



MED PRODUCT PACKAGING THRIVES ON STEADY COMMUNICATION

The products are packaged by the thousands, and make their way to hospitals, clinics and pharmacies, as 50 to 75 people at ProAct package them for sale.

Burnsville-based Apothecary Products has been sending more of its medical products ProAct's way, where crews are maintaining a quality level and turnaround time that's impressed Apothecary Planner Robert Kurr.

"We're very pleased with the quality we've been getting from them all around, from getting bids to getting the work completed, and on time," said Kurr. He sends out work to fewer than 10 outside vendors.

Nasal aspirators, ear syringes, pill boxes, droppers, spoons and other products are purchased in bulk from overseas suppliers, then packaged under numerous brand names for distribution to retailers, clinics and hospitals.

Workers wear hairnets and gloves, and every job is monitored closely, right down to the temperature of the blister pack machine that applies plastic packaging.



Above, Robert Kurr plans packaging jobs for Apothecary medical products and sends many to ProAct. Below, Apothecary's blister pack machine at ProAct packages pill splitters and other products in Eagan.



"It's training, training, training and retraining, especially on our blister (pack) machines," said ProAct Job Supervisor Harold Junjak. Each job is monitored closely to ensure proper sealing, which is highly dependent on temperature. Border and flange sizes, as well as the overall package shape, have an impact on a product's potential to break loose from its packaging, Junjak explained.

Clients request to be over there (working on Apothecary) and enjoy it more than anything else," Junjak said. He said Kurr communicates well regarding due dates and expectations. Kurr said there are times when large unexpected orders come in.

Kurr has found that ProAct has been very up front with him about its capabilities and making a job work. He knows what ProAct can and can't handle. "We've had other vendors promise the world, but they don't come through," he said. Communication

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NEW EQUIPMENT ADDS POSSIBILITIES



Large rolls of rubber backed fabric are rolled out to over 20 feet and cut into small mat sizes in just five minutes using Red Wing's new automated cutting table.

A sizable computerized cutting table in Red Wing and special crimping devices in Eagan round out two new production equipment offerings that make ProAct more competitive on current and future jobs.

The Gerber DCS 2500 is a machine designed to cut almost any fabric, said Red Wing Director of Production Paul Rodewald. Its 24-by-8-foot bed with vacuum suction and computerized cutting system are making short order of large jobs. ProAct uses it to cut mats for a customer that had previously been sending in pre-cut material for ProAct to package. Now, the entire process occurs in-house.

"We have to keep this table going every single day just to keep up with the orders," said Sewing Coordinator Roxie McGrath.

Two computers feed the cutter. One sets up patterns. The other operates the automated arm that cuts to spec. Product patterns are drawn out on a board that recognizes shapes, then platted based on the size of the roll stock to minimize material waste.



Sewing Coordinator Roxie McGrath installs a new blade for the Gerber cutting tool.

Plans are in the works to cut drape samples from very thin material and ProAct has already completed orders for Target and Walmart. Every two weeks, it receives a shipment of 50 to 80 large rolls.

While the new cutter separates material, new crimping tools and dies at ProAct in Eagan help put products together. Stretch cords to anchor down product displays can be attached to materials using special presses to apply metal bands. The first order for 15,000 pieces was turned around quickly. ProAct could easily assemble name badge lanyards and other products that require that type of assembly, said Randy Pettersen, who manages sales in Eagan.



ProAct temporary Mai Vang with a new press to apply clips to elastic materials

Transport leader urges bus readiness, absence reporting Watching and waiting at the door for the morning bus ride to ProAct is very important, as is being dressed and ready to go, says Eagan Transportation Coordinator Jane Snyder. Pickup delays can throw a bus schedule off and cause problems. Additionally, ProAct drivers cannot leave the vehicle, so clients who need help getting to the bus rely on residential staff and families to get them there. For any planned absences, the residence or family should call the driver's cell phone directly. If you have questions, please contact Jane Snyder (Eagan) 651-289-3159, jsnyder@proactinc.org or Tessa Langer (Red Wing) 651-388-7108, tlang@proactinc.org

ON A ROLL: INSIDE JOB PLACEMENT PUSH EQUIPS, ENERGIZES

From the inside looking out, ProAct is taking a fresh approach to placing its consumers in community jobs, and new Vocational Specialist Jen Malm is driving it.

