive psychology approach, here are some suggested areas you may wish to cover in your application:

Positive emotional climate; growth mindset; compassion; job crafting; strength-based approaches; bringing out the best in people; an appreciative approach; helping people reach their potential professionally and personally; meaning in work; accomplishment and purpose; sense of belonging; engagement etc.

4. **Describe the history of your well-being program and how long it has been in existence.** *(Maximum 200 words)*
The Well Being Program was initiated in December 2016 but elements were in place to build on.
5. **What inspired your workplace well-being program** (e.g.: describe the problem or challenge your organization was facing or the opportunity). What internal and external

factors did you consider in crafting your well-being program? What was your organization looking to accomplish? (**Maximum 750 words**)

The staff were passionate about their work. This resulted in staff working after their scheduled shifts, receiving phone calls in their down time. Due to the 24-hour nature of the operation, staff worked irregular shifts making it difficult to manage their personal time.

The part time staff, who were the majority of staff worked in multiple jobs in other youth shelters to pay their bills.

Staff were struggling with high workloads. There is more need for youth shelters and services than there are services available. Many more young people in the community were struggling with a range of mental health issues. Due to staff shortages, schedules changed constantly. In addition, due to the 24-hour nature of the organization, supervisors were overloaded and were finding it difficult to connect with staff and for team meetings. Although in the past, the shelter, scheduled staff events for staff to get to know each other, these had fallen by the wayside. Interpersonal breakdowns were surfacing between employees.

6. Please provide a high-level overview of your well-being program or initiatives (ie. What initiatives did you put in place to solve the organizational challenge or capitalize on an opportunity? Please attach documents which provide evidence of your program activities which you may have available). (Maximum 1,000 words)

We were very concerned when our Regular Employee Engagement Survey conducted in September 2016 showed a decline in engagement. The organization's Human Resources Department noticed a deterioration in workplace metrics. (**refer to Appendix 1 Workplace Scorecard**) particularly with an increase in turnover and sick days. The organization was facing challenges recruiting and retaining staff. There is a shortage of trained youth workers and it was critical that Marceline Youth Shelter retain its staff.

The decline in engagement score from 83% in 2014 to 75% in 2016 was concerning especially since the organization was in an expansion mode and recently acquired several new shelters. Survey results in 2016, identified lack of appreciation by the organization and leaders, perceived lack of support; lack of control over work; poor communication; unfavourable working conditions and job security. Employees commented that they were exhausted, and employees were struggling with mental health issues.

Violet Smyth, the Executive Director of Marceline Youth Shelter joined the organization in 2015. She worked with the Rose Sinclair the Director of Human Resources to conduct focus group discussions to understand the concerns of employees.

As a passionate advocate of promoting positive mental health, Shirley Smyth led the exploration of a strategy to address the unique needs of their youth workers. She shared the results with staff established a Well Being Committee, and named Rose Sinclair as the executive champion to oversee the work of committee. The mandate was to review the results of the employee survey;

identify a number of interventions using positive psychology; change HR policies and practices, and continue to adapt the program based on feedback.

Since its inception, the Healthy Workplace Initiative embraced the tenants of positive psychology, the promotion of positive mental health and a positive work environment.

The Committee identified pillars of our Healthy Workplace Strategy seen in **Appendix 2 Exhibit A**. These pillars included a commitment to imbed diversity inclusion within our the culture; create a positive work culture; ensure that our People Strategy and policies supported and reinforced a healthy workplace; focused on health and safety and in particular psychological safety. The Shelter provided preventative education and resources to help employees manage their psychological health and well-being.

Diversity and Inclusion - Our objective was to create an environment where differences are valued and where employees feel a sense of belonging. We wanted staff to feel that they could bring their authentic selves to work without fear of negative consequences in a psychologically safe environment. We monitor our performance through our Diversity Survey which can be seen in **Appendix 2 Exhibit B**

We have worked towards building a **positive, culture** with strong people values. We know that the culture that we create can drastically affect the mental and physical health of our employees. Staff are struggling because of inequalities in society, and these realities affect mental health and well-being. We are continuing to emphasize the importance of empathetic leadership, building trust, and reinforcing the importance of fairness and respect.

