



December 2009

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the ProAct family I offer warm wishes for the holidays. This is the time of year when we recognize our blessings, the good we have benefited from during the year.

The greatest gift of all is the time we spend with family and friends, particularly during the holidays.

May you and yours have a joyous holiday season and enjoy a rewarding and Happy New Year!

Steve Ditschler and the ProAct family

HILTON WORKER TAKES LOADS OFF, MASTERS WORK ENVIRONMENT

Laundry piles at home can be daunting, but how does 120 loads a day sound? That's the home laundry equivalent that enclave team member Cindy Erickson has before her, and she doesn't seem to mind it at all.

"She has just blossomed," said ProAct Employment Manager Catherine McCoy. "It was a perfect match," said Employment Coordinator Deb Hickey. "She can go in and fold fitted sheets just like that. Perfect."

The two 55-pound capacity washing machines at the Hilton Garden Inn tumble through hundreds of towels and dozens of sheets, completing their cycles in 40 minutes. An Eagan crew of four keeps the process moving.

"Go, go, go," says Erickson, at the 100-room hotel, as she removes towels from the large front-loaders. Her work functions are extra enjoyable due to the social components that go along with them. Talking to her coworkers as they work and during lunch is a practice she savors.

"I bug (Site Supervisor) Christina (Heald) a lot. We tease each other," she said. Some healthy kidding around makes the camaraderie stronger. One day, Erickson was singing and laughed when the chef



Cindy Erickson is a key contributor in the laundry operation at Eagan's Hilton Garden Inn, where she stays productive and keeps a cheery attitude that's contagious.

jokingly told her to keep her day job.

Whether she's upstairs filling the second and third floor linen closets, or on the load, unload and fold routine downstairs, Erickson often sings while she works. "The day goes by so much quicker," she said.

There's no disappointment here, or feelings of dissatisfaction due to higher aspirations. "I like whatever I do," she said. Prior to ProAct, she worked in a kitchen and dining room at the St. Paul Companies. Four different jobs there had gotten stressful, so her social worker suggested ProAct as a lower stress option.

Satisfaction from Hilton Garden Inn leaders comes as ProAct manages and completes its daily tasks. "We don't babysit here," said Executive Housekeeper Javier Rosario, who oversees the ProAct crew. The hotel employs three ProAct crews in its laundry and housekeeping operations.

For Erickson, there are breaks in the hotel work. On Tuesdays, she packages products on the ProAct work floor. She thrives on the variety. "I get a fair share of different jobs, so I'm happy." On some days, she goes to Capitol Direct to prepare bulk mail shipments. She's been with ProAct for four years.

FORMER PROACT LEADER REMEMBERED

Lou Besser, 74, the former ProAct board member, president and CEO, is best known for guiding the nonprofit through troubled financial waters. He died November 10.



Lou Besser was president of ProAct, then Owobopte, in the 1990s.

"He was really a fantastic businessman. That seemed to be his niche," said Dale Klette, compliance officer for ProAct, who once served as Besser's boss at Sperry Univac, the predecessor to Unisys. Besser engineered computer applications for Navy ships over his 25-year business career. A former math teacher, he also had a two year stint in the infantry division of the U.S. Army.

Besser retired from Univac in the late 1980s, when he also served on the Owobopte (a ProAct predecessor) board of directors. In addition to his leadership in pulling ProAct back to a strong financial position, Besser had a major role in the creation of the new ProAct facility constructed on Neil Armstrong Boulevard in Eagan in 1997.

His colleague, former Interstate Rehabilitation Center (IRC) Executive Director David Leiseth, had suggested a merger between IRC and Owobopte before Besser's retirement in 2000. Leiseth saw many similarities between the organizations and later approached the IRC board to pursue the merger, which took place in 2002.

Pet therapy program paws forward with Red Wing staffer's Great Dane

Calm is too turbulent a word to describe Gretel, a 160-pound Great Dane that's capturing the hearts of ProAct consumers in Red Wing.

