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Press release

Cedar Valley Hospice wins Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award

**Waterloo, May 18, 2020:** Cedar Valley Hospice believes that when people feel valued and cared for, they do their work with a stronger motivation, a deeper sense of meaning and a greater level of engagement.

Recently, this philosophy earned its merit. Cedar Valley Hospice was awarded the national 2020 Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award – an award presented only to organizations that meet rigorous standards of excellence.

Winners of the national Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award are selected by a panel of Gallup workplace experts who evaluate applicants and assesses them against rigorous criteria established by Gallup’s research. Applicants are compared to Gallup’s extensive database and must measure up to the most productive and successful organizations in the world. As a winner, Cedar Valley Hospice differentiates itself by investing in employees and putting people development at the center of its business strategy.

That strategy begins at the top. At Cedar Valley Hospice, its leaders don’t settle for just good enough. They challenge the status quo, aiming for a bigger mission, a stronger culture and a more engaged workforce.

“Cedar Valley Hospice is a special place to work and we have a very unique culture that sets us apart from other employers,” said Cedar Valley Hospice Human Resources Director Katie Unland. “We are in the business of caring for people with terminal illness, and our leadership team understands that how we treat our employees will directly impact the way our staff provide end-of-life care to others.”

Internally, their plan started by implementing quarterly 1-on-1 evaluation meetings and performance-based pay. They also created special committees by involving staff to take ownership in the strategic plan to help achieve agency goals and objectives.

“Cedar Valley Hospice has really focused on communication and transparency with staff,” added Unland. “We have weekly Executive Team meetings, bi-monthly management meetings, a weekly staff newsletter and staff meetings every other month to help facilitate communication.”

At Cedar Valley Hospice, their leaders believe in empowering its employees. They encourage a culture where managers are expected to manage using critical thinking and evaluation skills – which, ultimately, is used to make proposals to the executive team on areas of improvement or opportunity.

Each department also holds department meetings and one-on-one meetings with staff to touch base on work, projects, and what the manager can do to support them in their role. Basically, no individual idea or concern is left behind. This philosophy has improved processes and communication across all departments.

Cedar Valley Hospice Executive Director Michaela Vandersee also holds monthly “Meetings with Michaela” at each of its site locations to discuss questions, concerns, best practices, which is a great opportunity for staff to meet directly with Michaela building a solid foundation of trust and a culture of open communication. These are well attended and contribute to building high-performing teams.

Gallup notes that worldwide only 15% of employees are engaged, that is, committed to their work and connected to their workplace. At winning organizations, 70% of employees are engaged in the U.S. At Cedar Valley Hospice, 73% of its employees are engaged, further exceeding the national statistic.

It’s evident that employees at Cedar Valley Hospice are engaged. They, themselves, have taken ownership in a few endeavors of their own. They particularly enjoy the employee engagement committee. which is staff-led with guidance from the Human Resources Director. It provides encouragement, recognition through gifts and plans special outings for staff. They have also created a private, staff Facebook page. It allows them to get to know one another better and it has really driven engagement.

“Whether you have something inspiring for your co-workers or just a funny photo to share, I feel like the page has really connected our staff on a deeper level,” said Waverly Office Coordinator Cortney Manning. “Cedar Valley Hospice truly cares about the wellbeing of our staff and is continually finding ways to go above and beyond. I am proud to work alongside incredibly smart, talented and gifted coworkers all working towards one mission.”

Winners of the Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award are selected by a panel of Gallup workplace experts who evaluate applicants and assesses them against rigorous criteria established by Gallup’s research.

“Every day we make a conscious effort to put our mission first – to enrich lives with knowledge, respect and compassionate care – for our patients, clients, families and staff,” said Vandersee. “The happiness of Cedar Valley Hospice staff is a priority and has a direct, positive impact on those we serve.”

**Caption- Team: Cedar Valley Hospice hosted an ugly holiday sweater contest as well as a decorate your workstation contest last December. “Our staff enjoy these competitions,” said Human Resources Director Katie Unland. “We feel having some fun at work is important, as the work we do can be stressful and emotionally draining.”**

**Also attached (trophy award photo and logo).**

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Established in 1979, Cedar Valley Hospice is the expert provider of hospice care in Northeast Iowa. As a non-profit, we uphold the highest standards for our employees who help families manage advanced illnesses and symptoms 24 hours a day. We provide care for all – regardless of age, diagnosis or ability to pay. Other services include: the area’s only Hospice Home, palliative care, adult and children’s grief programs, and case management for those with HIV or AIDS. Anyone can make a referral. It’s never too early to call and find out what resources are available to you. For more information, visit cvhospice.org or call 800.626.2360.