



## RED WING WORK REVIVAL FINDS TALENTED, FLEXIBLE PRODUCER

People work hard on farms, and ProAct client Robert Morris was one of those people. He's not baling hay or walking the fields anymore. Instead, he's turning the work flow faucet to full blast at BIC in Red Wing.

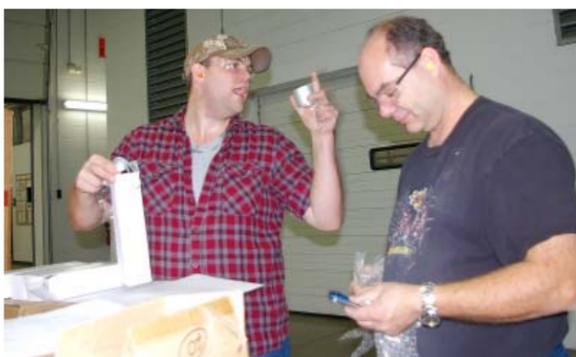
BIC recently purchased Norwood Promotional Products, and the company's Red Wing plant was shifted into overdrive.

Seasoned Supervisor Del Cook knows the routine and leads the crew at BIC, but little did he know that Morris, who is new to the operation, would be neck and neck with him in the fast pace of product debagging. With crews of six or more, ProAct removes bags from thermoses, tumblers, mugs and other products.

The challenge for Morris—open and prep boxes so a five person crew from ProAct can remove the bag from each item and prep it for BIC's production workers, who print customized images on the products. The hard part is keeping all the orders straight, with the correct count and a product that matches the numbers. Morris likes to know what's going on with every box, so nothing is left to chance,



*Lunchtime is the only time to get Morris to sit still. He grew up working on farms and wants to farm on his own someday.*



*Client Robert Morris, left, with Supervisor Del Cook, helps keep his fellow workers busy with product debagging operations at BIC in Red Wing. Cook said Morris thinks on his feet, comes up with faster ways to get things done and is tough to beat for speed.*

Cook explains.

"I'm here to do my job and nothing else," said Morris. High volumes make it easy to get behind, but not with Morris at Cook's side.

"He outperforms what I used to do in a day," said Cook. When he found out what Morris could produce on his work timings, the reaction was nothing short of "Wow!" Cook explains. As he and Morris keep product in front of others from ProAct who are stationed at a work table, production levels remain strong.

The ProAct team can debag a pallet of material in 10 to 15 minutes. "I can't find people (employees) on the floor to do

it that fast," said Leslie Carr, a BIC supervisor. Another BIC leader, Connie Miller, said her employees couldn't do their job without ProAct's debagging work. "Lots of work? That's an understatement," she said.

Order numbers are placed on products, as are large blue dot stickers, so company employees can see if a pallet of products stacked high in the warehouse has been debagged. As Morris breaks down empty boxes, he walks as many as he can to a bin to minimize the number of trips.

Cook doesn't need to repeat instructions to Morris. Most of the time, he figures it out himself, but will always come back with any questions. Because the supervisor doesn't have to

See Red Wing producer, page 2



*Morris said he grew up hearing, "If you're not sweating, you're not working."*

## HOLIDAY WISHES, WARM MOMENTS

The early onset of cold may have chilled our bodies, but it doesn't chill our holiday spirit.



It's wonderful to be in that time of year when we renew our gratitude for the people in our lives, and express our love and appreciation. We at ProAct have had a good year, and it's been a privilege to serve others through the year. We hope that you enjoy your time with family and friends this season and we offer you our best.



*J. J. V. Hall*

## LIFE OPS FINDS NEW HUDSON HOME



*The facility in Hudson, with more than 5,000 square-feet of space, also offers an outside recreational area and ample room for classes and other programming.*

To handle a growing number of people with disabilities and provide a more centralized base of operations, ProAct's Life Opportunities program has leased a single story building in Hudson, Wis.

The inside space is nearly five times the size of its former operation at the Stables in River Falls, where clients continue to do horseback riding and other activities.



