

Japanese National Day Events

Employer: Hitachi Construction Machinery UK

Area: South Tyneside

Theme: Mental Wellbeing, Exercise, Healthy Eating



To tie in with Japanese National Day which falls on the 11th February, we ran a series of events during the week of the 6th – 10th February 2023.

We wanted to run something a little bit different but also something relevant to our company. Since we are a Japanese owned business, this seemed an ideal opportunity to combine our history and heritage with a health and wellbeing campaign.

During the week of events, we ran a series of challenges, known in Japan as Chorei. Throughout the week a new Chorei was released on a daily basis, with three in total. Two of the Chorei were based around answering a simple question and the third Chorei was a more practical and fun activity.

The two questions we asked staff to provide an answer to were:

- What do you like best about working at HCMUK?
- Share your personal health and wellbeing goal for 2023

Staff were asked to write their answer on orange card and provide a photograph of themselves holding the card up.

We also ran an origami challenge (linked to mindfulness and relaxation) during the week.

Staff who completed all three Chorei challenges and submitted a photo of each one were entered into



a prize draw for a £50 voucher of their choice.

This got some really good engagement and employees had fun making their origami and submitted some great paper models.

We linked the origami activity to mindfulness and mental health since origami is known to help combat the symptoms of depression and anxiety. It is also a great way to learn a new skill and have fun in the process.

Overall, the campaign generated some good interaction and engagement. We had twenty people take part in the activities and it was good to see some staff at the depots around the country getting involved too. Comments received from those who took part was positive and it was seen by many as a fun, relaxing and team building set of events. It was also a good way to get staff to think about their own health and wellbeing goals for the year ahead.

Six months after the campaign the Health and Wellbeing Advisor followed up with everyone that took part in the chorei exercises to find out if they had achieved the health and wellbeing goals they had shared at the time. A number of participants responded positively and confirmed that they had achieved their goals and continue to care for their health and wellbeing on a regular basis.

"One participant commented: "Mine was to find more time for me doing what makes me happy. Things I've done to improve are": Starting Zumba which was something I wanted to try for a while and have been attending on a weekly basis for a few months now, Trying to make the most of my days off spending time as a family, Taken the time to have a relaxing bath every so often to destress from the day of work and toddler troubles! Lastly and what I'm still working on is trying not to travel about so much as I just felt I was constantly on the go to try and please all my friends and family but wasn't thinking of the impact that has on me."

"Another participant was successful in completing the Newcastle 10k in July and said: "I took up running just before Christmas 2022 in order to help with my asthma. When I started it took me a while to get my breathing right. After a few weeks my running style, breathing and health clicked into place and I could comfortably run without stopping. As for my mental health I find that once I start, I zone out and just go into auto pilot. This





allows me to relax and concentrate on my breathing and not the everyday worries of life. When I started running I set myself a goal and I chose the Newcastle 10k and the route was amazing. At the beginning the adrenaline made me run a lot quicker than in training but when I got to the finish line, I was tired but sped past the finish flag and the feeling was amazing, although I was tired the sense of achievement made it all worthwhile, taking only 6 months to get to the level I am now at. I have got my place for the Newcastle 10K 2024 and plan to do the Tommy Run in Seaham in November of this year.”

“Another participant who has been changing her diet in order to reduce her blood pressure commented: “I have been reducing my salt intake and changing it to low salt, adding more fruit and vegetables to my diet, cutting down on red meat and dairy products (mainly cheese) to reduce my blood pressure. It’s taken over a year, but I reached my best ever BP reading of 129/82 on the 15th August 2023, which I am so happy with. I do have the help of medication but hoping I can continue to lower my BP further to cease the medication.”