Staff must continue to feel valued and appreciated by their supervisors and their coworkers. Leaders participated in sessions emphasizing the important roles they play in creating a positive workplace. These sessions included the following topics: *Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*; *Implementing Positive Leadership* as seen in **Appendix Positive Leadership** (using supportive communication, enhancing the meaningfulness of work, encouraging compassion and gratitude, fostering positive energy, capitalizing on employee strengths)

We continue to support employee health and wellbeing through improving working conditions and workplace characteristics. We have integrated these elements into our People Strategy (**See appendix 2 exhibit C**)

An employee's perception of their working conditions can affect their well-being and their engagement. In the last 4 years, we have emphasized the importance of quality jobs with a reliable salary and good benefits. During this period, we have transferred **100** hourly employees to salaried positions so that employees had access to benefits and mental health resources, and predictable work schedules. We wanted to enhance job characteristics to ensure that there was role clarity, autonomy and allowed staff to play a role in job crafting.

Marceline Youth Shelter realized that due to the high work volume of staff and supervisors, they were not taking the time to connect with each other. The Shelter built into the schedule regular team meetings and regularly scheduled in person discussions between employees and supervisors. This conveyed to employees that supervisors and the organization cared about them as individuals. Supervisors lead sessions with employees using the *Values in Action*

Strength Assessment to understand employee's individual strengths. These all provided opportunities for social support and connectedness.

There are many ways that we have reinforced a healthy work environment through our **people strategy and policies**. This has included the design of benefit plans, leaves of absence and income security policies to support employees during challenging times. We take a preventative approach to our benefits help employees proactively manage their health. It includes access to enhanced Mental Health Resources and Referral.

We view **health and safety** from the perspective of total physical, mental and emotional wellness. Good working conditions ensures that we are providing an environment that allows staff to grow and feel supported.

In summary, we are achieving a healthy work environment through:

- A strategic and integrated approach with benefits and people policies to support a healthy workplace
- Being mindful of working conditions and how they affect health
- Creating “good jobs” which support employee health and enrich the quality of life
- Fostering inclusive environments where individuals are valued
- Ensuring a supportive culture where supervisors are responsible for creating a positive work climate.

7. What is most innovative about your program? (Maximum 150 words)

What made this program unique is that it gathered data about our workplace; identified areas that needed improvement; we engaged employees and leaders to work together to develop our Healthy Workplace Strategy unique to our environment. We also identified Pillars of a Healthy Workplace Strategy, which integrated our HR Policies, our commitment to Diversity and Social Inclusion, and our interest in creating a positive work culture and gave leaders the accountability to create the positive culture. We integrated concepts from positive psychology into our approach.

8. Please provide three testimonials from employees, and the community (if appropriate) demonstrating the individual impact of the program with at least one from the executive team (if available).

“ I feel more connected to my supervisor and feel that my supervisor cares for me as an individual, understands my challenges and is supports me” Poppy Smith Youth Worker

“I feel that things have turned around at work and I am no longer looking for another job. I feel appreciated by my supervisor and colleagues. I am telling my other colleagues and other Youth Shelters that they should join our team”. Hyacinth Collins –Youth Substance Abuse Counsellor

“Through the Values in Action Character Strength Assessment, I am aware of my strengths and how to build on them in the role that I play”. Jasmine Churchill, Team Leader

9. Name of leader or the executive champion of the Well-Being Program

Rose Synclair

CERTIFICATION (OF INDIVIDUAL SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION)

I hereby certify that the foregoing information is complete and accurate. I authorize and consent to the CPPA to use information contained in this application including photographs or other supporting materials or documents. Without limiting the foregoing, I agree that such CPPA use of such information may include publication, the creation of case studies as examples of great practices via webinars, written materials or other media for the purpose of educating and for the purpose of promoting best practices in workplace well-being. I also consent to adding my organization’s contact email (the person responsible for the application) to the CPPA’s official mailing list so that CPPA may contact that person by email for any purposes related to the CWWA Program (this individual will receive a verification email and will be able to unsubscribe at a later time).