*Human Service Technician Liz DeLaTorre helps Matt Harper off the bus at the new Life Opportunities location in Hudson, Wis.*

The facility, on the city's west side, is across the street from Expedite International, which has become a base of work operations in the western Wisconsin city.

Large open areas, as well as separate

See New Hudson facility, page 3

## MEMORIAL RECOGNIZES CONTRIBUTIONS OF PAST PROACT LEADER

Many remember difficult financial times at ProAct's Eagan predecessor, Owobopte, and the man who helped pull the organization through.

The time was the 1990s and that man was Lou Besser, the former chief executive officer. After his death in November of 2009, a long list of individuals made contributions to ProAct in his honor.

To make a more permanent monument to Besser's life and contributions, the management team decided to spend the donations on a rock garden and landscaping creation immediately outside the Eagan headquarters.

When the building was constructed in the late 1990s under Besser's watch, the CEO got personally involved with the



*Matt Johnson and Earl Hanks enjoy a few moments in the Lou Besser memorial garden outside ProAct in Eagan. The accessible brick walkway leads to a stone monument, at right, engraved with the words "In memory of Louis E. Besser, CEO, 1990-2000." Besser helped lead ProAct through some difficult financial times, and was able to grasp and implement the vision for a new building.*

landscaping work, explains ProAct Human Resources Manager Jo Ann Peine.

"I liked what I saw," said Lou Besser's daughter, Lori, who returned to Minnesota over Thanksgiving with her mother. "It's pretty special." The younger Besser also worked at ProAct for a number of years.

The memorial garden was constructed by Rock-N-Walls of Eagan.



## BUSINESSES HONORED FOR EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In celebrating some of the best companies that employ people with disabilities, ProAct has named 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 selected for three employer categories: Community Employment, Business Partner and

Supported Employment. The employers were part of ProAct's 38th Annual Awards Dinner in October. Representing the Eagan and Hudson, Wis. locations, it attracted about 600 to the Prom Center in Oakdale.

See Employers of the Year, page 2



*Above left, Fairfield Inn Assistant Manager Melissa Bruneau thanks a ProAct banquet audience after the hotel was named an Employer of the Year. Above right, Case Manager David Cho, at right, congratulates T&K Restaurant Franchise District Manager Leonel Perez. T&K owns multiple McDonald's restaurants in the south metro area and in southern Minnesota.*



## From the President...

As we move toward the end of the year, I am pleased to be able to report progress on several strategic initiatives which will position us well for the new year. One relates to our newest program, Life Opportunities, which is situated in Hudson, Wisconsin.



When we began we had a unique setting, working from a location called the Stables, which served as the "home base" of the community-based program and also allowed for therapeutic horseback riding. I am pleased to report that Life Opportunities now occupies a building with five times the space, providing additional space for training activities, vocational services and much more. It is also located closer to a number of community based employers, including those we already work with. We expect the Life Opportunities program to grow in the months ahead.

To improve services for existing consumers and respond to continued growth and demand in the metro area, we are adding program space for training and support in Eagan. The location is adjacent to our existing building and will be available for our

use in January 2011.

We remodeled a significant amount of space in our Red Wing building, following an internal needs assessment, to improve our service for people served out of that location. In addition, space was remodeled in our Zumbrota building in response to the increased number of people choosing that location to receive services from us.

The job market seems to be improving, which bodes well for increasing the employment and training opportunities for the individuals we serve. Community employment in integrated settings continues to be a highly desired outcome, and a strong job market helps us deliver those outcomes.

