



People Achieving

Volume 13 Issue 1 April 2016

ERECYCLING HITS MILESTONE QUICKLY

It happened in record time, ProAct received national environmental accreditation for its work in the ProAct eRecycling Services unit for Responsible Recycling (R2): 2013 and RIOS:2006 with NSF International.

“The trust factor in our systems and environmental soundness of what we’re doing just took a major leap with these two certifications,” said Tim Hovey, manager of ProAct eRecycling Services.



The certification was a two-part process, with an initial audit and then a follow-up audit to assure that systems and procedures meet standards. ProAct spent nearly five months to establish a quality, environmental health and safety manual to document its practices.

“The greatest excitement with eRecycling stems from employment of people with disabilities,” said Steven Ditschler, president and chief



executive officer of ProAct. “These certifications further prove that we are on the right track and I’m pleased that we have added these credentials for our eRecycling service.”

The nonprofit offers drop off, pickup and packaging services, and most materials are received free of charge. A complete list of the materials accepted, and the few items requiring a fee, is available at proactinc.org. ProAct takes all items with cords or batteries, except for devices containing refrigerants.



Spring eRecycling event heads to Durand, Wis.



Students and other volunteers at Durand High School in western Wisconsin assembled for a three-day collection event to gather electronics for ProAct eRecycling Services. Pallets of material flowed into ProAct’s Red Wing facility for disassembly and data destruction.



‘WAY TO WORK’ PROGRAM FIRST, GOODWILL JOB MATCHUP

Goodwill stock worker Angela Wieland had a good base of experience working on crews with ProAct, packing fishing lures, party products and more, as well as a background in human services since she was a teenager.

She makes history as the first job placement under the new “Way to Work” program, which utilizes in-house Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) counselors to assist. Goodwill in Apple Valley was discovered through a job fair. “We talked to them, coached her on interview skills, helped on her resume and she knocked it out of the park,” said ProAct job developer Franklin Wagner.

As Wieland sorted winter and spring clothes in the back room she said the job was meant to be for her. “I like it. It’s pretty cool.”

One of her goals is to save money for a car. She holds a learner’s permit and plans to take behind-the-wheel training.

She once worked, and volunteered, as a personal care attendant at a facility in Burnsville.



The newly remodeled and long established Goodwill store in Apple Valley hired Angela Wieland, left, to work for the high ranking Twin Cities store. Production and Facilities Manager Shaun Clover has been impressed.



Goodwill in Apple Valley is a Twin Cities leader among its close to 50 stores, and recently received a 20 percent boost in sales floor space, See Extraordinary job match, page 3

ProAct Golf Classic

Monday, August 15, 2016

Southview Country Club, West St. Paul

\$150

Sheena Henry 651-289-3149
shenry@proactinc.org

10 a.m. Registration, lunch and bid items
11:30 Best Ball, Shotgun Start
5 p.m. Appetizers, silent auction bidding
5:30 Dinner, golf awards, live auction
Register online proactinc.org

SHE KEEPS GOODHUE LAUNDRY TRADITION ALIVE

Locker room stinkiness at Goodhue School is kept to a minimum, thanks to an in-house laundry service run by Laural Seither, who found the job through ProAct.

Her cleaning care touches about 100 sports uniforms each day, from washing and drying, to ironing and stain removal. Her manager said she’s been easy to train and work with. “She’s pretty accommodating of whatever we ask,” said Karyn Edelbach, the head custodian.

A large commercial washer and a dryer run continually in a small area near a locker room. Walls with championship memories scrolled on them, high school love interests and school pride meld with a steady stream of purple school colors.

She likes the job’s independence, and finds the children are very polite. “If I have to remind them, I only remind them

once.” The job offers some autonomy, where she completes most of the work on her own, with occasional cleaning, on floors and windows and in the girls locker room.