The chief centerpiece of a new pet therapy program here, Gretel is certified through Therapy Dogs International. Her owner is human service technician Char Dudley, who described the rigorous testing her animal went through.

"They screen for loud noises and pull her ears to see if she would react to pain without biting," she said. The dog cannot be scared when left alone, or when spending time with a stranger. Dudley and her daughter, Inga, were both certified as dog handlers, which opens the door for dog therapy sessions at area nursing homes and other venues.

Though restricted to a particular area in ProAct's rivertown facility, consumers in groups of two or three can relax with

Greta, sitting and cuddling the canine giant. "People with high anxiety, they'll mellow just by being around her," said Dudley.

One little girl walking down the street gave Greta a bear hug without asking, which set her mother off, who screamed. "It's OK, she won't hurt her," said Dudley. The mother said her daughter is very afraid of dogs. She's not afraid of this one.

At ProAct, selected participants can



Red Wing human service technician Char Dudley, left, works with ProAct participant Stephanie McClain during a pet therapy session with Greta. The highly trained and therapy certified Great Dane is highly desirable at nursing homes, hospitals and schools, where children read to the dog.

spend time with the dog. Those who are allergic or afraid of dogs are screened out of this group. Greta, on the other hand, doesn't

See Pet therapy, page 2

KEEPING AN EAR OUT: MANUFACTURER BRINGS BIG JOBS TO EAGAN

An effort to resurrect an ear products line and get the items out to retail stores has proven an ideal opportunity for ProAct and its participants with disabilities.

Santa Barbara Medco, a subsidiary of St. Paul-based Micromedics, chose ProAct to assemble and shrink-wrap as many as eight different products, all of them at ProAct's headquarters in Eagan. Current work has focused on ear plugs, which come in



different style packages.

Master Scheduler Carrie Foley with Santa Barbara said the packaging services provided

Ear plugs for Santa Barbara Medco are packaged at ProAct's Eagan facility using semi-clean room standards.

by ProAct add efficiency for the company, freeing up its highly trained employees to take on more skilled labor. ProAct receives specific written instructions, and follows up with any questions.

"They do a great job," said Foley. "If there's ever a question about the work, they are very good about calling and making sure they know exactly what we were looking for," she said. People at her nearby facility have been impressed with ProAct's workmanship and attention to detail, she explained.

See Ear product maker, page 2

From the President...

As we approach the end of 2009 we can look ahead to the future with an even greater sense of accomplishment and enthusiasm.

Following a year in which we set a new high mark in terms of the total participants, ProAct also launched its new Life Opportunities program in western Wisconsin. This new initiative signals a further era of innovation and striving to meet emerging needs. While Life Opportunities was launched on a modest scale, it is expected that the program will grow in the months ahead.



While the economy has not improved as rapidly as many predicted and this has impacted our ability to maintain work and employment opportunities at optimum levels for the people we serve, we were able to increase the number of people in our programs. We should be positioned well when the economy improves. I appreciate the patience of our consumers, and the diligence of our staff.

Despite the impact of economic conditions, we have maintained the high quality of our program offerings, achieving high satisfaction among participants and rating organizations. We were gratified to receive a three year accreditation from CARE, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, with no formal calls for improvement. Such a report without recommendations is rare, an honor shared by only 3 percent of those surveyed. Even more distinctive, ProAct reached this level for the second time in a row.

The programs offered by ProAct continue to be popular with participants and those seeking employment-related services, and there is every reason to believe that demand for ProAct services will continue to grow.

Much of our success can be attributed to the commitment, talent and hard work of our staff members, who seek to maximize the achievement and satisfaction of the people we serve. They have been respectful and caring in their approach, while encouraging and supporting progress toward attaining individual goals. Many tell us that this is part of what makes ProAct special.

We are thankful of everyone who has contributed to the success of our participants, but most appreciative of each individual journey of those we are privileged to serve.