Name Rose Synclair

Date July 20, 2021

Title Director Human Resources

Thank you for promoting the practice of positive psychology. You may be contacted by a member of our team regarding your application.

Appendix A Workplace Scorecard

Marceline Youth Shelter

	2014	2016	2018	2020
Total Staff	150	280	300	350
Total Full Time Staff	50	60	250	300
Average Tenure	8	6	7	9
Full Time Engagement	83%	75%	82%	84%
Full Time Turnover	7%	13%	10%	7%
Average Sick Days	7	11	8	6
Total Part Time Staff	100	219	50	75
Average Tenure	5	2	3	4
Part Time Engagement	80%	65%	70%	73%
Part Time Turnover	14%	20%	13%	10%

Appendix B

Marceline Youth Shelters

Exhibit A -Healthy Workplace Framework

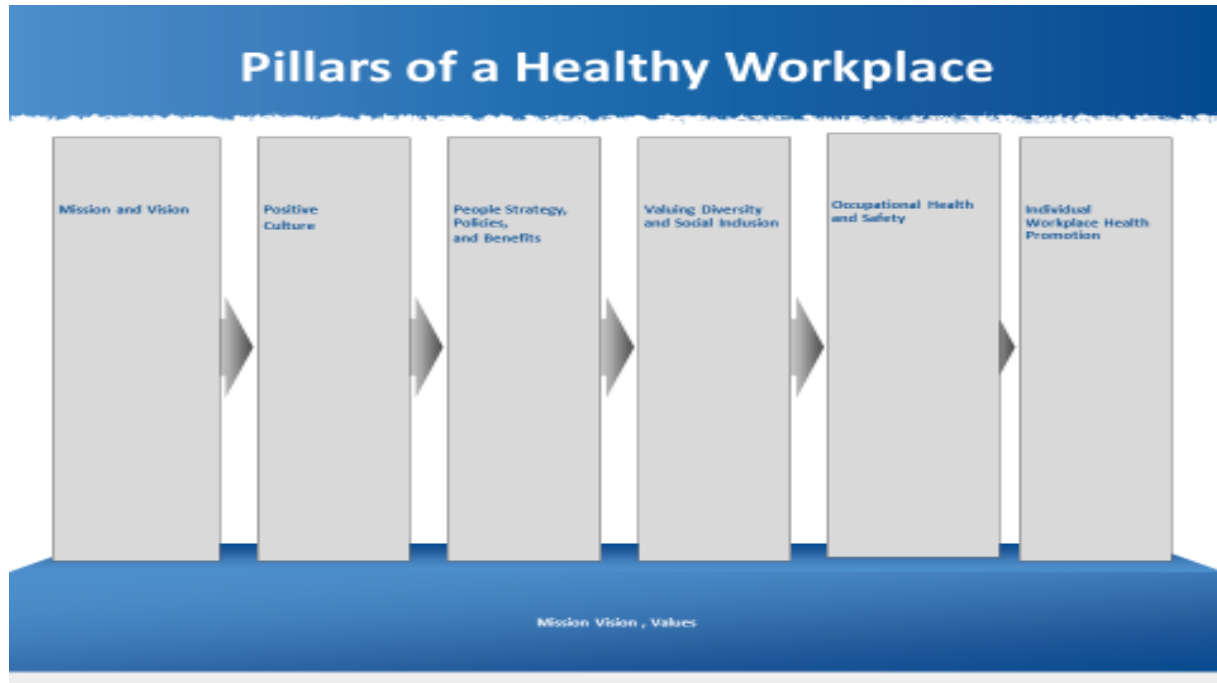
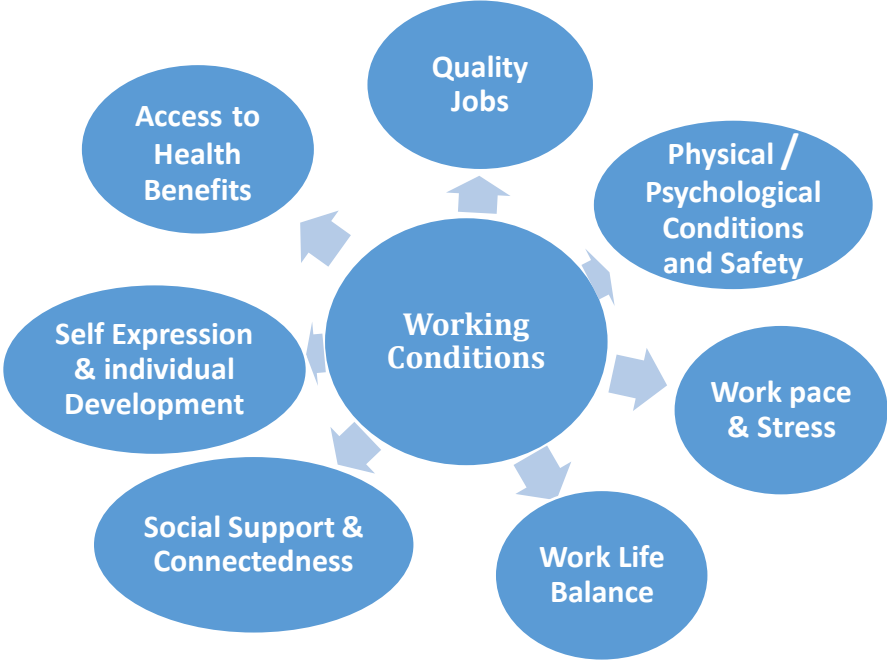


