

NYSP21 Performs Sustainability Assessment and Training for Heritage Christian Services

Heritage Christian Services (Heritage) was founded nearly 35 years ago and now partners with thousands of people throughout Western New York. The mission of Heritage is to provide a living and working Christian environment where everyone feels valued and respected. Many of the agency's 2,500 employees work one-on-one supporting people with disabilities to find the best place to live and work, and build strong community connections. Heritage is recognized as one of New York's top 10 service providers for people with disabilities and has earned national accreditation.

Challenge

Heritage relies upon government funding for a majority of its operational budget, however the current funding environment has provided less support than years past. Understanding these constraints, Heritage has determined that minimizing waste, energy, water, and cleaning supply usage are key enablers to potentially reduce costs. Heritage wanted to identify sustainability improvement opportunities and best practices which would help reduce their bottom line operational costs.

Solution

The New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP21) worked with Heritage to conduct sustainability assessments of current operations at three residential care homes and two childcare facilities in Rochester, New York. NYSP21 developed and provided sustainability checklists to Heritage prior to the on-site assessments. These checklists collected information on chemical, water, and energy use, and waste handling practices at the individual sites. The assessments focused on the building uses of energy, appliances, household chemicals, water use, and site management practices. At the two childcare facilities, NYSP21 also reviewed furniture, toys, floor coverings, and food preparation.

At the conclusion of the assessments, sustainability training was provided to approximately 80 people including residential/childcare site managers, day habitation providers, maintenance, and support personnel to share lessons learned and sustainability best practices. The training highlighted sustainability improvement opportunities and best practice topics such as alternatives to harsh chemicals, water use and energy savings, and HVAC best practices.



Training conducted at Christian Heritage Center Facility

CHALLENGE

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SOLUTION

- NYSP21 conducted sustainability assessments of current operations at three residential care homes and two childcare facilities
- NYSP21 developed and provided sustainability checklists to Heritage prior to the on-site assessments
- Sustainability training was provided to approximately 80 people, focusing on lessons learned and sustainability best practices

RESULTS

- NYSP21 identified opportunities for Heritage to reduce their chemical and water usage, increase energy efficiency, improve the handling of food and pharmaceuticals waste, and improve facility work practices



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Results

NYSP2I identified opportunities for Heritage to reduce their chemical and water usage, increase energy efficiency, improve the handling of food and pharmaceuticals waste, and improve facility work practices. The following findings have the potential to provide immediate cost savings for Heritage.

- Implement the setback feature on programmable thermostats to save on utility costs
- Utilize the New York State Office of General Services purchasing discount program to purchase healthier cleaning options identified in the New York State Green Cleaning Program
- Pilot changes to on-site practices to improve workplace organization, reduce food waste and reduce water and dish cleaning chemical use
- Improve preventive freezer maintenance and ensure adequate air flow around refrigerators
- Pilot secure pharmaceutical waste disposal using the New York State Medication Drop Box program to keep these chemicals out of the water supply and food web

“As a non-profit organization in the human services business, we sometimes find ourselves between a rock and a hard place with respect to financial resources. Our desire to provide the highest quality service to those we support while striving to be an employer of choice requires us to continually seek cost control and, if possible, cost reduction. Partnering with the NYSP2I team at the Rochester Institute of Technology to identify behaviors that increase energy efficiency, reduce our environmental footprint and create savings to reinvest into our employees was a triple win. We sincerely appreciate the support, education and technical expertise that NYSP2I provided.”

– Daniel Ross,
Corporate Controller/Compliance Officer
Heritage Christian Services

NYSP2I PARTNERS



New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

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