Working with people from all program areas, Malm meets participants to plan, strategize and actively seek outside work. The task was previously handled by case managers as one of their many responsibilities.

The initiative has already led to a job placement at Lowe's in West St. Paul, another at a Quiznos sub shop in Oakdale and a possible position in automotive service at Sears in Burnsville.

Malm searches online, makes calls and personal visits to managers and human resource staff members to promote her candidates. "You just have to jump in," she said. "They're very motivated to work and excited about getting independent employment."

That enthusiasm shines through when many candidates talk repeatedly with coworkers and supervisors about their upcoming meetings with Malm. They ask questions like "When is Jen coming to get me?" Some get dressed up for interviews, but making the job connection is often Malm's task.

Even with ProAct's array



Jen Malm helps Phillip Briggs apply for jobs online at Barnes and Noble in Eagan. Malm's targeted placement efforts span several ProAct departments.

of support services for new employees as a selling point, it often comes down to meeting the correct person, the specialist explains. She tells job seekers that they're at a different level now and to be open minded about hours and availability.

Inside ProAct, Malm interviews people and assists with resumes and cover letters. To further enhance the experience, she takes some clients into the community to search. With her laptop computer at her side, Malm made a trip to the Eagan Barnes & Noble with DT&H client Phillip Briggs. The two filled out online applications and searched for open positions. Briggs spent seven

years in shipping and receiving before his job ended in 2008.

With unwavering persistence, Malm secured an interview for Briggs at Rainbow Foods, and went after more. The voc specialist talks to Briggs about Solos Pizza Cafe and Panda Express, two new restaurants opening across the lot. Malm had already talked to Solos about Briggs' friendly and considerate demeanor. "They're trying to figure out a way that you could empty trays and garbage," she tells Briggs.

Malm also helped Briggs apply at Old Navy and followed up on his application. His drive to work only encourages her to try harder.

"I can't look into the past," said Briggs. "I can't do that because I have to look into the future." Many of his 15 years spent at a ProAct competitor were spent working, and he's more than ready to return to a regular job.

Motivation has a big impact on a person's success, said Malm, and so do interpersonal skills. She talks to Briggs about shaking hands, making eye contact, dressing for an interview and good hygiene. These are extra important because getting interviews has become more difficult.

When face to face interviews with employers open up, Malm offers to sit in and explain questions to her participants. At times, the questions are not easy. One

See Finding jobs, page 2

From the President...

I am pleased to report that ProAct is performing well in 2010, with strong numbers of participants and good reports on the quality of the services we provide. This gives us a sound foundation, able to cope with the threats posed by the down economy.

We are keeping an eye on developments in St. Paul, as the legislature strives to come up with a spending plan. ProAct has already been informed that 2.5 and 7 percent cuts in program fees were proposed for two of our funding sources in the Governor's proposed budget. While we hope this can be avoided, we will manage with the final rate. These are difficult times for everyone. We have worked hard to operate efficiently, and staff members have been diligent in upholding a high standard of quality. This has led to consistently high levels of satisfaction in our participant surveys.



As we move forward, ProAct will continue to look for new areas in which it can make a contribution to improving the lives of people with disabilities. Whether through employment services, life skills or enrichment programs, ProAct seeks to present quality services in a welcoming environment.

We have been particularly pleased by the success of our new Life Opportunities program in Hudson and River Falls, Wisconsin. Providing innovative services to participants, Life Opportunities is expected to grow as its programs become more widely known in western Wisconsin.

All of us at ProAct value your support and appreciate the ongoing backing that you provide throughout the year. Whether as partners in community services, contributors or collaborating agencies, your help is valuable to all of us. Thank you all for what you do to make ProAct a strong and innovative service organization.

WATCHFUL EYE, LISTENING EAR TO HELP

She could be called the guidance counselor of the break room, a supervisor, and, in a number of cases, a confidant and friend.

Rehab human service technician Lisa Putnam fills a new post at the Eagan location that's similar to that of a hall monitor. She does her best to answer questions from consumers. Some have issues they want addressed. Others just enjoy making small talk.

"She's here to make sure that everybody is staying safe," said her supervisor, Rehab Program Coordinator Charlotte Eastin. Additional staff members are often in the room, as well. Putnam's calm and nonconfrontive personality is also helpful when she encourages people in Rehab to stay on schedule. Further incentives are given through a ProAct lottery rewards system with prizes for clients who make good on their time commitments.