As we approach the New Year, I wish you all a joyous holiday season, and look forward to a year of accomplishment and success in 2010.

Cordially,

Steve Ditschler

INDUSTRIAL VET STRATEGIZES, PROMOTES PRODUCTION SERVICES

As the new face of ProAct in the production world, Sales Manager Randy Petterssen is doing his homework, studying ProAct's competitors, forming a strategy and implementing it.

"They've positioned themselves well," said Petterssen, who has a track record in industrial distribution that spans more than 30 years. In comparing ProAct to its primary competitors, Petterssen found it was the strongest financially, but needs to raise its rank in overall sales.

He last served as a vice president of sales for Source One Alliance, a group of industrial distributors that focused on a single product fulfillment process that reduced costs for users. It was modeled after

Toyota's "Lean" manufacturing process.

On his choice to join ProAct, Petterssen reflected on his first experience with a nonprofit. "There's part of me that wants to do a little 'give back.' It's not all about meeting the next sales goal or the next new thing you want to buy," he said.

The aim at ProAct is to provide a consistent supply of work, in addition to the more temporary jobs that the organization bids on. Manufacturing companies are tending to do less with less in today's market, he said. "They're going to be very hesitant



New Sales Manager Randy Petterssen brings 30 years of industrial experience to ProAct's Eagan operation.

to hire low skilled labor into their operations," said Petterssen. Instead, they'll hire temporary workers or "farm it out" to operations like ProAct. He went through a similar recession period between 1982 and 1985.

A native of St. Paul, Petterssen studied broadcasting at Brown College, and was an announcer at a small market radio station before breaking into the industrial distribution business in 1976. In addition to his positions in sales, Petterssen has worked as a general manager and a vice president of product development. He lives in Maple Grove with his wife of 34 years, Janelle. They have two grown children.

Ear product maker, from page 1

ProAct bid on Santa Barbara's monthly production, said Dave Cavalier, director of production for ProAct in Eagan. The products require a "semi-clean room" atmosphere. Packaging workers wear hair nets and latex free gloves to package the ear products.

With products available at many pharmacy chains, one of Santa Barbara Medco's products was selling at a rate of 20,000 boxes per month at Walgreens stores.



Ear plug protection from Santa Barbara Medco.



Carrie Foley schedules production orders for Santa Barbara Medco.

a distribution channel for Micromedics' over-the-counter market, according to a company news release.

Santa Barbara Medco products include Physician's Choice Ear Drops, Ear Putty and Foam Ear Plugs; Eavey Ear Easy Wrap Ear Bands and Swimmer's Choice Ear Drops.

Three of the primary ingredients used in Santa Barbara's ear wax removal product are produced in California. Santa Barbara Medco was acquired by Micromedics, a privately held St. Paul-based company, in 2007. The purchase opened

Comments welcome, alternative formats available

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Pet therapy, from page 1

mind any of her growing pool of friends with disabilities. "She's a people dog, and wants to be by people all the time," said Dudley.

At Dudley's home in the country, Greta can romp around on two acres of land. She eats about a coffee can of dog food each day.

The preoperative ward at Gillette children's hospital in St. Paul has requested the large dog with the red, white and blue ribbon and the pink paw prints leash, in



part because Greta stands tall enough to do therapy beside children's beds. The Red Wing Health Center is a regular therapy setting, and Dudley has calls in to several schools and to a hospice.

"She's one of the highest trained dogs in Goodhue County," said Dudley, and has done quite well in her daughter's 4-H dog obedience competition.

Purebred Great Danes tend to have hip problems, and have a life expectancy of just nine to 10 years, Dudley explained.

ONE MILLION FACE MASKS FOR H1N1 EFFORT

It's a dream job of large proportions that's resulting from new flu concerns, a million mask march that can't be ignored.

