

Building a culture of decent work, one relationship at a time: HWTC

For the Hospitality Workers Training Centre (HWTC), decent work is grounded in empowering staff and clients alike. The organization encourages employees to learn and build leadership skills, while providing clients with a clear understanding of what working conditions in the hospitality and food services sector should be.

“Decent work, to me, really means stable income, consistent hours, managing expectations, and being able to have opportunities to grow, as well,” says Ken Tang, Director of Programs and Services.

“We want to make sure that all of our trainees that come through ... that they’re learning about employment standards, so that when they go into the workforce they’re not taken advantage of or misled in any way.”

The training centre launched in 2003, as a way to bolster the sector’s workforce in the face of layoffs and displacement as a result of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in Toronto.

“The hospitality union wanted to develop a training centre to provide incumbent workers additional training, some cross training, or upskilling,” Tang says.

In 2012, it opened its own social enterprise eatery, Hawthorne Food & Drink. Now, close to 200 people a year receive training for the hospitality sector.

The Centre works closely with hospitality partners to develop training curriculum that addresses the industry’s needs, while also giving participants an opportunity to build successful careers. “

We ensure participants are aware of decent work through our training modules focusing on industry standards, safe work environments, health and safety, the employment standard acts.”

“We do offer training in our programs for entry-level positions. But these entry-level positions have a lot of mobility, a lot of career growth,” Tang says.

HOSPITALITY WORKERS TRAINING CENTRE

“We continue to work with past participants and hospitality workers to support them with incumbent training as they advance in their careers.”

With about two dozen staff, the centre supports learning and development opportunities for all employees. The process balances personal career development goals and organizational needs.

“We encourage staff to be able to step away from their desks, so they build their networks as well,” Tang says. “Networking and relationship building is critical to the type of work we do, to building our capacity as an organization and to maintain a learning culture.”

Decent work provides a framework for attracting and retaining staff. Tang sees it as an investment in reducing turnover and a selling point for recruitment. He points to ONN’s decent work checklist as a helpful too. “

If we meet a majority of that checklist, we can promote that outwardly, and recruit talent into our organization as well.”

Read more:

<https://theonncanada.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/case-studies/>