There are people at ProAct who are vulnerable adults, and part of Putnam's charge is to help protect them. "Her main focus is to deal with people with higher needs, and to give



Lisa Putnam, right, listens to Patrick Shields, who speaks his mind. Below, she helps move one group of ProAct workers out of the break room to make room for the next.

direct support to those people who need it," said Carolyn Dobis, director of programs and services. She has a special eye for spotting personality conflicts that can boil over quickly. But, her skills go much further.

Available to many individuals who need help to stay focused on their jobs, Putnam helps to develop job readiness skills. The ultimate goal for many of the participants is to place them in community-based jobs, Dobis explained.



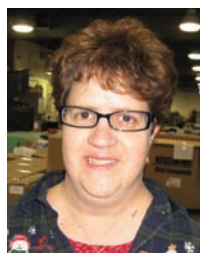
Red Wing Special Olympics bowler wins division

Red Wing consumer Irene Gadient took home a first place win for her division in the Special Olympics state bowling tournament in Bloomington.

"It was different, and kind of fun to watch other people bowling too, with different abilities and people in wheelchairs," she said.

Another year at the tournament, Gadient took second place, missing first by one pin.

"Special Olympics Minnesota



Irene Gadient.

gives athletes with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to have meaningful and competitive sports experiences," said Anna Kucera, marketing and communications manager for the Special Olympics. "Bowling is our most popular sport, so our annual State Bowling Tournament is tons of fun for everyone involved."

Bowlers are placed in divisions of up to eight athletes based on their gender, age and score, tournament organizers explained.

Sages event: Challenging Behaviors and The Aging Person with DD:

Speakers: Kelly Ruiz, MA and Donna Kuller, RN, both of the Metro Crisis Coordination Program. Friday, April 9, 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. Christ the King Church, 8600 Fremont Avenue South, Bloomington. Cost: \$15. RSVP by April 5 with Susan Flaagan at Dakota Communities at (612) 860-0854 or SusanF@dakcom.org

Finding jobs, from page 1

interviewee was asked to give an example of a big mistake he made and how he handled it. Malm helped turn the answer around so the participant could better relate to a past situation on the work floor.

For just one interview, Malm may help a client with 10 different applications. She often works from ProAct employer contact lists and also establishes new connections.

It took two months, but not long

after this session, Briggs was offered a weekend job busing tables at a Perkins restaurant near his home.

When job matches like these are made, Malm is thrilled to see the fruits of her labor. "It's wonderful," she said. "And, it's rewarding when things like that happen." Participants are appreciative. The new Quiznos employee was so grateful that she offered to take Malm out for a lobster dinner.

CLEANING UP INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION

Paulene Swandby carefully dries a wheelchair, pulls out the straps and then checks her list. Her steady chair cleaning work at Red Wing Health Center is essential in an environment where resident health is priority one.



Clean environments in health care settings are important, and Paulene Swandby covers a wheelchair cleaning schedule.

Cleanliness and hygiene are part of site surveys, said nurse manager LuAnn Albarado. Wheelchairs are the primary form of transportation in the three floor center for 80 to 90 percent of those in treatment. About half are there for injuries, some are on ventilators and others suffer from dementia.

"It's a never ending thing, like keeping up the cars in the household- you keep the oil changed in the car and you keep the wheelchairs maintained in the facility," said Albarado.

Swandby quietly tends to her duties, running the moving chairs through what looks like an overgrown restaurant dishwasher. Alert buzzers go off as she passes through certain doors, and she disables them by entering a code. Another buzzer on a wheelchair sounds like a smoke alarm when it kicks on. Many of the people she serves are seniors. "Sometimes, on E1, they'll tell me I'm so nice," she said. "I've had a couple



of them who wanted to go home with me." One woman, who is known as "grandma" gets talking and Swandby tries to understand her. "You're doing what, grandma? Alright, you get some

sleep, OK?"

Swandby moved to Red Wing from Wabasha. Her post here comes after extensive enclave experience and nearly 11 years with ProAct.

Fridays can sometimes be crunch time on wash duty, when Swandby covers the dementia unit, where chairs are washed three times a week.

