



News from THE WALLACE GROUP

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ProAct, Inc.

For Immediate Release

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PROACT ANNOUNCES 2008 EMPLOYERS OF THE YEAR

Platinum Pizza Holdings, Minneapolis VA Medical Center and Packaging Distribution Services recognized for important role in employing people with disabilities

ProAct, Inc., an Eagan-based organization serving individuals with disabilities, has selected three organizations for “Employer of the Year” awards. Platinum Pizza Holdings and its Domino’s Pizza franchise, the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and Packaging Distribution Services were each recognized for their exceptional efforts in employing people with disabilities.

The businesses were recently honored before a crowd of nearly 600 during ProAct’s Annual Awards Dinner at the Prom Center in Oakdale. Winning Employer of the Year recognition for the Supported Employment category, Platinum Pizza Holdings is an Eagan-based Domino’s Pizza franchise with 12 locations in the Twin Cities. ProAct sends out teams of individuals to distribute the company’s marketing literature to homes in the Eagan and Hastings areas.

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The opportunity has been ideal for a group of 23 ProAct participants, who make their way to residential neighborhoods in crews of five and six, according to ProAct Employment Manager Catherine McCoy. People enjoy getting out of traditional inside work settings to the outdoor environment, and Platinum has been a strong business partner, McCoy explained. “They’re very responsive to employing individuals with disabilities,” she said.

Honors in ProAct’s Community Employment category went to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, which employs three health aides and one food service employee from ProAct. Three of the individuals have been employed at the VA for 15 to 20 years, said ProAct Case Manager Rachel Stebbings, who provides support. “Everything they do, they do for each employee,” she said. “If there’s an accommodation that needs to be made, they make the accommodation.”

VA Public Affairs Officer Ralph Heussner said the medical center was proud to accept the award. “The recognition has been earned by the VA employees with disabilities and other challenges who are committed to serving our veteran patients. We appreciate their efforts every day,” said Huessner.

The Employer of the Year award for the Business Partner category went to Packaging Distribution Services, an Eagan-based firm that produces specialty cartons and corrugated containers for a variety of product applications. ProAct’s in house crews help with product assembly.

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ProAct Director of Production Dave Cavalier, said the work is appropriate for a wide range of skill levels, providing work opportunities for a large group of people with disabilities. The branch manager for Packaging Distribution, Mike Sommers, has been pleased with ProAct's performance. "The work always gets done and on time," he said. "And, I've never had a complaint on any job ProAct has done for me." ProAct was also noted by Sommers for its ability to closely follow instructions.

ProAct is headquartered in Eagan and maintains additional sites in Red Wing and Zumbrota. Its mission is to serve individuals experiencing barriers to employment and self-sufficiency due to intellectual and developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health issues, traumatic brain injuries, and other challenges.

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