Seither filled a role left vacant by a couple of retirees who had 20 years with the K-12 school. She decided it was time to get more organized, and crafted a manual for the laundry room. “So, it’s not just guesswork, what I’m doing,” she said. Her manager was impressed. Inventory sheets are used to keep coaches updated.

A notice posted in a hallway also got her attention. Goodhue needed reading



Laural Seither finds herself in a Goodhue Wildcats “time capsule,” in the school’s decorated laundry.

volunteers, so Seither schools first-graders twice a week. “I let the kids read to me. They sound out the words,” she said, recalling her own difficulties as a child in school. “Why not help others out?”

Transportation is a snap, as Seither lives just blocks away, and her ProAct designated coordinator said she’s improved her attendance record. At one point, she stayed home sick to avoid infecting the children, Edelbach explained.

A coach stopped by during the interview to say that Seither’s laundry work keeps the locker room cleaner,

Goodhue independence, see page 2

Inside: • Great fit for daughter • Parent meeting May 12 • Wisconsin DVR • New board members

FULL ‘KAIZEN’ WORKFLOOR REVAMP STRENGTHENS RW TEAM

Change for the better is what “Kaizen” means, the continuous improvement process that finds its latest expression across the entire work floor at ProAct in Red Wing.

In essence, two sections became one, and materials and people can now be accessed more quickly, explains Supervisor Courtney Horne. Her work area serving a major customer served as a Kaizen testbed last summer.



Better product access, closer coordination, more cross-training and more time to do quality checks are just a few of the “Kaizen” advantages experienced by Red Wing workers.

“We’re not running anymore, and they’re not waiting,” she said. The products are closer and jobs can be set up each day to meet everyone’s needs.

As ProAct eRecycling Services outgrew its initial space, a new plan was needed, and this morphed into a major work floor reorganization impacting about 130 people. Production Operations Coordinator and eRecycling Manager Tim Hovey brought his Kaizen experience to ProAct and grant dollars to train other

See Kaizen process, page 2

From the President...

Spring weather came early this year, putting a spring in one's foot and a smile on the face. It is the time of year when optimism reigns, and I am hopeful for the months ahead.

There will be challenges ahead, but I am confident that we will succeed in maintaining a strong, healthy environment to provide people with disabilities with training and employment opportunities. There are some who will argue that only jobs in the competitive marketplace should be considered, but we believe that all options should be available.

ProAct provides a variety of employment choices for the people it serves, including competitive, integrated employment. We also offer opportunities to work out in the community as a member of a crew or on contract jobs in the community and in a more supportive setting in one of its facilities. Indeed, ProAct is partnering with the Department of Employment and Economic Development on a pilot service, the "Way to Work" program, with two staff from Vocational Rehabilitation Services embedded in our Eagan office and working closely with our staff to enhance the opportunity to achieve competitive integrated employment. Overall, we believe that people with disabilities should have the right to choose what they wish to do, and that it isn't a choice unless they have options.

Parents and guardians of our participants are also key stakeholders in

this process, and we are excited to announce a group meeting with them in Eagan on May 12 at 7 p.m. We'll share updates on system changes, and listen for feedback.

I am pleased to welcome Arleen Sullivan of Anchor Bank, who is based in Eagan, and Brian Knapp of Capital Safety in Red Wing to the ProAct board of directors. I know that these two outstanding individuals will make significant contributions to ProAct's future success.

The board has also been focusing on the future and has adopted a strategic plan for the organization, a plan that is imbued with the principle of informed choice, and maintaining a range of constructive options for the people we serve.

I would like to draw your attention to the effort underway at the Minnesota legislature to gain an increase in reimbursement rates for service providers for people with disabilities. The effort is being pressed by the Best Life Alliance, which we support, to get a 5 percent increase to help fund needed wage increases for direct service providers.

We appreciate your support and understanding as we go forward to serve people with disabilities with quality programs and caring support.

Steven Ditschler



MOM FINDS FIT FOR OUTGOING DAUGHTER

Outgoing and bubbly, participant Dani Belting receives a high level of support at ProAct in Eagan, where she attends classes and regularly explores the community with others.