Exhibit B Diversity and Inclusion Survey Results

Survey Questions	2014	2016	2018	2020
Leadership removes roadblocks to allow me to fully participate	60%	57%	55%	56%
All staff members regardless of their diversity have equal opportunities for promotion	69%	59%	64%	70%
Leaders are role models in valuing diversity and social inclusion	68%	63%	70%	74%
Visible diversity is celebrated in the Shelter	73%	70%	75%	79%
I feel welcomed at the Shelter regardless of how I look	88%	81%	83%	85%
I feel accepted and included in my work environment	86%	82%	85%	85%

Exhibit C Working Conditions



Appendix C

Implementing Positive Leadership

Marceline Youth Shelters

Positive Leadership Strategy	
Provide Best Self Feedback	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain information from associates on unique personal contributions • Help others develop a best self-portrait- (ie.when they are at their best) 	
Use Supportive Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide five positive statements for every negative piece of feedback • Habitually use supportive communications • Use descriptive statements in providing negative feedback • Remain problem- not person focused in providing negative feedback 	
Enhance the Meaningfulness of the Work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the work's direct impact on people • Associate the work with a core personal value • Clarify the long-term effects of what is being accomplished • Reinforce contribution goals more than achievement goals 	
Implement Personal Management Interviews	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a role negotiation meeting with direct reports • Hold regularly scheduled one on one meetings with direct reports • Provide regular personal development opportunities for direct reports • Ensure regular accountability for continuous improvement 	
Encourage Compassion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice and share information • Express emotions and feelings • Enable appropriate compassionate responses 	
Encourage Gratitude	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct gratitude visits • Write gratitude letters • Keep a gratitude journal 	
Foster Positive Energy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for serving others • Personally model positive energy • Diagnose the unit's energy network • Recognize and reinforce positive energizers • Manage negative energizers in stages 	
Capitalize on Others' Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for others to do what they do best • Frequently celebrate positive outcomes 	