The long anticipated work from Apothecary Products is filling ProAct warehouse and workflow aisles with box upon box of face masks intended for Walmart, Walgreens, CVS and other retailers. The merchants are gearing up for increased consumer concerns over the H1N1 flu virus.

Apothecary plans to distribute six to eight million of the masks using eight different sites to prepare them. Most of the stores have the masks in stock already, said Kent Halvorsen, leader of the company's master scheduling and forecasting operation. New supplies will keep the products available on shelves.

In most cases, the sanitary work



Production Supervisor Harry Junjak and HST Coordinator Bob Moore with a small portion of the one million face masks ProAct will process for Apothecary Products.

involves repackaging. "It means a lot," said HST Coordinator Manager Bob Moore. "It's good consumer work. Everyone can get involved in the job and it's good training." As the hundreds of pallets roll in, the work is a welcome addition, and difficult to ignore.

YOGA CLASS RELAXES, RENEWS IN RED WING

After Case Manager Trina Marsh started doing yoga, with an instructor she knew in high school, she brought the idea to ProAct in Red Wing.

"Because we had gotten such benefits from doing it, I thought it would be good for the clients," she said. Soon after, the Yogi-Up Studio instructor, Heather Morgan, brought her teaching to ProAct for two half hour sessions on Thursdays.



Instructor Heather Morgan, right, leads Red Wing consumers in weekly Yoga stretches and routines.

"We do a lot more stretching, and we're working on breathing techniques to get an idea of what the range of motion is so we can feel successful, that we're not failing," said Morgan.

The class can relate back to work, as Morgan advises participants about taking deep breaths instead of simply reacting to difficult situations. "It's kind of an all around feeling better about yourself, self esteem, self awareness, better balance to increase strength and confidence," she said.

WIS. PARENTS GAUGE IMPACT OF LIFE OPS

Though it's barely 6 months old ProAct's Life Opportunities program is already beginning to have a noticeable impact on the lives of its participants.

A shy Ben Feia, who may not utter a word unless spoken to, is changing, said his grandmother, Mary. The impact has been

obvious. "We've just seen a whole lot of change in his demeanor," she said. "He's talking much more and he's actually starting conversations."

Feia moved to Hudson, Wis. from Georgia a year ago. Living out of the country most of his life, Feia didn't have much opportunity until he moved to Georgia in the eighth grade, his grandmother explained. After graduating from a program there, Feia was alone a lot, as everyone around him was either at school or work.

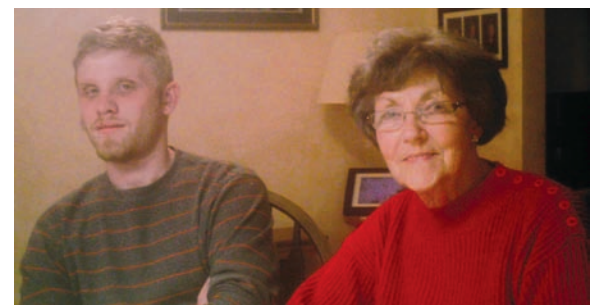
"There's a lot of activity around here. It (the program) really was the perfect fit, the perfect thing, the program," his grandmother said. With Life Opportunities has come increased motivation to get up and going in the morning.

Feia gained a strong dislike for factories through a work program at his school. "He has a lot of potential. It just hasn't been tapped yet," said Mary.

Fellow participant Kyle Glowe, another shy individual who seldom talks, announced to his mother that he loves his

job. "Usually, he has to be prompted," said Stephanie Glowe, his mother. Kyle is tracking days of the week better, as well.

"We're lucky to have that as there aren't really a lot of choices," she said.



Mary Feia said her grandson, Ben, has shown significant changes since he entered ProAct's Life Opportunities program last summer.



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.

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.

Adult Day Services drama events teach skills

Taking an idea from concept to completion that involves argumentation and debate, teamwork and even confrontation—and working it out in front of one’s peers takes skills and confidence.

