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Shawmut hosts thousands of workers for construction safety week programming

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Boston/New York/Los Angeles Shawmut Design and Construction, a \$1.6 billion national construction management firm, commemorated its 15th annual Construction Safety Week by welcoming thousands of workers to programs that stressed the year-round importance of employee wellness, mental health awareness, worksite vigilance, and the availability of support.

Shawmut hosted 364 events in more than 70 locations for employees and trade partners that included Narcan and First Aid training, mental health discussions, and emergency response preparedness. The programs underscored Shawmut's longstanding and industry-leading commitment to employees' mental and physical wellbeing.

"Every day we work in an industry with high rates of suicide, addiction, and inherent dangers of the job. This week I was absolutely inspired by our teams' engagement in programming and the commitment to mental and physical wellness and looking out for each other," said Les Hiscoe, Shawmut's CEO. "That is why safety is something we prioritize not just this week, but 52 weeks a year." Hiscoe's commitment to safety earned him 2023 CEOs Who "Get It" honors from the National Safety Council.

26 Court St.

Among the events, Hiscoe and chief safety officer Shaun Carvalho talked about mental health with workers at the City of Boston's 26 Court St., where teams are restoring and preserving the 11-story, 176,000 s/f municipal building originally constructed in 1912. The revitalization will provide modern workspaces for several city departments and include a universally accessible plaza and public lobby and gallery.

Glorya Kaufman Creative Community Center

In Los Angeles, project team members and trade partners gathered for a training on fall protection at the Glorya Kaufman Creative Community Center at the Wende Museum. The center will accommodate cultural, educational, and social services and include a live performance theater, serving as a resource for several Culver City-based nonprofit organizations and Culver City Unified School District students.

New York Public Library's Aguilar Branch

And in New York, Hiscoe, COO Reza Amir Khalili, and executive vice president of the New York Metro Region Dave Margolius also toured the renovation of New York Public Library's Aguilar Branch and talked safety. The renovation of the 120-year-old landmarked building will upgrade service, improve infrastructure, and create enhanced spaces for patrons and programs.

To effect meaningful year-round change, Shawmut's employee-led Mental Health & Wellness Leadership Group works to identify programs, initiatives, and paths to address the mental health crisis in the industry; the firm's leaders seek to model their own self-care, and have undergone training; and jobsites hold monthly discussions with trade partners about psychological safety and mental health to raise awareness around topics including empathy, substance abuse disorders, and suicide awareness. These efforts and more have earned the company numerous recognitions, including a 2023 Mental Health Visionary Award from the Construction Industry Alliance.

By embedding holistic health and innovative safety practices, Shawmut has seen a healthier workforce, reflected in nearly 50 percent decrease in lost workday incidents since 2019.

"As a 100 percent employee-owned company, we are dedicated to engaging every member of our team and trade partners during Safety Week and throughout the year—from safety technology platforms to wellness programs and trainings," Carvalho said.

Since Shawmut's inception, safety has been a core value that is embedded into its culture as a top-down and bottom-up business imperative. Shawmut is constantly piloting and implementing new technology to keep its safety program cutting-edge through its Technology Pilot Program. This allows for testing of different programs and platforms on a small scale, eliminating the penalty of failure—and enables informed decisions for larger-scale integration. This led to the integration of AI, which helps prevent incidents based on historical data—driving Shawmut closer to prediction and zero incidents. By identifying risk, Shawmut can pinpoint specific issues, take immediate action, and allocate resources—helping to address incidents before they arise.