Dani Belting is a six-year participant at ProAct in Eagan, where she attends life skills classes and community outings.

service, where a priest with an outgoing personality said he heard that there were donuts after church, and asked the group to save a chocolate one for him. "Dani says, 'No way,'" her mother explained. It

"The staff are very attached (to her) and she gets very attached to people, as

was typical that the priest would say things and Dani would answer him.

Managing behaviors is a common goal with the family, group home and ProAct. "Tricia has been a very good advocate to make sure that all three of us are on the same page," said Sue. There are policies and practices at ProAct, which can be different from the group home, where she has three roommates, the mom explains. ProAct's larger, busier environment requires a different approach.

The ProAct environment has many smaller events built in. Bowling, computer and cooking classes are part of a full schedule that includes volunteerism, library visits, training in thriftiness, exercise and area parks.

Belting's disability is a challenge with the focus on tasks that work situations require. There also are some hearing limitations with high pitches, her mother explains, but Dani knows some sign language.

"She's very routine oriented," said Sue. "And she keeps everybody rolling." Jokes and comments that bring laughs are saved in her memory and used anytime Dani feels it's appropriate, her mother said.

ProAct has played a major role in her life. "They are so good with her and do such a good job of taking care of her little quirks," Sue said.

The mother often brings in treats for ProAct staff and participants, on holidays and for other occasions.



Belting enjoyed a library class in Eagan with John Hanneman, left, and direct service professional Ryan Sandberg.

well," said Belting's designated coordinator, Tricia Gantt. Belting lives in a group home, but is very connected to her parents, who are her guardians and speak with ProAct staff at least once a week.

To say Belting is social would be an understatement. She was the 2007 homecoming queen at Rosemount High School, is well known at her church, and isn't the least bit shy in expressing herself, her mother, Sue, explains.

"People enjoy seeing her at church. She is really loud," said Sue. Humor plays a big role in the mother's interaction with her daughter. The mom chuckles as she tells story after story about funny situations.

One such instance was in a church

PACKAGING CREDIT POURED OUT IN SSP

A half dozen volunteers from ProAct are building their impact for people in need, packaging large amounts of food for kids to eat this summer.

"They cleared a whole pallet of cereal," said ProAct instructor Angela Fluery, who first brought groups to Neighbors, Inc. in South St. Paul two years ago. That pallet translated into nine cardboard barrels with individually bagged cereal bowls, 10 per bag.

Neighbors is a major food relief provider.

"I was so impressed with their teamwork and focus," she said. Volunteer activities like these are sometimes cited as great baselines for future employment.

Individuals from ProAct are known by name by other volunteers. "The food director said it's about time they get some



Neighbors, Inc. in South St. Paul is a church-established social service agency that provides emergency assistance to people in Dakota County.



recognition," said Fluery. In addition to this story, the crew was expected to be featured in a newsletter produced by Neighbors. Fluery took the crew out for coffee earlier in the ProAct semester.

Ski competitor, from page 4

racing crew, to set up events and stuff," said Morehouse, who drills holes in the snow and installs fencing.

His core job at Econo Foods often involves cart maintenance and cleaning work "He helps out, off and on, in just about every department," said



his parents in rural Cannon Falls. He hunts, drives dune buggies, golfs, bikes and gets out on the water in a kayak during the warmer months.

ProAct Designated Coordinator Joyann Johnson. A job coach visits him twice a month.

Morehouse continues to live with keeps it looking good.

She previously worked for five years at ProAct, and for the St. James Hotel and Red Wing Health Center in laundry and housekeeping. "My mother was a professional housekeeper—hotels, nursing homes, you name it," said Seither. "She did a very good job with it."

Goodhue independence, from page 1

for the simple fact that there aren't 100-plus towels hanging in lockers. The service is better for health and sanitary concerns, the head custodian said. "It's very needed, we think."