Building on these attributes is exactly what Eagan instructor and human service technician Dan Abramowicz has in mind, as he and Case Manager Mark Gonnella lead the drama class in ProAct’s Adult Day Services (ADS) program.

“It gives them a chance to do public speaking, to formulate arguments and debates from a very loose script,” said Abramowicz. In pursuit of an audience entertainment goal, eight weeks or more of drama planning builds a camaraderie between participants. The leader shares acting styles from theater books and the group studies award winning films to learn techniques. They also choose parts and read scripts from Seinfeld.

Their latest performance, a mock trial based on a contractual marriage dispute. The original idea resulted from a brainstorming session with the group.

Wig-topped consumer Mark Olson



ADS drama class members perform a mock trial performance that was eight weeks in the making. The scene had highs and lows in a marriage contract dispute that ended with a wedding. The exercise gives participants a chance to use argumentation, logic and reason.

pounded the gavel as a judge as participant attorney Brianna Lahti used logic and reason to make arguments. Witnesses were brought forward for both sides and examined. As in most dramatic court scenes, evidence seemed to drift toward one party, then the other. Both seem to have their faults, Abramowicz said.

As the plot unfolded, the judge decided in the end that the couple deserved each other, and married them.

“There’s a sense of camaraderie when you do something like this,” he said. “We’re all in the same boat and working toward the same goal.”

Everyone participates, and the process allows people to see themselves in other situations. It is by far the most popular offering in ADS, Abramowicz said.

Fantasy football class teaches math, strategy



Carrie Sampson catches the Viking spirit with Case Manager Perry Thrun, leader of ProAct’s Fantasy Football class. Her team, the Caramels, was 1-1 and had 44 points.

Adding up the scores, talking about who is injured and choosing players keeps ProAct’s Fantasy Football class engrossed in what could have been, pointwise, had they picked the teams and players to run with the pigskin.

Chosen players who score points build the tallies of participants, who choose team names and assemble rosters. The New Orleans Saints was the top scoring team, so a participant with the Saints quarterback would be doing quite well, as would someone with running back Adrian Peterson, who had 10 touchdowns as of this writing. Team names range from actual NFL teams to more creative contrivances, such as “The Barbs,” a group of players named after seniors leader Barb Edd.

Two conferences match up for a top team finish where the leaders play for the championship. Case Manager Perry Thrun was a natural pick to lead this assembly of sports fans. He’s been involved in fantasy football since the sixth grade. “It educates them on the world of sports, which are a pretty big part of life.”

Experience Works, from page 4

keeping the product traffic going. He’s also able to fill the supervisory shoes of human service technicians who are absent, Moore explained.

Gregory’s counterpart on the Day

CHILI DUO CLEANS UP AT RED WING CONTEST

“When you’re hot, you’re hot,” but when the taste test begins, it all comes down to preparation.

Human service technicians Jeremy Tesch and Steve Whitmore in Red Wing expressed their in-bowl palatable pleasings at the annual United Way Chili Cookoff at the National Guard Armory. Tasters paid \$5 to sip and sample about 25 different tummy warming varieties of the soup known for its beans and red broth. ProAct’s representatives did well with an entry titled “Great Bowls of Fire.”

With help from ProAct participants, the twosome’s creation brought back awards, in the form of specially labeled cans, for “Most Unusual” and “Best Name.”

Stocked with zucchini, squash, andouille chipotle sauce and pan fried summer sausage, close to five gallons of the soon to be lunchtime favorite were on hand for pensive judges and those seeking alternative nourishment. Advisory: Tesch’s past experience as a chef may have influenced the overall outcome.

“The mayor said it was definitely one of his favorites, definitely the most original,” said Tesch. Red Wing’s leader was joined by an estimated crowd of more than 200.



Human service technicians Steve Whitmore and Jeremy Tesch, who is a former chef, wowed the judges at the 2009 United Way Chili Cookoff, taking home prizes for Best Name and Most Unusual.



