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WORKING WELLNESS

Discover how some spas are prioritizing the health and wellbeing of their employees and reaping the rewards as they thrive. BY HEATHER MIKESELL

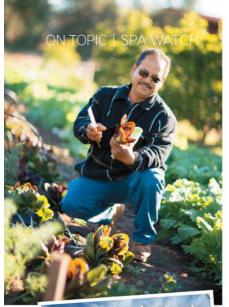
IN THE BUSINESS OF NURTURING OTHERS, SPAS HAVE LONG TOUTED THE

importance of wellness and self-care. However, that message is sometimes lost on therapists and other employees who give their all to promote the wellbeing of their clients. Recently, there has been a shift in the industry, as more spa professionals have begun to recognize the fact that nurturers need nurturing, too. "In order for our wellness industry to thrive, we need to support the healing professionals who give to others every day," says Kevin Kelly, chairman and CEO of Civana, a wellness-hospitality and real estate brand. "They deserve an affordable respite to recharge and be inspired." As a result, Civana recently introduced its Healers Vitality Program, which reduces daily room rates at Civana Carefree Resort (AZ) by an average of \$100 per night for professionals in the health and wellness fields, such as estheticians, fitness and program instructors, massage therapists, nutritionists, caregivers, nurses, and employees from wellness-related product companies. "The best healers are those who give of themselves with intention and an open heart," says Rianna Riego, chief brand and wellness officer at Civana. "We all know that cannot be faked and can only be given unconditionally when someone is in a safe and joyful place themselves. We need to keep our healers feeling emotionally safe and physically healthy." As a result, spas around the country are now providing staff members with a range of wellness offerings to ensure they're able to provide for clients without diminishing their own reserves or compromising their own wellbeing. And the benefits are two-fold, as happy and healthy employees are the key to creating a positive environment, which is always good for business.

creating **CULTURE**

Civana, which features a "wellness through oneness" culture, is based on four pillars: nutrition, movement, discovery, and healing arts. One way in which it distinguishes itself is with its focus on making sure its employees are as well cared for as its guests. "The first thing we did when we purchased this property was to offer our employees free food at the cafeteria and upgraded the offering to a more nutritious menu," says Civana's Rianna Riego. Employees are also encouraged to participate in any of the resort's eight to 12 complimentary daily movement and enrichment classes, although guests have priority. "On a daily basis, we recruit employees to attend various classes based on their availability, especially line staff," says Riego. "And aside from a heavily discounted rate at the spa, we offer treatments to our staff on a regular basis as part of training."







programming for success

One spa at the forefront of caring for its staff is Rancho La Puerta (Tecate. Mexico). Launched in 2014, the destination spa's Employee Wellness program has since grown to include 440 employees, two doctors, a nutritionist, a psychologist, and an exercise psychologist. According to CEO Roberto Arjona, the program is intended to inspire staff members and their families to live a healthy lifestyle by following the founding practices of Rancho La Puerta. Employees can take advantage of classes and workshops that tackle topics, such as cancer prevention, drinking risks, and healthy eating practices. They can also take part in daily fitness classes that take place Monday through Friday on property specifically for staff and members of their families. What's more, the program also gives participants access to complimentary lab work and physical exams every six months, which provides a snapshot of their progress in the program. Since its launch,

employees have lost a total of 1,268 pounds of body fat and approximately 500 inches from around their waists. "The program has shown a drop in obesity and overweight levels, an increase in productivity, and a decrease in absenteeism," says Arjona. It has also helped decrease chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension.

Going beyond just physical wellbeing, the spa also addresses employees' financial wellness with company loans for the purchase of land, construction, and housing and a debt consolidation and management program to help employees pay off debts and manage the repayment of loans and finances with zero interest. "The repayment of loans is based on the employee's ability to make payments without compromising his or her daily or basic needs," says Arjona. According to him, the financial help is much appreciated by employees as are nutritional consultations for the entire family.

FINDING balance

While Miraval Arizona has long been a leader in promoting mindfulness, it is also mindful when it comes to the welfare of its staff, "We give our employees the tools to enhance their wellbeing so they can embody the healthy lifestyle we promote to our guests," says general manager Mark Stebbings. Invited to take part in the spa's many wellness classes and workshops, employees are also given the

chance to experience a variety of spa treatments. "At Miraval Arizona, we provide opportunities for our staff to take care of themselves, so they can live their best lives while being an inspiration to our guests," says Stebbings. "On their days off, our staff is encouraged to try out the property's diverse collection



of wellness activities, including yoga, meditation, hiking, and nutrition classes to help them find balance in their lives. When we launch new spa treatments, we always give our staff a sneak peek, so they can take some muchneeded time to unwind." According to Stebbings, the spa is always looking for ways to inspire staff members on their own path to wellness. "At Miraval Arizona, our staff is the

> foundation of the resort," says Stebbings. "It is their hard work, creativity, and passion for health and wellness that truly makes the quest experience so profound. It is important to us that we show them our appreciation the best way we know how-by giving them the tools to live a life in balance."