Goodhue School has a rich history of more than 100 years, she said, with seven additions and 12 levels. It serves a vast geographic area, and 675 students. The city of Goodhue has less than 1,200 residents.

Between the Minnesota Vikings and Goodhue Wildcats, there's plenty of purple color to go around. Seither



new jobs and the team is more united, said Horne. Cleaner and more organized work areas also help.

The feeling of work pride is there, and even when participants beat their numbers by just a few, there is huge excitement, the supervisor said. "It's a pretty big deal for



these guys." Supervisor Jean Meyer played a key role in Red Wing's first Kaizen, and Production Manager Jim Bohmbach also stays connected.

"My management skills have improved greatly just because of Kaizen," Horne said.

Kaizen process, from page 1

staff and participants only enhanced the effort.

Big results come from small changes accumulated over time, according to Kaizen doctrine. For Red Wing, the proof is in the pudding, and the flavor is a tasty blend of getting jobs done right the first time and improved quality control, managers explained. Planning it took two weeks.

Horne said there are always kinks to work out, but the system flows quite smoothly. Staff and participants are cross-trained, which makes both groups more valuable to the organization. "It's a huge improvement," she said.

Participants overcame initial memory issues with help from staff, partly by using a simple numbering system that designates sections. More people are interacting, consumers are more easily encouraged to try

Get to know us

proactinc.org

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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

ProAct Board of Directors:

John Christiansen, Chuck DeNet, Brian Knapp, Paul Kramp, Mary Ellen Leary, Larry Lehman, Jim Louwagie, Teri McCloughan, Marty Stapleton, Arleen Sullivan and Jon Wilbrecht.

PROACT BRIEFS:

Cook-off for potato soup

Spreading the good word about ProAct, job developer Traci Kolo served up some warm nourishment in late March at the Potato Soup Cook-off competition in River Falls. She joined with a downtown store and volunteer Michael Van Someren to share information about ProAct.



Participant and Riverwalk employee Michael Van Someren, center, Shoppy Chic owner Cyndi Ritger and ProAct's Traci Kolo.

"It was a fun time. We had a lot of people coming through," said Kolo. Van Someren dressed as a "Lucky Charm."

New ProAct Playhouse show has comedy focus



Emerging veterans of the ProAct Playhouse dramatic team are returning soon for some engaging comedy sketches that mimic a "Saturday Night Live" style format.



Designated Coordinator Matt Briggs leads the Eagan group, which has brought more serious performances to audiences in the past. Watch proactinc.org and Facebook for more details.

'Back to '50s' on May 11

Participants at ProAct Life Opportunities in Hudson are prepping for an annual dance and celebration on May 11 starting at 11 a.m., which features a "Back to the 50s" theme.

Old long play (LP) records, a DJ, decorations and costumes including poodle skirts will create the ambiance, and grilled food will satisfy palates.

Parent meeting May 12

Parents and guardians of participants, and staff members are invited for a special meeting on Thursday, May 12 at 7 p.m. at the Eagan headquarters. Enjoy light refreshments. RSVP with Sheena Henry - shenry@proactinc.org, 651-289-3149.

Cinco de Mayo culture



A popular Mexican holiday, Cinco de Mayo, celebrates a battle soundly won by Mexico over French troops. It's usually enjoyed with food, dancing and parades. ProAct is making Pinatas to be stuffed with candy and serving guacamole, chips and enchiladas.

Lights recycling continues



Mike Garstig works through strands of Christmas lights for the "Recycle Your Holidays" recycling in Eagan. A truckload of 7,000 pounds of processed strands was sent off and totals will be known by the end of April.

Decorative stepping stones added to sale crafts



With some materials donated by River Valley Flooring in Red Wing, ProAct participants are producing decorative stepping stones with crack resistant Quikrete material.

On sale for \$5 each, the products are part of the latest project led by direct service professional Char Dudley, who has led multiple craft sale projects for the nonprofit.