The health center helps people with intense behaviors, said Albarado, and performs many medical functions in house. Some patients are there for head injuries. They can get frustrated, the nurse said, when they're not able to function at pre-injury levels. "It's very rewarding when somebody wakes up from a coma and starts making progress," she said.

Swandby's job offers experience that she can use in the future. "I'd like to go to college for cosmetology, but I've never checked into it to see how much it costs," she said. She's already dyeing hair for her friends.

Correction: ProAct's recently released 2009 Annual Report incorrectly reported a donation made by John and Janet Thames in honor of David Opdahl. The contribution was made in honor of Kathy Thames. ProAct regrets this error.

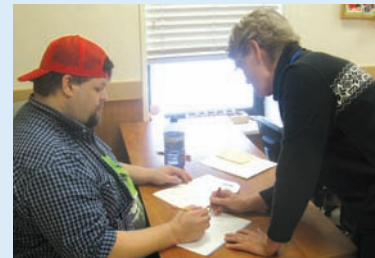
PROACT PHOTO BRIEFS:

Now delivering Thisweek papers



Site Supervisor Roger Egan, center, stuffs papers with Joe Langworthy, left and Bob Fideldy in preparation for ProAct's new weekly paper route in Burnsville and Eagan. Rain or shine and door to door, the route can be challenging in the winter.

Red Wing GED class begins



Community education instructor Dorothy Eckblad works with Tim Borchert during a new GED® class offered by ProAct in Red Wing. The courses include reading, writing and work site math.

Aktion Club members part of Kiwanis



Community service is the emphasis for these Red Wing and Lake City Kiwanis members. From left are: Kurt VanDeWalker, Brad Mickelson, Kitty Halverson, Darcy Soine, Jeff Miller and Larry Bale.

Visiting rivertown animals weekly



Meghan Diercks gets a kiss from a coon hound at the Goodhue County Humane Society. She has two similar dogs at home.

Cooking for diabetics



Instructor Loretta Ohmann teaches mixer safety to Karen Kohls during a cooking class focused on low fat and low sugar foods.

Med products, from page 1

is essential, so Kurr talks to ProAct staff members almost every day.

ProAct's Eagan production leader is a key contact. "From our end, it's gratitude for the type of work that's conducive to our clients and the steadiness of the work," said ProAct's Eagan Production Director, Dave Cavalier. The jobs require a range of skills, which fits well with ProAct's workforce.

Life Ops update, from page 4

program, which is an ideal match for three clients who are nonverbal, according to Briggs. One is learning colors and words that she typically uses at work.

Cavalier describes Kurr as community minded and interested in helping people with work opportunities.

"They play hardball with the big boys such as Walgreens and Walmart," said Cavalier. "You've got to be able to move, adjust and rock and roll."

While based in Burnsville, Apothecary has an additional facility in Michigan.

For program growth, Briggs remained optimistic. She hopes to bring additional clients in after area high schools let out for the summer.

ProAct Board of Directors:

Charles DeNet, Robert Kincade, Paul Kramp, Mary Ellen Leary, Larry Lehman, James Louwagie, Teri McCloughan, Dr. Michael Nanne, Dr. Barbara Rebhuhn and Marty Stapleton.

Hotel housekeepers uphold 10-year tradition of impressing managers

The Fairfield Inn in Mendota Heights is a place with plenty of opportunity for housekeeping hustle. That's part of the reason why ProAct's crews have been called in for a solid decade.

The newly renovated hotel, due east of the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport, upholds high standards. Guest rooms sport new furniture and bedding with fresh carpet throughout. The bathrooms are next.

"There are very high expectations," said ProAct Site Supervisor Velinda Raehsler. Hotel managers meet with the ProAct and hotel crews each morning and Fairfield holds weekly scoring sessions for ProAct's room cleaning and preparation.

In early February, two individuals received 90 and 98 percent ratings, she explained. "These guys are phenomenal," said Raehsler. "They just know what we have to do."

On average, the crew cleans and prepares 17 rooms from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Some of the work is split up by task, with one person handling all the bathroom cleaning, for example.

Others, like 8-year veteran Mark Vanderbie, prefer to do complete rooms themselves. Nearly 60, he is very efficient, fast and accurate, and tackles rooms with king sized beds, said Raehsler. "He tells me that 'For 58, I sure can move,'" she said.

