



McCarthy Building Cos. Inc.

Business: Commercial and green construction, specializing in health care, education, technology, hospitality, industrial and transportation

Sacramento area manager:
Aaron Alhady

Founded: 1864

Local employees: 200-230

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Headquarters: St. Louis



McCarthy's Aaron Alhady, left, Shannon Marquez and Matt Wade at the local Ronald McDonald House that McCarthy volunteers helped repair.

McCarthy empowers employees to give back

The company's emphasis on community service creates an attractive culture for workers

Last year, employees at the Roseville office of McCarthy Building Cos. Inc. assembled at a job site in Sacramento. Once there, they ripped out and replaced concrete that didn't comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act. They planted new vegetation and repainted the complex. They redid brick pavers that had settled, and cut down a tree, grinding the stump and roots.

Although these efforts fit into the normal scope of work for McCarthy, a commercial construction company based in St. Louis, they were done free of charge for this client. In this case, the client was the Ronald McDonald House, a 'home away from home' for families of children who are being treated at one of Sacramento's five area hospitals.

"We don't get asked to do this; we offer it up," said Matt Wade, who's been a project director at the construction firm for the past 10 years. "It's really in our company's culture; we do these kinds of things every year."

For Wade, that culture is one of many things that makes McCarthy — which is

100 percent employee-owned — a special place to work.

"They drew me straight out of college with a lot of things that differentiated them from other construction companies," Wade said, citing not only the firm's dedication to the community but its dedication to the personal and professional development of employees.

For instance, employees count their medical, vision and dental screenings toward points to reduce their health care premium. They can participate in wellness activities to trim as much as \$400 off their health premium, he said.

"They're very passionate about being builders and self-performing the work instead of contracting out. That brings a new level of excitement to the routine," Wade added. "Instead of managing the construction, you have your hands in the dirt."

Aaron Alhady, vice president and Sacramento area manager at McCarthy, said that he finds it appealing that the prevalent feeling among employees is what he calls a "real, genuine desire to be successful — not only for themselves but for the other employee owners."

"Because we have a personal stake in the outcome, it really pulls the best out in people," he said. "And we don't just come in and chase projects. We want to be part of the community we work in."

Evidence of that is in the company's annual Community Day. On that day, he said, "We will pay everybody as if it were a business day," but instead of going to work at McCarthy, employees can do

volunteer work at their favorite charity.

"We define success in many different ways, and they're not always financially based," he added.

Shannon Marquez, business development manager, said that what she likes most about working at McCarthy is the people.

"There's always a sense of teamwork. We have a lot of fun, too," she added.

"We have lots of extra-curricular activities," including an adult softball team every summer and a bowling league. Company employees also participated as a relay team in the California International Marathon as well as the Komen Race for the Cure, a fundraiser to support breast cancer research.

"I would say management takes an active role in your growth. The management team has an open-door policy. You can check in at any time to ask, 'How am I doing?'"

"They also understand family," she added. "I'm a new mom, so having me spend time with my child was respected."

Wade said the sense of teamwork is not limited to the 300 or so employees in Northern California but seems to be shared by all of the nearly 2,000 employees.

"It's amazing when we go to trainings and bring in people from all over the country. You talk to them, and it feels like you're talking the same jargon. There's not a, 'It's my division against yours,' there's no posturing. It's really a family feeling."

Definition of A+ workplace:

"One where employees have been empowered to provide input in the guiding principles and visions of the business while being acknowledged for their commitment and contributions to achieving goals along the way."

Most important perk: "In spite of today's economic challenges, we at McCarthy have never been more committed to the development of our employee owners. As an 100 percent employee-owned company, it's an easy decision investing in innovative training and technology systems to develop our most important asset, our people."

Biggest mistake an owner/manager can make: "Not taking the time and making the effort to understand and inspire your fellow employees."

— Aaron Alhady, vice president and Sacramento area manager