ADS EMPLOYEE CREATIVE, ENERGIZED, TALENTED

Alejandra Costellenos, known as Ale, came to ProAct in Eagan two years ago as a graduate fresh out of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

With majors in biology and math, her career goal involved medical school until her part-time college job in a group home brought out her passion for hands-on, direct care. "I want to heal and not diagnose," she said.

Her goal to bring a difference to each classroom found its way into a computer class, where they are shooting and editing commercials for the film and theater class. "They love picking out the theme of the commercial ... and when they see their progress, it is awesome."

She is pleased with how quickly the class learns how



Alejandra Costellenos, center, brings her passion for people to a cooking class giving ample hugs and teaching cooking skills. Below are photos of her travel to England and Ireland.



was memorable. An organized "Pub Crawl" introduced her to "old Irishmen hanging out at the bar telling us their stories, culture and history."

To further her career, she is looking to earn a master's degree in nursing from St. Kates, if she is accepted.



'Face of ProAct' continues community work

ProAct Community Relations Manager Catherine McCoy celebrated 21 years with the organization and moves into a new chapter of semi-retirement.

In many ways, she's been the face of ProAct with the business community for more than two decades, and McCoy continues part-time in that part-time role as a key promoter.

"We've grown to appreciate her a lot," said President and CEO Steven Ditschler. "She has a tremendous and genuine caring for her staff. And, she is so likable."

McCoy was responsible for finding numerous job sites in the surrounding



McCoy, center, was congratulated by former coworker Wendy Keller, right, and Carolyn Dobis, Eagan director of programs and services.

community, and had previously served as employment manager. A special luncheon was held to honor her service.

"She has represented us very well as an organization," said Ditschler.

VOCATIONAL EXPERTISE IN WISCONSIN

Specific, detailed and in touch, the Wisconsin Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) works closely with ProAct Life Opportunities in Hudson, which provides job search and placement assistance to a number of individuals with disabilities in the area.

ProAct Program Coordinator Margaret Christensen said technical specifications in Wisconsin are quite different from Minnesota's system, as are the reporting methods. And, the state typically asks for a new work site each time for work tryouts, whereas ProAct in Eagan relies on a large existing network of sites where individuals can be evaluated. In Hudson, job developer Traci Kolo seeks out work experiences that match each individual's work preferences.

This means more time in the community and "boots on the ground," said Christensen. "She is really reaching out to a lot of people." In between the regular campaigns, she does job coaching for ProAct's more established participants. "It's a bit more labor intensive in some ways."

Christensen works with a core group of VR counselors, usually five or six, and all are

responsive to questions by phone and email. And, a lot of information is available online, she explains.

The people who are new to ProAct's program come with varying amounts of background information. It depends on how long they have been searching for work and if they've been with other providers, even three or four, perhaps, the coordinator explains.

Some come right from school while others may have been out of work for as long as 25 years.

Job placement expectations can be high, depending on the person being served. Employers seem to be receptive to receiving free help, she said. They both receive a temporary worker and a staff member to assist.

ProAct attends meetings in Eau Claire every six months. Monthly reports are written and sent for the individuals served. One person with DVR asks that reports be written as if she's right there, with many specifics, Christensen explains.

Many providers in the Hudson area work with smaller groups of individuals, two to three at a time.

Wisconsin doesn't look favorably on in-center type jobs, the coordinator explained, so ProAct needs to explore other options for tryouts, training and placement.



Extraordinary job match, from page 1

explains Production and Facilities Manager Shaun Clover. When it reopened in February, Apple Valley Goodwill set a Twin Cities record for opening day sales volume. As a top three store, it also serves as a training center for managers.

"The trust that I've gained in her has increased exponentially. It's been very positive," said Clover.

Wagner makes twice per month visits to check on Wieland's progress. He said ProAct's team is good at finding out what's important for each person, whether that's goals beyond employment, moving out of a group home, or going back to school.

