



New Horizons Life Skills

Overview:

New Horizons Life Skills has been serving adults with special needs since 1971. They serve their constituents through three programs: day services providing opportunities for inclusion in their communities, supported programs to secure employment opportunities in competitive work environments, and an independent living program with 24/7 staff care in group housing arrangements.

Recently, New Horizons reestablished itself as one of the top agencies serving the state of Tennessee. The Board and senior staff looked forward to creating a new multi-year strategic plan. The effort took a toll on the health of the culture within the organization all of this occurring as the Board and senior staff planned to create a new multi-year strategic plan. While all of the staff remained devoted to the work and to the mission of the organization, their relationships had suffered over the course of preparing information for the state causing friction and miscommunication daily. The advent of the pandemic also contributed to these conditions.

Through the Center for Nonprofit Management, New Horizons Life Skills reached out to The Macfarlan Group to support the leadership team in their work to improve the workplace culture and to work alongside the Board to create a multi-year strategic plan. We are known for our work with individuals and teams in developing their leadership skills to secure a cohesive, collaborative culture within their organization.

Challenge:

New Horizons delayed the creation of the multi-year strategic plan due to the unhealthy staff workplace culture. They still wanted to begin the strategic planning process but knew the workplace culture had to change for a successful implementation of the plan.

Solution:

The Macfarlan Group analyzed the workplace culture through a comprehensive data collection plan that provided data-driven, actionable steps to improve the culture. As 2021 ends, The Macfarlan Group will begin the process of working with New Horizons Life Skills on the creation of a multi-year responsive strategic plan.

Impact:

The Macfarlan Group provided four critical elements within the engagement with New Horizons Life Skills:

- Assess the current workplace culture and its effect on operations and systems used to deliver the mission of New Horizons Life Skills, with special attention given to the retention of current staff and the recruitment of new employees.
- Create a roadmap of best practice steps related to human resources to strengthen the culture and working relationships within the staff.
- Provide individual leadership coaching to identified staff.
- Prepare the senior staff and the Board of Directors for the upcoming strategic planning process.

The Macfarlan Group provided the necessary expertise and experience within the engagement with New Horizons Life Skills for the organization to strengthen their workplace culture to prepare for the strategic planning process in the following ways:

- Met with all staff to understand the current workplace culture providing a space for every staff member to contribute to the data collection
- Met with identified staff to understand the institutional history and practices of senior leadership over the life of the organization.
- Presented findings and actionable steps to leadership with an implementation and evaluation strategy based on best practices to strengthen the workplace culture in preparation for the strategic planning process.
- Created a continuous program of leadership development to support the organization as it implements the recommended actionable steps over time and assess the inculcation of the best practice methods in the daily delivery of the missions as well as the recruitment and retention efforts.



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