

## External Evaluation for Neighborhood Industries

March 15, 2023

**To: GuideStar - Candid**

### ► Introduction

Enclosed is an external evaluation for Neighborhood Industries with information and data that was gathered through a cultural assessment and strategic recommendations report that was requested by the Board of Directors in late 2022.

My name is Krystal Klaassen, I am an organizational development and change management consultant offering 15+ years of working with non-profits to understand changes that need to be made to create a more healthy and thriving culture in the workplace. I am a certified HR Professional and completed a master's degree in Organizational Leadership Studies with a focus on HR organizational culture development and strategic change management. I work as consultant and lead HR strategic integration that enhances culture and overall performance to meet the organizational mission, business, and people goals.

In October 2022, I was contracted to complete an organizational cultural assessment - an analysis of current behaviors, strengths, gaps, and barriers to change that are shaping the workplace culture at Neighborhood Industries and a change plan to address these root issues. The information provided in this external evaluation comes directly from the analysis work and diagnostic research I completed from October 2022 to January 2023 for the organization.

Feel free to reach to me if there are any questions or more information is needed for the external evaluation process.

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Sincerely,



**Organizational Development Specialist**  
Human Resources

## ► Collection of information

The information collected for the analysis report and this external evaluation was through confidential survey results from employees across Neighborhood Industries in a diversity of roles, personal interviews with the executive staff team and Chief Executive Director. Several visitations to observe workflow processes and customer service at the Neighborhood Thrift.

I also attended a couple of Board of Director meetings and surveyed each member regarding mission and vision, goals and priorities for Neighborhood Industries, current challenges, and board engagement with employees to learn if board members agree about the current challenges at Neighborhood Industries and the missional direction moving forward.

I participated in a Neighborhood Industries tour from an invitation from Ricky Bravo with a group from Workforce Connection to visit and learn more about the work and mission of each of the entities in Neighborhood Industries. The final part was a group session with AP to listen about history, current needs of the store, and how Neighborhood Industries is working to serve the community in the current climate of growth.

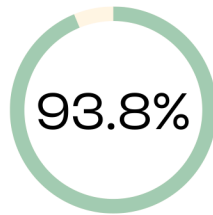
Finally, I reviewed Neighborhood Industries employee relation documents and materials, including website, onboarding/off-boarding processes, employee work schedules, employee handbook – (policies, performance, and PTO – Paid Time Off policies).

## ► Assessment of Work Culture - Strengths and Gaps

### ► Strengths

These strengths are prioritized and listed as they related to one another. The strong non-judgmental and safe workplace creates an environment for workplace relationships to build trust and value one another. When employees support one another, they begin to work towards a common mission and feel connected in their strong belief of the collective organizational mission of making a difference in the community. The cultural of belonging at Neighborhood Industries is an organic outcome from the previous three strengths. People feel they belong to the mission and direction of the organization and are engaged with one another to get the job done. This type of environment creates a sense of support for employees to feel free to develop skills and use creativity to get their responsibilities done without judgment.

## ► Strengths cont...



Employees feel that Neighborhood Industries is a safe place to work and are comfortable in the environment.

Neighborhood Industries has a strong psychological safe workplace environment through meaningful and trusting relationships with coworkers and management. There is a sense of safety employees feel to speak up even when there is a difference in opinion. Employees are not afraid to ask for help and are quick to offer support and care for one another when someone is in need.

People are not worried about being punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. In this environment, there is an understanding that people will not embarrass or reject people for sharing ideas, taking risks, or soliciting feedback.

People enjoy working together at Neighborhood Industries and it directly impacts the positive job satisfaction that many feel on a daily basis in the workplace. 75% of people feel valued and appreciated as an employee. There is authentic relationships and friendships between some employees that cultivates an environment where employees feel mentally and practically supported with workplace stress.

There is a keen sense of cultural belonging that is being influenced by the previous three strengths listed. People working at Neighborhood Industries feel that they are part of a community (non-judgmental workplace family) making a difference in Fresno. This workplace sense of belonging brings meaning and purpose into many of the lives of the employees.

87.5% of people stated that they love or really like working at Neighborhood Industries. The culture of belonging at Neighborhood Industries is centered in acceptance of people regardless of background, attention to helping those in need, and support to one another.

### **Non-Judgmental & Safe Environment**

Trust in Leadership

### **Work Relationships**

Coworkers value each other

### **Missional Connection**

Strong belief in making a difference

### **Culture of Belonging**

Employees feel valued in the workplace

### **Creative Learning Environment**

Support in gaining workplace skills

## ► **Gaps**

These gaps are prioritized from bottom up and listed as they compound on one another and will create bigger concerns if not addressed. The gap to focus on and is the greatest concern is the overburdened staff from unbalanced workloads. People communicated clearly concern for one another's well-being and stress from a sense of overworking in order to cover necessary tasks. The intensity of overburdened staff is a result of the other gaps compounding on one other and directly impacting how employees feel about their workloads.

### **Development and Training**

Support in acquiring needed job skills

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### **Effective Communication**

Need for clear direction of next steps

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### **Systems of Workflow**

Fear of missing something

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### **Employee Benefits**

How employees are cared for

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### **Overburdened Staff**

Unbalanced workloads

Employees asked for more development and training opportunities to acquire needed job skills to effectively manage the responsibilities they are either currently doing or want to grow into. Communication was a common theme throughout the employee feedback channels. People stated that they communicate well with one another in working relationships but desired more clear communication in three specific areas: clarity in job expectations, upcoming changes that impact employees, and updates regarding the business of the store. These three areas are critical to focus on enhancing communication to help sustain the workforce and keep employee engagement high.

As the organization grows, there will need to be clarity on how tasks for critical workflow processes happen and get distributed to key positions. There is a lot of mental energy being used on trying to understand what needs to be done and how to do it rather than maximizing on their strengths and responsibilities in their role.

A common theme from people was there is a burden on some tenure staff to educate, train new employees, and 'hold things together' without enough support for their own experience and development. Staff are acquiring more and more areas of responsibilities because of immediate needs that came up. Pressure to have their hands in too many areas and just to keep going.

## **Impact on the Fresno Community**

Neighborhood Industries is making a positive influence and impact in the Fresno community through its programs - Pathways to Empowerment, Street Cleanup, Recycling Warehouse, Thrift shops, etc. There is a strong connection to making a difference in the community. When asked "What do you like most about your job?", serving others in need, opportunity to make a difference, and mission of Neighborhood Industries came up 6 times. Even though most people could not fully articulate the company mission, they understand the essence and believe in it.

90% of employees and board members strongly agree or agree that Neighborhood Thrift cares about its customers and is making a real difference in the community.

Neighborhood Industries has worked to remove over 4.5 million pounds of waste that will be kept out of landfills as well as 35 thousand pounds of litter has been removed from the streets of Fresno. The commitment to Fresno is backed by the monetary donations of over \$200,000 reinvested back into the local community.

The organization has generated \$1.6 million in employee income and provides employment for 85 people who needed employment.

## **Potential Progress and Growth**

Neighborhood Industries is working on positioning itself to have significant growth and progress in its programs and expansion of thrift shops throughout the city of Fresno. The Chief Executive Officer, AP is working closely with the Board of Directors to implement some strategic recommendations that will increase the organizational capacity for growth. One goal is to create the infrastructure for administrative and financial management to help alleviate unburdened staff and build stronger systems of support to increase organizational workflow processes.

My sense is that there is a genuine desire to maximize on the strengths of Neighborhood Industries employee relationships, culture of belonging, and non-judgmental & safe environment and to embrace a trauma informed approach for all staff and internal systems, structures, and practices that relate to people.