

Children First awards seals of approval



FREDRICK O'JOE/THE OREGONIAN
Mitchell Jones and his wife, Donna, never expected that his employer, Providence Health System, would help so much after a fire gutted their Northeast Portland home a year ago. The company used a fund to pay his phone and utility bills.

The Families in Good Company campaign honors 20 local companies that make it their business to support families

By KATE TAYLOR
THE OREGONIAN

Companies aren't required to make sure employees get to their children's baseball games. If workers can't pay a phone bill or find good care for an ailing grandmother, they're usually on their own.

This week, a local nonprofit group honored 20 Oregon companies that do consider it part of their mission to help employees juggle work and family needs.

Children First for Oregon granted seals of approval to the companies at its second annual awards ceremony. It gave top honors to six of the companies that give employees such options as flexible work arrangements and support for dependent care.

Why should companies strive to win the seal?

"Why businesses should care is about recruitment and retention," said Rose Yuska, project director for Families in Good Company, a Children First for Oregon awareness campaign sponsored by Portland General Electric. Companies nominate themselves.

"More and more, we're seeing employees tired of 80-hour workweeks away from their families," she said. "Companies who are sensitive to that are the ones who are going to attract and retain top talent."

Mitchell Jones, an office supervisor for Providence Health System, said it feels good to work for a company that he knows would help out if he was ever in trouble.

When a fire left Jones' family homeless last year, Providence paid his phone and utility bills with a fund set up

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FAMILIES IN GOOD COMPANY WINNERS

Companies are honored in six categories, based on numbers of employees:

- O'Neill Pine/FPS Group of Salem** (3-10 employees) Maintains a 30-hour workweek and requires that 10 percent of paid work hours be dedicated to volunteer work in schools.
- Douglas Schools Federal Credit Union of Roseburg** (11-49 employees) Donates thousands of dollars and many hours of volunteer time to 13 high schools and several human service agencies in Douglas County.
- Oregon Research Institute in Eugene** (50-249 employees) Sup-

ports program for employees to volunteer one hour a week to mentor minority high school students. Offers bus tokens to employees and keeps a company bicycle on-site for those who need to run errands during the day.

- Norm Thompson of Hillsboro** (250-999 employees) Provides employees with counseling resources, information and educational services, child- and elder-care resource and referral services.
- Providence Health System** (1,000-plus employees) Provides on-site

child care for employees at its three hospitals. Invests more than \$300,000 in free bus passes for employees, \$100,000 in free employee carpool vans and \$100,000 in commuting services, such as bike lockers and free shuttles.

- University of Oregon in Eugene** (Government) Provides three on-site child development programs serving nearly 400 families. Family support includes work-family task force, work-family coordinator, work-life training sessions and seminars, work-family library and family support groups.

THE OREGONIAN • SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2000

Seal: Benefits cover wide range

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for employees experiencing hardship.

As part of an in-house volunteer program, employees chipped in \$650, as well as food and time to make sure he, his wife and their five children could recover.

"I was really moved by what they did for me," said Jones of Portland. "They rallied around us. I didn't ask them for anything, but they knew. And my kids knew... after watching the house burn down and then seeing how they helped us. It makes you feel good to work for a place that cares."

Companies that got the seal of approval this year offered employees benefits that ranged from dinner vouchers to comprehensive elder-care programs. One winner, Oregon Research Institute in Eugene, offers health training seminars, bicycle tune-ups and weekly yoga classes. And it allows owners to bring their pets to work.

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You can reach Kate Taylor at 503-294-7692.

SEAL OF APPROVAL

Recipients of the Families in Good Company Quality Seal:

- 939th Rescue Wing, Department of Defense
- Beaver Motor Coaches
- David Evans & Associates
- DoubleTree Hotel Springfield
- First Consumers National Bank
- Intel
- Legacy Health System
- Linn Benton Bank
- Rainbow Valley Design & Construction
- Resource Connectors
- Sony Disc Manufacturing
- Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue
- US West
- Radisys



Seal designations are valid for two years; companies must reapply to uphold their status in 2002.

Businesses can begin applying for the 2001 awards in the fall. For information or to receive an application for the awards or seal, call 503-294-1456.