Another speed judge is Site Supervisor Kam Scott, who does task time studies for new clients who want to work at Fairfield. These help determine wage rates.

Inspections can be vigorous, as hotel staff check vents in bathrooms, higher areas

for dust, air conditioners, bathtubs and other "deep cleaning" items, Raehsler said. After cleaning a bathroom, the ProAct crew runs a lint roller over the entire floor to make sure to catch any stray hairs.

Customer kudos are a bonus for the ProAct faithful, and so are the



tips. The day before this visit, a group of basketball players paid two compliments. Raeschler saves the \$15 to \$20 a week in housekeeping gratuities for regular lunch parties.

"If you make it fun, they want to stay," she said. "If you're a drill sergeant, they don't want to."

Managers have been appreciative. "We don't know what we would do without them," said Assistant Manager Melissa Bruneau. She said Raeschler and Scott go back to check all the rooms and correct any problems right away. Bruneau also noticed a sense of work pride among the ProAct housekeepers, who prefer to stay as busy as possible.

The morning meetings focus on particular items "If our employees are happy, then our guests are happy," said Brundau. Hotel employees and ProAct crew members alike are allowed to raise any comments or concerns. Managers also keep them updated as part of the overall team, Brundau explained.



ProAct's Mark Vanderbie joined the Fairfield Inn crew in 2002, and continues to impress his supervisors. He single-handedly cleans four rooms, from top to bottom.



Members of the Fairfield crew, in back from left, Sandra Landis, Mark Vanberdie, Supervisor Velinda Raehsler and James Quick. In front, Theresa Hart, Janessa Kitrow, and Mary Jungmann.

Raehsler doesn't seem to mind dealing with the performance pressures from managers, and working alongside the ProAct team members she supervises. "They put more pressure on me because I know what their expectations are," she said.

She knows when her coworkers with disabilities have had a hard day. "If our bodies hurt, so do theirs. If my feet hurt, their feet hurt. It's usually one for one," Raehsler said.

Comments welcome, alternative formats available—Upon request, this publication is available in alternate languages and formats. Comments are welcome. Contact Heidi at 651-289-3149, hranderson@proactinc.org.

SHE REACHES OUT, PROACT BENEFITS

Take a look at any ProAct work enclave in Dakota County and chances are four to one that Cathy McCoy found the job through a chamber of commerce connection.

"The more that your face is out there, the better it is," said the longtime employment manager. Referring to an appointment filled calendar on her desk, McCoy said her January was a kickoff month and was extremely busy. The social events call, two, three and even four of them each week, and McCoy answers, to promote ProAct workers and tell the nonprofit's story.

"I've always felt, especially in the last 10 years, that you can't just send letters out and pick up the phone. You've got to see people," McCoy said. She estimates that 60 percent of her time is spent on these marketing efforts.

From St. Paul, to West St. Paul, Eagan, Rosemount and other areas, McCoy is the face of ProAct in the business community. In both the going and the knowing, she works to build on her valuable connections made over 15 years, week in and week out. That staying power helps build trust, and only increases her ability to spread the word about ProAct.

During a morning coffee event at Rosemount Eye Clinic, McCoy tells a business connection that her task is to make sure businesses utilize ProAct's workers, and that they do a good job for them. Smiling and approachable, she explains ProAct's offerings, and welcomes questions.



Above right, Cathy McCoy visits with a business owner at a chamber of commerce morning meeting held at The Commons on Marice senior home in Eagan.

Quick, around the room introductions are often McCoy's opportunity to get her message out to entire groups. It's even better when someone in the group publicly commends ProAct for its work.

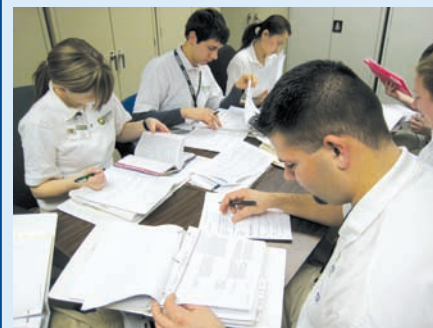
Giving greater exposure to ProAct, McCoy has served as a board chair and foundation chair for the Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce.



McCoy, center, listens to leader presentations at the morning chamber event in Eagan.