The fire-inspired variety took three to four hours to prepare, with help from Tesch’s cooking class at ProAct. Contrary to visions of cooks simply throwing items into a pot and turning up the heat, Tesch worked on his chili step by step, with specific techniques to assure a bold and proper flavor.

He taught ProAct participants about proper dumps, the sequence of ingredients that enhances the overall flavor. Celery and onions are cooked separately and simmered down, followed by beans, hamburger and a little bit of cumin.

Though the honor doesn’t mean more dollars for the United Way, a primary ProAct sponsor, it did bring ProAct some recognition in the Red Wing Republican Eagle. The concoction’s creators were pleasantly surprised. So, keep those crackers handy.

PROACT NEWS BRIEFS

Eagan Rotary awards \$2k grant

The Eagan Rotary Club named ProAct for a \$2,000 grant to cover transportation needs for the nonprofit.

“One of the many goals of the Eagan Rotary Club is to support local organizations with our annual Art Gala fundraiser,” said Rotary President Leif Hagen.

The club distributed \$25,400 in grant funds to area groups.



Leif Hagen, president, Eagan Rotary

Staff members support United Way

After a series of fundraising campaigns within ProAct, staff members contributed generously to the annual United Way fund drives.

Employees at the Red Wing facility sold candy grams, put on a bake sale and a pot luck to drive donations to the United Way of Goodhue Wabasha and Pierce Counties, raising \$3,600 in all.

“We do try to emphasize that the United Way has supported us for so many years,” said Sally Ogren, director of programs for ProAct in Red Wing.

In Eagan, fundraising organizers held a bake sale and a BAM (books and more) sale that included CDs and DVDs. Employees also played dice, poker and bingo to raise dollars, said Employment Manager Catherine McCoy. A two hour donor celebration with pies was also held. In all,

Training and Habilitation work floor is Marcos Rios, who has a manufacturing and farming background and speaks little English. “I keep myself busy and feel fine,” said Rios, who weighed color tabs in bags on a scale maintain packaging standards.

“He’s like a grandfather to us,” said consumer Allison Duke. “He’s great with

Eagan employees contributed more than \$7,200.

Do you have a health care directive?

ProAct is urging its participant team members, staff, supporters and other interested parties to consider health care directives, written agreements that allow a designated person to make health care decisions for another when that person is unable to do so.

The University of Minnesota Extension Service offers a suggested health care directive form that explains the terminology, duties and legal requirements involved. More information is available online at www.mnaging.org/pdf/MSS110-D.pdf

The impact of social networking sites



Is social networking via the Internet an important part of your daily routine? Are social networking sites a regular stop in your search for information about topics and organizations that are important to you?

Have Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Digg become household words? ProAct, Inc. is exploring the use of these trendy new information mediums to reach its important audiences, and would like to hear your feedback. Please contact Heidi Anderson at hander@proactinc.org with your comments, and be sure to include “Social Networking” in the subject line.

everybody here. We respect him and he respects us.” HST Mariela Sabin said Rios knows the product well. He’s also able to set up production areas and does well with quality, she said.

Gregory said he’s impressed with how people at ProAct go out of their way to help others.

Get to know us

Admission Information

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651-289-3151

Red Wing- 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- Ken Gray
651-289-3163 (individuals)

Red Wing- Pamela Veith
651-388-7108

Donation Opportunities

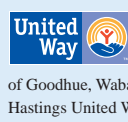
Heidi Anderson
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ProAct’s Four Locations

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



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

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.

EDUCATOR MOVED BY SPECIAL NEEDS

If activity is what keeps a person vibrant, new retiree and longtime ProAct board member Dr. Barbara Rebhuhn is on a dynamic journey to help the world by sharing a lifetime of disabilities experience.

Newly retired from the Hudson School District, where she last served as the director of student services, Rebhuhn serves on four leadership boards, all of them for organizations serving people with special needs. She also leads a teacher education class at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls centered on students with learning challenges and mentors a second-grader.