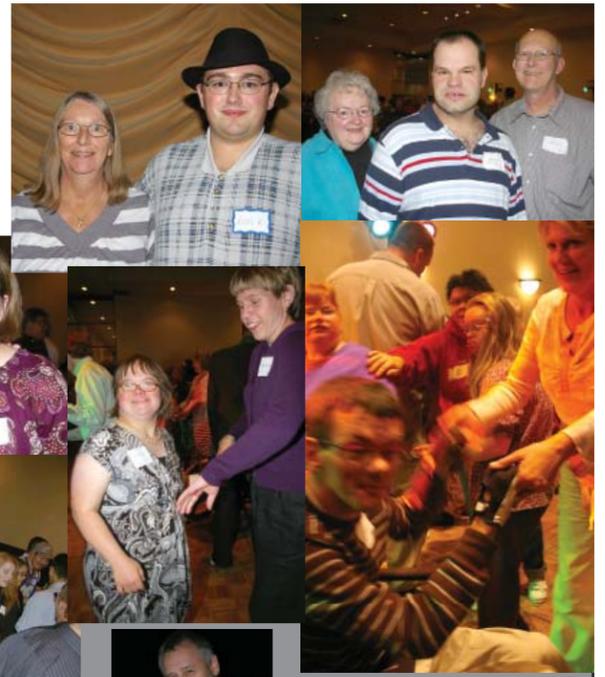
Our recognition banquets were well attended and thoroughly enjoyable, as participants were honored for their years of service and outstanding achievements. I was also pleased that we could recognize several companies that we work with at our Eagan/Hudson banquet, since they provide the projects that give work opportunities for our participants.

On behalf of ProAct, I wish our participants, family members, staff and supporters a warm and rewarding holiday season and a happy new year.

## RECOGNITION, MEMORIES AT BANQUETS

### Eagan/Hudson

More than 500 people attended the banquet and awards ceremony at the Prom Center. Individual participants and businesses received awards and a lively dance ensued afterward.



### Red Wing/Zumbrota

The Treasure Island Casino banquet center hosted a happy crowd for a hearty meal and celebration. ProAct consumers received awards and recognition for their years of employment.



## 'OUTSTANDING' AWARDS FOR PROACT, STAFFER

A national nonprofit program that seeks jobs for seniors chose ProAct and ProAct employee Christine Peterson for "Outstanding Older Worker" and "Outstanding Employer" awards.

The awards from "Experience Works" were presented at a special luncheon held recently at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska. "Older workers continue to contribute to the community after retirement," said presenter Taryn Galehdari, employment and training program specialist with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development



Carolyn Dobis, director of programs in Eagan, receives the "Outstanding Employer Award" for ProAct from Taryn Galehdari with DEED. Below, ProAct senior employee Christine Peterson receives the "Outstanding Older Worker Award" from Galehdari.



(DEED). The state agency provides grant dollars for Experience Works, along with the U.S. Department of Labor. Galehdari formally recognized the award winners before the luncheon crowd

Peterson and ProAct were nominated by Experience Works Coordinator Shirley Ackerman, who first approached ProAct in 2008 as a possible site where seniors could gain work experience. Experience Works offers a subsidy that pays qualifying senior participants to work at ProAct for a limited time period. "It's been a really good partnership," Ackerman said. "All I have to do is call and say 'I have somebody' and 'Can you find something for them?'" That's how Peterson found ProAct, which eventually hired her directly.

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See Red Wing producer, from page 1 micromanage his key team member, he can focus on bigger picture items.

Morris is so familiar with the job, that after only weeks at BIC, he helped a fill-in supervisor to keep it going when Cook was out one day. "Any questions she asked, he was able to answer," Cook said. Morris said he's always thinking. "My mind goes, even in my sleep."

The ProAct supervisor said he knows that when he says something to Morris, it's going to get done. "In fact, I don't have to say something to Robert and it's going to get done," Cook said.

The two have had races to debug travel mugs. Each is able to outdo the other. "He's game for a little competition," said Cook.

Morris remembers laboring 13 to 16 hour days on farms when he was younger. He

worked with crops and livestock. By 2020, he's like to own his own farm. "I don't plan on working for a business all my life," said Morris. He also performed customer service support for an information technology department within the Samsung corporation.

Cook, who is quite driven himself, said the goal is to help people to work to their maximum potential, not casually. "You can't teach people to improve themselves if they work slow."

Cooks' military-like, down to business style seems to be well accepted by Morris and other crewmembers. "They all love coming here, not because of me but because they're busy," he said.

"I'm all about business. It's nothing personal. It's work, work, work," he said. "This crew here runs like a well oiled ship."

