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All in—All the Time!

A success story featuring:  **Ronald McDonald House Charities**
Greater Las Vegas

How do you begin to describe the people who make your life easier in the face of heartbreak? The words are hard to find, especially when the people in question are providing hot, home-cooked meals and a safe place to sleep while your child lie sick or injured in the hospital. The people who dedicate their lives to taking care of the families who need it most. Some would call them heroes. Others might call them saints, possibly angels. But even heroes and saints have their limits. Little did the team at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Las Vegas (RMHC LV) know that a major tragic event would be the catalyst to propel them from their breaking point to a new culture that allowed them to reach levels of caregiving and teamwork they had never experienced.

The Ripple Effects of Culture

Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC) is a nonprofit organization offering comfortable housing for families of seriously ill or injured hospitalized children—at little or no cost to the family. The work of RMHC employees is incredibly demanding, both mentally and emotionally. As caregivers, the effects of burnout become amplified when a workplace culture is unsupportive and dysfunctional. RMHC LV experienced workplace behaviors such as gossiping, betrayals of trust, and unproductive confrontation that led to employee turnover and an uncomfortable environment for many of their team members.

The negativity ingrained in RMHC LV's culture was even beginning to blur over into people's lives outside of work. Julie Beard, who now serves as Executive Assistant & Database Coordinator, has been with the organization for over 10 years. "Work was taking a toll on my personal life, to the point where I would go home and I wouldn't want to do anything with my husband or daughter—even around the holidays," said Beard. "I was so drained...and it was definitely making me resentful and stressed out."

A small but mighty team of 19, RMHC LV's dedicated group always had good intentions, but were never quite able to work together as effectively as they wanted. Jacqueline Cruz, Director of Development, had also noticed an absence of trust and accountability throughout the team. "I just knew that we weren't reaching our full potential as an organization because we were not able to address the things that were holding us back," Cruz remarked.

A Tragedy that Incited Change

On October 1, 2017, Las Vegas experienced a tragedy the likes of which were unprecedented. A gunman opened fire on a crowd of concertgoers on the Las

Vegas Strip, killing 58 people and injuring 422. The resulting panic brought the injury total to 851 people, quickly putting healthcare facilities at maximum capacity. In the wake of the devastation, RMHC LV would play a significant role in the aftermath. They were called upon by hospital partners, first responders, and The Red Cross to provide support and housing for the families of the shooting victims.

For the first few days after the incident, the team at RMHC LV operated flawlessly. They came together and performed better than ever before to serve their community in this time of crisis—but their success was fleeting. By the fourth day, the team was completely exhausted. They were defaulting back to their regular attitudes and issues of dysfunction. Their overall spirit and ability to focus on their team, along with the pressing tasks at hand, had dissipated. Alyson McCarthy, CEO of the organization, knew she had to take action...and that she needed external help.

An RMHC LV board member referred McCarthy to a Wiley Authorized Partner, who introduced her to The Five Behaviors™. McCarthy, who had already been reading Patrick Lencioni's best-selling leadership fable *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, decided to bring in the Partner for three months of one-on-one coaching. After seeing significant progress, the RMHC LV board approved a team-wide training session on The Five Behaviors.

"This was something that we were starting to look into on our own," recalled McCarthy, who wanted to experience The Five Behaviors alongside her crew. "But it's tough as the leader of a team to conduct your own seminar. If a team leader is facilitating and trying to learn at the same time, they won't be able to engage as fully in the program."

From Disconnected to Determined

Upon completing their Five Behaviors session, the team was able to review the reports that pinpointed their strengths and weaknesses... and big changes began to take place. The Five Behaviors gave them permission to not hold back any concerns, and to have the tough conversations that needed to take place in order to move forward as a team. A few months after the program was facilitated, the Partner returned to review the team's Progress Report, which demonstrated significant positive changes throughout the group.

"Coming into the organization, as a new employee, the Progress Report showed a lot about the team," said Heather Hernandez, Family Services Manager. "It showed they were willing to do the work; willing to make the changes. The important part is the continuation of this program within the workplace. Without that, the work can slip so easily. We are all able to have some hard conversations and it speaks volumes about where their hearts are."

It was during the follow-up meeting that everyone was able to see growth, but also recognize areas that still needed improvement. "One of the outcomes of The Five Behaviors training is that we actually came up with an action plan," said McCarthy. "I've taken so many trainings from so many different people in the past over the years, and I can honestly say this is the only program I've ever taken where what I learned is actually implemented and being used to this day."

Strength, Support, and Surpassing Goals

Now, each morning, the group holds a 15-minute huddle where they discuss one thing of value, and everyone's current priorities. It's a daily reminder that, before anything else, they are a team first. At the end of these meetings, they recite their newfound motto and rally cry: "All in—All the Time!" It's a moment of coming together with laughter and high-fives before everyone disperses and goes about the rest of their day.

RMHC LV has changed their entire employee performance system since going through The Five Behaviors. The structure of their goals has transitioned into metrics that are reflective of how they define success as a team. Additionally, the team has had serious achievements with larger projects, such as their "Runnin' for the House" 5k fundraiser in 2019. During the planning process, the team faced obstacles that would have previously



The Five Behaviors model

derailed the annual goal; however, armed with The Five Behaviors principles, they were able to overcome these challenges through hard work and determination. With over 1,200 runners and walkers, the event was a major fiscal and organizational success: *over \$85,000 was raised, exceeding the fundraising goal by more than \$10,000.*

Going forward, RMHC LV is ready for anything. They are now working from a place of trust, accountability, and the strength that comes from knowing they are supported by one another. Holding their team to a higher standard has created an environment that feels happier, inspiring, and more productive, even with the occasional rough patch. Because when caregivers are committed to their own wellbeing, everyone benefits.

McCarthy echoed the importance of being all-in, and the effort everyone has made to reach this level of teamwork. Their culture has improved drastically, making RMHC LV a better organization—not only for her team of heroes, but the thousands of families they support each year. "If we take care of our team, and we take care of each other first, everything else will fall into place."

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