"It's what I love. It's what I've done for 37 years," said Rebhuhn. Helping others to identify and resolve issues with special needs is her life's passion, one that began at a very early age.

At the tender age of 12, Rebhuhn's best friend had a baby sister with Down's

Syndrome. "I loved that little girl and it virtually created my career," she said.

As her long career in education developed, Rebhuhn took a great interest in autism. "There are still children to be identified, especially in the Asperger range." The impact on serving adults, she said, will be huge, because the needs aren't going to go away.

Near to her heart, and her home, ProAct's new Life Opportunities program has been especially enthralling. Adults with disabilities in St. Croix County used to have just two options and now there are four. "Because ProAct is such a good organization as a whole, I think we would be remiss if we chose not to expand geographically," she said.

With regard to the future for people with disabilities in Wisconsin, Rebhuhn said its leaders need to see people with disabilities as a priority. Though current economic conditions are unsure, she hopes funding can at least be maintained at the current level, or even expanded.



ProAct Board Member Dr. Barbara Rebhuhn serves on four organizational boards.

Consumer actor inspired by sister in NY

To the surprise of his coworkers and staff, ProAct Red Wing participant Stephen Craig appeared on stage at the Sheldon Theater, where he had a major speaking role in a play.

"I didn't tell anyone here," said Craig, who was inspired by his sister Deborah, who has acted on Broadway in New York.

"She does such a good job at acting that I had the confidence to do a play myself," said Craig. Though Craig admits he was scared that he would forget his lines, things went according to plan. "It was a big fear I had to face." His fear came to fruition, but not as he anticipated. Craig forgot one line, made something up, and the show went on with hardly a notice.

His characters in "The Laramie Project," a local resident, and Moises



Amateur actor Stephen Craig conquered his stage fright and took on a major role at the Sheldon Theater.

Kaufman, a key organizer, involved interviews with individuals. Performing for an audience in a nearly two hour play and practice are far different, however. "It felt really good to be on stage with all of the people in front of me. I couldn't see them because of the lights," said Craig.

To get him to loosen up and calm his nerves, Deborah told him to have fun with it. Craig's interest in acting is second to a greater passion, singing. An upcoming musical in Red Wing may be his big break.

his big break.

Until then, he'll spend some time on a science fiction writing project called "Perfect." It's a story of someone who goes back in time to fix society's wrongs. Craig has been working on it for seven months.

"He's a pretty bright and smart guy," said Pam Veith, employment services manager.

We specialize in work teams so well suited for the job, you'll think you trained them yourself.



- Short or long term
- Customized services
- Contract agreement
- Training and supervision provided

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Red Wing, Pam Veith
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pveith@proactinc.org
Eagan, Cathy McCoy
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Janitorial, housekeeping, office support, packaging and assembly, quality control, automated equipment control, laundry, groundskeeping and document scanning among others

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SENIOR PROGRAM FUELS PROACT WORK

For any job prospect, work experience is often the number one influence for future success. Getting it is another story.

Enter ProAct, and "Experience Works," (EW) a state and federal program that pays low-income seniors to work part-time for nonprofit organizations. On ProAct's Eagan production floors, two program individuals are helping people with disabilities to be more productive, while gaining experience to make them more employable.

Jeff Gregory once owned a truck repair shop but is now legally blind and receives disability benefits. A state caseworker connected him with EW, which pays him to

labor alongside people with disabilities, and to supervise when needed.

"It's so much fun coming here that it would about be worth it doing it for nothing," said Gregory. He said he was grateful for all the training he's received



Jeff Gregory, left, and Marcos Rios work part-time for ProAct as part of the Experience Works program for seniors.

from his boss, Human Service Technician Coordinator Bob Moore. Gregory said most of his work hinges on quality control and

See Experience Works, page 3

Maximizing Human Potential for Greater Self-Sufficiency