



2022 Family-Friendly Focus



M&G Family Summer Picnic

FEBRUARY HERO: Morris & Garritano

Supporting working parents is great for business, great for families and great for the community. Morris & Garritano (M&G) puts that philosophy into action daily for its 130+ employees on the Central Coast. The independently owned insurance company was built on a family foundation that is three generations strong and strives to create a culture of flexibility — something that has become a critical need for nearly all employees and a necessary norm for many businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It was around 2017, three years before the start of the Pandemic, when Morris & Garritano decided it was time to double down on its commitment to the wellbeing of employees by changing the company's approach to work schedules. M&G began offering employees the option to work remotely or in hybrid locations (telecommuting) AND to modify their hours to accommodate their individual needs. Just like that, clients could reach someone at 7am, a working mom could take her baby to a morning music class, and a working dad no longer had to rush to pick up his child from daycare by 5:30pm. According to M&G Human Resources Director Angela Toomey, the results of this shift were undeniably positive and further elevated an atmosphere of trust that improves quality of life for employees without compromising the productivity of the work week. Toomey emphasizes that many family-friendly practices, such as this flex policy, are free or low cost yet can have a clear beneficial impact when it comes to recruiting new employees and retaining current ones — including parents who are juggling growing families, child care challenges, Pandemic-related health/safety concerns and e-learning for school-age kids.

Beyond flexible scheduling, Morris & Garritano also has an “ease-back-to-work” program that allows new parents to return to the job part-time following their paid family leave, and to gradually resume their regular schedules over time as they feel comfortable and ready. Moms have access to a private nursing room with a bevy of equipment and supplies, and babies and children are always welcome to visit the office. The company also hosts a number of special, family-inclusive events each year.

M&G understands that each business must determine what is feasible for its specific structure, size and set of circumstances. Toomey encourages companies to start by simply surveying employees to find out their wants, and to think about the potential turnover or what they stand to lose if they don't make adjustments; even small changes can make a big difference. Sharing experiences and lessons-learned goes a long way toward encouraging other businesses to enhance and/or expand their own family-friendly policies and practices. We hope M&G's example as a Hands-on Hero @Work will inspire potential future Hands-on Heroes @Work honorees!

The Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program is a partnership among First 5 San Luis Obispo County, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce and the County of San Luis Obispo; this FREE initiative, housed within the Chamber, aims to help businesses hire and retain employees, support working parents' balance between job and home life, and bolster the economic vitality of our communities. The program builds on the SLO County Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit which was created by the “We Are the Care” Initiative – a countywide coalition dedicated to addressing local child care and related work-life balance challenges faced by local families.