### New board chair, from page 4

that the plan is a living document that we can work with to direct the activities of the organization." Plan goals should be integrated into daily operations, she said, weaving in specific action steps.

The fact that ProAct is viewed as a well-run organization with strong processes is a commendation to the professional leadership of the organization, according to Leary.

She said she's struck by the pride of the consumers at the fall recognition dinners, and the appreciation expressed by customers. "That two-way street is very evident, and the appreciation from both sides."

The new chair has more than 30 years experience in human resources, mostly in the financial services and high tech sectors. Before starting her own business, she served as vice president of human resources for GE Capital Consulting in Minneapolis.

### See Employers of the Year, page 2

"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."

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.

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.



Engineer Eric Fraser, at left, with Santa Barbara Medco is honored as ProAct Employer of the Year in the Business Partner category. ProAct Sales Manager Randy Petterssen presents the plaque.

**ProAct Board of Directors:**

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

**Finding a job, staying the course, improving**

“It all comes out in the wash.” And, at a well-established restaurant inside a large Mall of America retailer, ProAct’s Andy Kluznik dishes up cleanliness in a hurry.

“I go as fast as I can,” said the dishwasher, who got a real test the day after Thanksgiving, when three dishwashing staff members kept the dirty to clean dish rotation flying along. “It was really busy. There were a lot of people,” said Kluznik.

His body gets stiff after a hard day’s labor, but he said he’s worked this way all his life. “I’m pretty fast, but not like Speedy Gonzales,” he said.

After work, he goes home, and he sleeps well. “I’m not thinking that far ahead. I’ve got this job and I’ll take it one step at a time in my life,” he said.

Finding the position took a lot of searching, and Kluznik was highly motivated and has a positive attitude about working, said Jennifer Malm, vocational specialist with ProAct. “She helped me a lot,” said Kluznik, who said it’s



After hunting for work for months, Andy Kluznik secured a dishwashing job at an elegant Mall of America restaurant.



been much easier to find jobs in the past.

“It keeps me busy and I get more money,” said Kluznik. He’s been in situations where he hasn’t had a regular job in the past couple of years, so he’s grateful for his current position.

Kluznik proved himself working at ProAct community group employment sites including Fairfield Inn & Suites and The Hilton Garden Inn, Home explained. “He’s also very open to suggestions for important things he could improve on.”

Kluznik had worked busing tables at the Radisson in downtown St. Paul and in landscaping. A history buff, he’s read about the gangsters who used to visit St. Paul, “Ma” Barker, “Doc” Barker and John Dillinger. His reading hobby began about three years ago.

**ARC PICKS PROACT VOC STAFFER FOR HONORS**

The 5,400-member strong Arc of Minnesota organization has named ProAct’s Jennifer Malm for its “Irving Martin Professional of the Year Award.”

Malm, a vocational specialist with ProAct in Eagan, was chosen as one of two winners by the nonprofit group, which has 12 chapters across the state. She was the winner in the Direct Service Professional category.

The honor is given to exceptional individuals employed in community services for people with developmental disabilities, according to Arc. “Winners demonstrate sensitivity and the ability to provide an outstanding quality of service, which results in increased independence for people with developmental disabilities,” explains an Arc of Minnesota news release.

Chief among Malm’s accomplishments is her ability to find jobs for people with disabilities, and helping them to stay

employed. She coordinates services, teaches job seeking skills and workplace adjustment and does job coaching. Malm’s work doesn’t stop after she accompanies someone on a job interview. She also provides extra training to those in danger of losing a job.

“Jen’s dedicated work ethic, energetic attitude, and appreciation for all of our program participants make her an indispensable champion of awesome,” said Heather White, ProAct Vocational Services coordinator.

The award’s namesake, Irving Martin, was a person with developmental disabilities who called on people working in the disability field to perform to their highest standards. Nominees may be, but are not limited to, direct care staff, case managers, program directors, program administrators, program developers, and trainers.

The Arc of Minnesota promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community.



Vocational Specialist Jennifer Malm receives the Arc of Minnesota’s Irving Martin Professional of the Year Award from Awards Committee Chair Hunter Sargent.

