



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Katie Crabtree Thomas  
Ohio Psychological Association  
Cell: (740) 418-4292  
kcrabtree@ohpsych.org

**TWO OHIO ORGANIZATIONS WIN  
PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE AWARDS**

*Eastway Behavioral Healthcare (Dayton) and Eldermount Adult Day Care Program (Cincinnati)  
named 2007 recipients*

“Work is stressing me out!”

How many times have you said these words? And what does your organization do to combat stress?

The Ohio Psychological Association (OPA) will honor two organizations that have implemented programs and policies to make their employees’ work life psychologically healthy. On Oct. 24, 2007, at 12:15 p.m. at Quest Conference Centers, Columbus, OPA will recognize **Eastway Behavioral Healthcare (Dayton) and Eldermount Adult Day Care Program (Cincinnati)** as recipients of its fifth annual Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award.

After an application was submitted to OPA, a panel of OPA members conducted a site visit. The workplace was evaluated on five areas: employee involvement, employee growth and development, health and safety, employee recognition and work-life balance.

“Many employees report calling in sick because of stress,” said Cathy McDaniels Wilson, Ph.D., OPA president. “We are proud to honor these organizations that demonstrate a psychologically healthy workplace through programs and activities that reduce stress and help their employees. We hope other workplaces will implement similar programs.”

**Eastway Behavioral Healthcare**

A few years ago, **Eastway Behavioral Healthcare**, the largest, private, not-for-profit provider of behavioral healthcare, housing, employment and educational services in the Miami Valley area, faced financial struggles and 40 percent employee turnover. But now, the organization is financially stable and has a 15 percent turnover rate, a number that decreases each year.

Why the big change?

Because of new workplace programs. In the past several years, Eastway has implemented a variety of psychologically healthy programs, all aimed at making Eastway an “employer of choice.”

A number of programs are in place to help employees’ mental and physical health. An annual health fair, open to employees and their families, provides carbon monoxide screenings, smoking cessation information and other health screenings. Employees also are offered a discount to the YMCA. Eastway has been a strong participant in the Dayton area’s “Battle of the Businesses” competition for three years running and this year joined the area’s new “Battle of the Bulge” competition which encourages employees to lose weight. The organization also fields several softball, basketball and kickball teams each year.

Eastway has developed a number of internal committees as a means for employee participation and feedback – meetings are scheduled at flexible times to accommodate employees’ varying schedules. The Benefits Committee took on the challenge of looking at increasing healthcare insurance rates, solicited employee feedback and helped to select and then educate employees about a new insurance plan. The Succession Planning Committee, which takes on a special project each year, conducted an employee survey



---

## *Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award*

which revealed an interest in more frequent recognition. Co-employees, an Employee of the Quarter program was created to augment an existing annual recognition event. Changes have also been made to paid holidays, again, based upon employee feedback. The organization's Wellness Committee (Catalyst as it's called), which is the driving force behind many of the events and activities like the health fair, is continually looking for new ways to get employees on a more healthy track.

*-more-*

### ***Page 2 • Two Ohio Organizations Honored...***

Employee development, growth and safety are other important aspects of the workplace at Eastway. Many employees are promoted from within. Employees are encouraged to attend conferences and seminars or participate in the organization's tuition reimbursement program. "Brown bag" lunch training sessions are offered six times a year. Eastway's intranet site links to over 250 E-Learning training modules, where employees can complete required and continuing education credits. The organization has developed an in-house management training series which covers specific agency operations including finances.

Due to the nature of their work, safety is a big issue. Eastway has a security guard on site along with a designated chief safety officer. Panic buttons are located in each room. In case of a crisis, a response team is in place with an action plan. That team also provides training with role playing situations. Employees are required to attend a crisis intervention course with the local police once a year.

"From my personal experience, Eastway nurtures an environment where employees matter and our needs, feedback and well-being are taken into account when organization decisions are being made. As an eight-year employee, I have had numerous opportunities through the years to participate on employee-driven committees, have been a part of succession planning and have been encouraged to move-up in the organization," said Cybil Saum-Johnson, director of care management and compliance. "As a working mother of two extremely-active daughters, I appreciate the flexibility we have at Eastway in our daily schedules. However, that my personal experience is not unique – this is the atmosphere for all employees. Eastway really is a great place to work."

### **Eldermount Adult Day Care Program**

Eldermount Adult Day Care Program provides a service that is listed as a component of a psychologically healthy workplace: elder care.

Founded in 1985, Eldermount has offered health and social services to over 1,000 members and care giving families in the Cincinnati area. It operates as an outreach program and non-profit ministry of the Sisters of Charity. Eldermount's Adult Day Program offers members a chance to spend time with others, participate in activities and have their healthcare needs met all in one place. It allows the person to live at home, while receiving the assistance they need.

Eldermount's most impressive best practice is its scholarship program. Scholarships are available for employees of the Sisters of Charity, including the Eldermount staff, so that they may enroll their family members in the Eldermount program. Two current employees use this program for a spouse and are able to maintain their employment because of it. Eldermount also boasts flexible scheduling, reimbursement for childcare, an employee assistance program with five free visits for employees and their family members and a wellness center that is available for staff use.

The scholarship and family support programs were not the only psychologically healthy areas. It rated highly for its attention to employee growth and development, including an excellent tuition reimbursement program which many staff have used. Its six-day orientation program also is a workplace highlight.

Health and safety are other strong areas of Eldermount's work environment. Staff input into the new facility was beneficial to all employees, members and the overall program. The facilities are clean. Access to the facility is carefully monitored.

***Page 3 • Two Ohio Organizations Honored...***

Interviews with several groups of staff and management generated positive comments about the employee involvement opportunities at Eldermount. The suggestion box is viewed as a powerful mechanism since many changes result from ideas that are submitted. Turnover is low and staff is dedicated to the mission of the Sisters of Charity. Management is respected, and seen as caring and responsive. Eldermount's core values include respect and honest excellence, which governs both its outlook for its members and its staff.

"Eldermount Adult Day Program is honored to receive this award and would like to thank the larger Sisters of Charity organization for the employee programs and events they support throughout the year," said Kathy Baker, Eldermount director. "As an important part of a care giving team, staff feels appreciated and recognized for the work they do. This appreciation and respect is contagious and is shared among co-workers and with those in our care."

The benefits of a healthy workplace can include increased productivity and employee retention rates, recruiting advantages, company image enhancement, a better workplace atmosphere, as well as workers who are less stressed and more satisfied with their jobs.

Failure to provide a psychologically healthy workplace can impact the bottom line. A poll conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that one in four employees has taken a "mental health" sick day. Job stress also costs U.S. industry \$300 billion annually.

For more information about Ohio's Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award, contact Katie Crabtree Thomas, director of communications and education, at (800) 783-1983 or [kcrabtree@ohpsych.org](mailto:kcrabtree@ohpsych.org).

###