@ ProAct updates by e-mail You can read the latest from ProAct ... and soon receive program information and schedule changes by e-mail. Simply e-mail info@proactinc.org and indicate "Mailing List" in the subject line. Be assured this information will not be shared.

NURSES TRAINING FOR UP CLOSE LOOK



Students in the Licensed Practical Nurse program at Rasmussen College look over client paperwork to learn about disabilities and treatments they may need to administer when they practice nursing.

Nurses in training are fast learning that there's no substitute for practical experience, and ProAct is one place where they can get it.

Two groups of Rasmussen College licensed practical nursing (LPN) students converge on ProAct for several hours of clinical work each week, poring over client files, observing people with varying disabilities and thinking of treatment methods they would use to help others when they enter the field.

Rasmussen Dean of Nursing Dana Feld said the 10-week clinicals or observational sessions are for a psychosocial nursing and mental health nursing course. "This is where students are learning their bedside manner. For nursing, it's one of the most difficult things to teach," she said. Feld asked how they would treat someone who is nonverbal, for example.

The class is Psychosocial Nursing, with a mental health nursing clinical. Students look up an individual diagnoses axis and social history. Risk management information is also analyzed. This may reveal if someone is at risk of falling out of bed.

"They're building rapport," said Feld. "They get to come here and practice what they're learning in class."

Each week they pick a specific disability, such as autism, mental illness



Rasmussen student William Wright, right, observes Karin Westby on the work floor.

or obsessive compulsive disorder. The students not only study the files. They learn how to interact with people with each diagnosis. At the end of each clinical, the group meets to discuss what they learned.

What the students find out, says Feld, is that people with specific disabilities don't all share the same characteristics. "And, to make assumptions about people can set you up for very bad nursing," she said.

LPN nurses have strong employment prospects. Feld said there are 146 open LPN positions in Minnesota, and the number of students coming out of school is lower than worker demand. Job placement rates are approaching 100 percent.

Feld said she was surprised by the variety of products processed by ProAct and wants to support those efforts through her own personal purchases.

Get to know us

Admission Information

Eagan, Hudson/River Falls-
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Red Wing, Zumbrota-
Pamela Veith
651-388-7108

Production Services

Eagan- Dave Cavalier
651-289-3158
Randy Pettersen
651-289-3157

Red Wing- Paul Rodewald or
Paul Mummert
651-388-7108

Need Employees?

Eagan- Catherine McCoy
651-289-3170 (groups)
Eagan- Deb Ulrich
651-289-3165 (individuals)
Red Wing- Pamela Veith
651-388-7108

Donation Opportunities

Heidi Anderson
651-289-3149

ProAct's Four Locations

3195 Neil Armstrong Blvd., Eagan, MN 55121
204 Mississippi Ave., Red Wing, MN 55066
224 S. Main St., Zumbrota, MN 55992
N 8424 A 900th, River Falls, WI 54022



ProAct is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for employment planning, employee development, and organizational and community employment.



Programs funded in part by The Greater Twin Cities United Way, United Way of Goodhue, Wabasha & Pierce Counties and Hastings United Way.



ProAct, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization with 40 years of experience.



3195 Neil Armstrong Blvd.
Eagan, MN 55121

PROACT

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877-245-0405 toll free

Comments and alternative formats

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Welcome to People Achieving,

an inside look at the activities and programs of ProAct, Inc., serving people with disabilities in and around Minnesota's Twin Cities, in communities along the Mississippi and in southeastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin.

DENTIST BRINGS TBI EXPERIENCE

ProAct Board Member Dr. Michael Nanne focuses primarily on his Burnsville dental practice, but also carries a level of expertise in traumatic brain injuries.

Through his involvement in sports dentistry, he has delved into concussion management and continued education for mild traumatic brain injuries (MTBI), a field that parallels ProAct's Adult Day Services offerings in Eagan. "I do things besides just drilling and filling teeth," said Nanne.

This better equips him to provide input to help ProAct clients who have sustained head injuries and want to get back into the job market.

The doctor has helped many of his patients get relief from TMJ (jaw joint) related pain as well. The treatments stem from his understanding of a person's correct jaw relationship or bite position.



Board Member Michael Nanne has thrived, despite his own disability.



Success in his field meshes well with ProAct's achievements. "I'm excited to be involved in ProAct and in helping to see the company succeed and be a leader in the community," he said.