**Golf classic in Hastings supports transportation**



At 17 under par, the team from Staples Financial Group, center, in West. St. Paul took top honors at the 2010 ProAct Golf Classic, held at Hastings Country Club in August. At center, from left are: Trevor Johnson, Kris Staples, Casey Fox, and Art Staples. Proceeds from the four person scramble or team tourney will benefit ProAct’s transportation programs for people with disabilities and provide money toward matching grants to purchase new vehicles.

**PROACT PHOTO BRIEFS:**

**New classrooms versatile, can be used for work**

Newly enclosed classrooms were added to the work floor area in Red Wing, and when a rush job came in from BIC, could easily be utilized for packaging and assembly.



**Homemade fire starters catch flame**

Jeff Cunningham, an owner of Musty-Barnhart Agency, markets the ProAct fire starters at the company’s Red Wing office. ProAct is seeking more outlets for the flammable creations, which are made from recycled materials. This thing has kind of taken on a life of its own, said Case Manager Heidi Befort.



**Touring production reaches students, seniors**



Led by Case Manager Perry Thrum, Eagan’s ProAct Touring Players class performed “The Three Little Pigs” and “Red Riding Hood Too” in elementary schools, a day care, a junior high class, a nursing home, and for ProAct Red Wing and Eagan audiences. The cast included: Paul Daily, Chelsea Grenne, Amanda Lien, Brandon Ziemke, Rachelle McKinley, Heidi Magnusson, Katie Zettell, Bill Spencer, Sheri Jonee, Mike Becker and Jason Maus.



**Rotary, other donors support ProAct**

ProAct received a \$2,000 grant from the Eagan Rotary Club. At left is Employment Manager Cathy McCoy with Roy Wallace, Rotary Community Grants Chair. ProAct also received matching funds from the Jones Foundation when donors gave during the “Give to the Max Day” campaign.



**Energized to get his general ed degree**

Tim Borchert with ProAct in Red Wing is working steadily toward his general education degree. He takes classes at ProAct, in the evenings, and he encourages others at the facility to do the same.



**Making the cuts, and the cards**



Eagan Case Manager Sherri Coons, above right, and human service technician Katrina Schumacher, work to cut letters and artwork with clients and the new Cricut cutting machine in the Handmade Cards class. Funds for the intricately detailed cutter were donated by the Halvorson and Kappes families.



**New Hudson facility, from page 1**

classrooms, a dining room, offices and a centralized kitchen make the new Hudson space highly versatile. Program participants check in before work in the morning, and can enjoy some exercise before they head off to a job site, said Teresa Ducheneaux, the program coordinator.

The new operational base will also be home to a new vocational service function where clients will receive assistance in finding outside jobs. At least one new client will be ready for job searches right away.

Others are making personal strides. Consumer Ben Feia is one who is increasing his independence by moving into his own apartment. Home-like amenities at the day services program, such as a washer and dryer, help Life Opportunities to prepare clients like Feia for independent living. “He’s looking forward to it, and I think with the right supports, he’s going to make it,” said Ducheneaux.

An increased commitment to the western Wisconsin and eastern Twin Cities suburbs has spurred new participants from farther away, the coordinator explains.



ProAct’s Ben Feia preps boxes at Expedite International, an employer across the street from ProAct’s new facility in Hudson, Wis.

From 20 miles to the northeast, three people are brought in from New Richmond, Wis. She also hopes to add people from Woodbury and other cities near the Minnesota border with Wisconsin. At press time, Life Opportunities was serving 12 participants, an increase over past months.

The coordinator has hosted numerous tours, increasing ProAct’s presence among social workers, families with disabilities and the business community. The area chamber of commerce has made a visit and a community bank offered some financial support through a 2011 fundraiser.

Ducheneaux is looking forward to spring, when the grounds can be used for gardening, which feeds into the cooking classes.



Above, a ProAct crew at Expedite in Hudson works in the shipping area, which can involve a lot of hustle and physical labor. At left, a spacious interior space can be used for many programming functions in Hudson. Pictured is Matt Harper.



