



News from THE WALLACE GROUP

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ProAct, Inc.

For Immediate Release

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EMPLOYERS OF THE YEAR FOR 2010 ANNOUNCED BY PROACT

Nonprofit serving people with disabilities selects Fairfield Inn, Santa Barbara Medco and T&K Restaurant Franchise as exceptional employers

In celebrating some of the best companies that employ people with disabilities, ProAct, Inc., has chosen three organizations for “Employer of the Year” honors in 2010. The Fairfield Inn & Suites in Mendota Heights, Santa Barbara Medco and T&K Restaurant Franchise, both of Eagan, were chosen from the list of finalists.

Winners were chosen for three employer categories: Community Employment, Business Partner and Supported Employment. The employers were part of ProAct’s 38th Annual Awards Dinner in October, which attracted about 600 to the Prom Center in Oakdale.

“The stability and growth opportunities provided by employers are crucial to the people we serve,” said ProAct President and CEO Steve Ditschler. “We’re grateful to be of service to them, especially in these challenging times.”

ProAct Employers of the Year/page two

Winning recognition in the Community Employment category, Fairfield Inn and Suites-Airport in Mendota Heights employs three ProAct crews in its housekeeping operations. The 119-room hotel has had a longstanding relationship with ProAct through multiple owners.

ProAct Employment Manager Cathy McCoy credits Fairfield's Area Director, Kevin Renville, General Manager Malinda Nordin and their staff for efforts to integrate people with disabilities into the Fairfield operation. More than 70 ProAct clients have had the opportunity to work at Fairfield, and the hotel has allowed ProAct to offer short term job assessments and evaluations to vocational clients, McCoy explained.

Nordin said the award was a nice compliment, and a surprise. "We wouldn't be who we are without their hard work, commitment and dedication, and the leadership they put into this property," said Nordin. "It's nice to have a group that's been with us over 10 years, one that you can just count on to produce good results."

In the Business Partner category, Santa Barbara Medco uses ProAct for product assembly and packaging services. ProAct's Eagan director of production, Dave Cavalier, said Santa Barbara communicates well, and the two organizations have grown together. ProAct packages items for Santa Barbara's ear product line, which is marketed through large retailers around the country.

ProAct Employers of the Year/page three

Santa Barbara Medco Master Scheduler Carrie Foley said she appreciates ProAct's fast turnaround times, and the organization's ability to take on multiple job tasks. ProAct can put a substantial number of workers on a project on short notice, which saves a lot of time for Santa Barbara's human resources department, she said. "They've always done 110 percent and gotten it to us. They do a great job," said Foley. Santa Barbara Medco has increased its product volume and has gotten some new retail clients, which is beneficial for ProAct, Foley explained. The company's products are also sent out to doctors offices.

Independently employed people who receive services from ProAct have benefited greatly from T&K Restaurant Franchise, the winner in the Supported Employment category. The company owns several McDonald's Restaurants in the south metro area. "The HR staff is really good to us," said ProAct Case Manager David Cho, who works with the restaurant operator to gather required information for ProAct clients. Flexibility is a hallmark of the group of fast food stores, which have allowed ProAct individuals to transfer to other stores when a need arose, Cho explained.

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

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