



2022 Family-Friendly Focus



The Family-Friendly Workplaces 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.

OCTOBER HERO: Carmel & Naccasha LLP

What would you do with a few extra hours of free time in your weekly schedule? This summer, Carmel & Naccasha LLP gave its employees the opportunity to answer that question—with the goal of helping them better manage the interface between work and family. The law firm, established in 2004 and with offices in SLO & Paso Robles, instituted a summer-long '40-for-36' plan where team members got paid for their regular schedule while working a 36-hour work week. As many Human Resources experts will emphasize, it was the simple act and art of listening— that led to the integration of this worthwhile initiative!

While the company considered implementing a '9/80' or '4/10' schedule-policy change, employees voted down those options—not favoring a 9-to-10-hour workday. The '40-for-36' compromise stuck! And you might say so did the resulting memories made— going to the beach, reading a book, spending time with family and pets or enjoying other simple joys. The plan was so well received, it will now be offered every summer. Less stress means better mental health & higher morale, which yields a happier workforce and improved productivity. Companies across the globe are testing out this type of approach and finding it to be an overwhelming win. In Iceland, years of trial runs in the public sector led unions to negotiate working patterns; now 86% of Iceland's workforce is moving toward the right to shorter hours for the same pay, say researchers from UK think tank Autonomy. Growing numbers of U.S. businesses are adopting similar models.

According to Carmel & Naccasha Complex Litigation Attorney Jessica K. Raynor, it's rare to find a law firm that not only tells its employees it values work-life balance— but shows them. Raynor says she was thankful for the extra time to be with her young kids before the start of the school year. No doubt that little gift is the kind of thing many working parents want most.

Action starts with engagement, and Carmel & Naccasha LLP serves as a great example of how to get involved. Founding Partners Timothy Carmel & Ziyad (Z) Naccasha have been enthusiastic voices at the table for the county-wide "We Are the Care" (WATC) Initiative. Their desire to make a difference prompted them to help develop and later utilize the SLO County Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit created through WATC for area businesses (additional details top right of page). In addition to the company's summer work-schedule perk, which was coordinated by Firm Administrator Stacy Bartlett, Carmel & Naccasha can celebrate having several other practices in place: lactation support/accommodations, childcare benefits, telecommuting options, flex time, return-to-work programs, and paid family leave. All members of the firm are encouraged to improve their skills and take civic leadership roles for the betterment of community. As Carmel & Naccasha sees it, employees are the greatest asset a company can have; positive shifts happen when management listens to what workers want, invests in them, and prioritizes their happiness in the workplace. Applause for this Family-Friendly champion!



To learn more about the Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit, visit slofamilyfriendlywork.org. For information on the Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program, contact the SLO Chamber's Workforce Development Manager, Christina Lefevre Latner, at (805) 786-2762 or christina@slochamber.org. To learn more about early-childhood related initiatives, go to first5slo.org.