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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.

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Work done at your location: Cathy McCoy, 651-289-3170 [cmccoy@proactinc.org](mailto:cmccoy@proactinc.org)  
Work done at ProAct's facility: Randy Pettersen 651-289-3157 [rpeterssen@proactinc.org](mailto:rpeterssen@proactinc.org)

### Maximizing Individual Potential for Greater Self-Sufficiency

ProAct, a nonprofit headquartered in Eagan with sites in Red Wing, Zumbrota and Hudson, has over 35 years of experience.

## WORK PASSION, NEW BOARD CHAIR

The new chair of the ProAct Board of Directors brings a human resources background to the organization, and a passion for employment opportunities.

Mary Ellen Leary has served on the board since 2003, but her association goes back to before Eagan-based Owobopte merged with Interstate Rehabilitation Center in Red Wing to become ProAct.

A few years earlier, her human resources firm, The MEL Group, was hired to do a search for a new chief executive, Steve Distchler, who came to ProAct in 2000. She also learned more about ProAct through her accountant, CPA Steve Wornley, who was serving on ProAct's board at that time.

Leary said ProAct develops employment opportunities and real life skills for its consumers while its customers provide the work. Human resource aspects and employment models come into play, which are her firm's expertise.



New Board Chair Mary Ellen Leary brings 30 years of HR experience to bear.

In terms of employment opportunities for people with disabilities, some of the "off-shored" work that was sent outside the U.S. by the manufacturing sector over the last several years is starting to come back, although off-shoring hasn't abated, Leary explained. The services sector of the economy does provide opportunities for on-site work at retail operations, which saw gains in Minnesota for October, she said.

ProAct is essentially a local outsource provider that offers services to other companies, Leary explains. Some are provided at company work sites, while other work is brought in house. As staff outsourcing becomes a more common practice, ProAct is

well-positioned as a preferred provider, she explained. Leary likes to describe it as a way of delivering work, versus whether or not a person with disabilities is working in house or on a customer site.

The new board chair is mindful of ProAct's vision as described in the strategic plan. "The major push for me is making sure

See New board chair, page 2

**DEED, VRS help recognized-** ProAct would like to thank the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) for support received through the Funded Internship Program, which has led to successful placement of job candidates.

## Get to know us

### Admission Information

Eagan, Hudson-  
Sue Lowe  
651-289-3151

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, Hudson- Catherine McCoy  
651-289-3170 (groups)

Eagan- Heather White  
651-289-3163 (individuals)

Red Wing- Jim Bohmbach  
651-388-7108

### Donation Opportunities

Heidi Hanson  
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  
1202 Beaudry Blvd., Hudson, WI 54016



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



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



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

## NEW INTAKE LEADER KNOWS SERVICE INS AND OUTS

She's welcoming and friendly, and can answer almost any question one could think of about ProAct. Veteran Case Manager Sue Lowe now serves as ProAct's intake coordinator in Eagan.

"I'm honest, because I have an awareness to some of the questions, and I know how things run in the programs," said the former case manager who worked in Day Training and Habilitation for nine years. She also coordinates staff training and orientation.

The new face of ProAct's headquarters to the outside world first got involved in the disabilities field while a new teenager in Huron, S.D. in the 1960s. She was a peer mentor and went door to door for



The view from those who are new. Lowe's outgoing personality shines as she introduces new people to what ProAct has to offer.

Arc to promote the new idea of a day program for people with disabilities. The campaign was successful, though many were opposed to a day program in the city. It operates there to this day. Lowe's career later moved into group

home work, special ed teaching and tutoring.

At ProAct, her work is no less strenuous, with multiple tours and as many as 34 client referrals per month. Each new person added requires about four hours of preparation by Lowe.

She's been most surprised by the number of calls she's received from family members of people with disabilities who need to know how to receive services. Lowe also spends time explaining the purpose of ProAct's pre-vocational program, which is to prepare people for community jobs.



Lowe answers detailed questions from a Dakota County social worker, right, and his guest during a tour of the Eagan facility.