"I feel ProAct is doing an excellent job of fulfilling its goals of providing services to people in need," the doctor said. He's especially pleased to be involved in a nonprofit that's stable, and has a growing reputation among businesses and people who need services.

Nanne had needs of his own after sustaining a life threatening injury in 1982. Despite losing one of his legs, he has gone on to be active in skiing, golf and water skiing. "I'm continually striving to rise above my physical disabilities and finding a way to both compete and succeed in life."

Nanne is in his ninth year serving as a team dentist for the Minnesota Wild hockey team. "It's very rewarding for me ... to be on the protective and preventive side," he said.

When there is work to be done, ProAct provides:

- Customized services
- Product assembly and packaging
- Training and supervision

Office support, document scanning, packaging and assembly, laundry, health services, quality control, automated equipment control, janitorial and housekeeping, among others

ProAct, a nonprofit headquartered in Eagan with sites in Red Wing, Zumbrota and Hudson, has some 40 years of experience. Maximizing Human Potential for Greater Self-Sufficiency. proactinc.org

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Wis. program realizes gains, more work

There's added work, higher expectations and more interest from parents and young people with disabilities. The Life Opportunities program is, indeed, living up to its name.

ProAct's offering in western Wisconsin that combines work, life skills and recreation is thriving. Clients with disabilities working at the S.O.R.S.A. restaurant supply business in Hudson have started packaging orders to be shipped to customers.

"We've found a job for everybody," said ProAct Program Coordinator Stephanie Briggs. Each person is capable of performing at least one function of a particular job, she explained.

For one new project, participants debugged and repackaged turkey decoys, which were missing instructions. Performed at the Stables facilities in River Falls, the

work resulted from a connection through S.O.R.S.A. To Briggs' delight, more work hours have been logged as a result.

The supply business also started inventory work for English stoneware and chinaware to sell on eBay. After counting, products are photographed for marketing.

Add to this an additional job for Expedite International in Hudson, which coordinates offshore product manufacturing jobs for import to the U.S. "It's great work for our folks and they seem to like the variety," Briggs said.

While welcoming its first program participant from River Falls, the Life Ops program is getting more attention, as more potential clients are taking tours to see what it's about. A new human service technician, Holly Conwell, has been on call to assist, as well. She brings a background in sign language to the



See Life Ops update, page 2

MAN ABOUT THE FALLS ASSISTS STUDENTS

He's visible, enthusiastic and helpful, and he's making inroads in Cannon Falls.

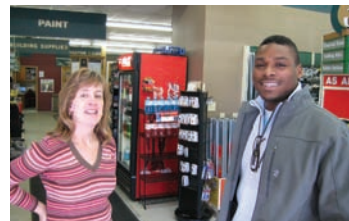
Job coach Kareem Lipscomb, who has served in various capacities at ProAct in Red Wing, is connecting with business owners and managers to arrange job assessments for area high-schoolers with disabilities.

With a bucket of clean rags in hand, he meets with Snap Fitness Manager Krissy Neumann. Lipscomb placed a high school senior with Snap for a cleaning job tryout or assessment. "He did a lot of good cleaning. I want him back," said Neumann. The 6-week-old operation is the only fitness center of its kind in Cannon Falls and customers want to keep it looking nice, she explained.

After a few minutes here, the friendly promoter zips to his next stop, Interstate



Above, Lipscomb meets briefly with Snap Fitness Manager Krissy Neumann to discuss a student's job tryout. Below, he checks in with Mary Reinhardt, an owner of Interstate Lumberyard, which has welcomed the job experiences.



Lumberyard, a hardware and building center. The store hosted the same high-schooler for freight unloading, cleaning and delivery work. "He just did a phenomenal job, and was always willing to help out," said Owner Mary Reinhardt.

Opportunities like these have resulted from connections through Cannon Falls High School, and from some ties Lipscomb is developing on his own. Sometimes, lunchtime is the time to make his finds.

Grabbing a bite at a local gas station, he strikes up a conversation with one of the owners, who is interested in ProAct's services. Lipscomb was hopeful to arrange a job tryout there soon.

In an age of online social networking and texting from afar, Lipscomb's face to face visits are an old art that's paying dividends for young people with disabilities. He asks, then explains, and businesses respond.

Maximizing Human Potential for Greater Self-Sufficiency