The new employee likes her coworkers, volunteered here as a transition student in 2007 and had a friend who worked at the store who has since passed away.

At Goodwill, a white board in the back room provides direction for the day. Shoes, bags and purses are sorted, and the store's core product clothing articles. Each

is inspected for quality and brand value.

VRS counselors helped Wieland to set goals, and even assisted with shopping for work clothes. "I've always kind of been a people person," she said. "Sometimes, I'm shy at first and then I talk more."

Learning the store takes time, she said, and that's important for helping shoppers.

The influx of donations rolls in to the tune of 300 vehicles a day, and it only increases as spring comes online, Clover explains. The amount of material per vehicle goes up and some days the store receives 350 or even 400 donors. May and June are the peak times, with another spike in the fall.

The store uses a structured system to track workers' progress, and to rotate products which are not selling off the floor. Color tags indicate discounted prices. Clothing or "soft lines" here

comprise about 70 percent of the products. Many donors are also shoppers and the thrift location's history dating to the 1990s has provided for a strong market foundation, the manager explained.



TRAINING ON STEEP RISE IN EAGAN

Learning and honing the skills essential for life, and finding some enjoyment and camaraderie along the way is an emphasis at ProAct's Day Training and Habilitation program in Eagan, to the tune of 93 classes, and still counting.

"We are packed to the nines," said Program Manager Stephanie Osman. She polls participants for their interests and organizes the classes and teachers. Color coded lists in a stapled packet track the order and participation.

A new theater staff member was hired as a life skills instructor, and the ProAct Playhouse productions that Osman birthed several years ago soldier on. From relaxation and aerobics, to volunteer outings, culture nostalgia, singing,

dancing bowling and terrariums, it's a world of choices. There are crafts to make and donate, and gifts to be prepared for children in need. Space is at a premium.



Cooking classes are especially popular, useful and filling.

Spring brings more options, both outside and offsite.

So why so much growth in classes and training? Osman said in-center work functions are becoming more complex

than in the past, requiring greater skills from participants. The classes help individuals to maintain their skills and abilities, she explains.

And, designated coordinators are now teaching some classes as well. It's an opportunity to work more with people on their case loads, and to get more familiar with the offsite volunteer activities.

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

NEW BOARD MEMBERS BRING ADDED SKILLS

A metro area banking executive and a Red Wing manufacturing leader are now contributing their insights and perspectives to help guide ProAct's myriad of services for people with disabilities.



Arleen Sullivan, Anchor Bank

Arleen Sullivan of Anchor Bank and Brian Knapp of 3M's Capital Safety in Red Wing have been elected to the ProAct board of directors.

"I am delighted that Arleen Sullivan and Brian Knapp will be sharing their good judgment and perspectives with ProAct as we move forward in the future," said Steven Ditschler, president and chief executive officer of ProAct. "In addition to their professional accomplishments, they are true community leaders, as well."

The director of community banking for Anchor Bank, Sullivan guides personal, business, and residential

mortgage teams at 17 locations in the Twin Cities. Previously, she was a commercial banking market president and lender at Anchor, following earlier service at Stillwater National Bank. A native of Maine, Sullivan is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass.

Brian Knapp is the director of U.S. operations for Capital Safety Inc. of Red Wing, which became a part of 3M Company last year. It is the nation's largest manufacturer of industrial safety equipment. He previously served as plant manager and operations manager for Capital Safety, following earlier experience at Andersen Windows. Knapp earned his



Brian Knapp, Capital Safety

degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and later received a Master of Science degree in operations management from the same institution.

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



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



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Colorado slopes call to Cannon Falls worker

Matt Morehouse has been carrying groceries at Econo Foods on weekdays in Cannon Falls for nearly a decade. He's also gotten involved in downhill ski competitions, which led him to Colorado.

Earning medals at Welch Village Ski and Snowboard Area was a start. Steamboat Springs, and a racing event, are his last ski stops this season.

It's a relatively new sport for Morehouse, who was introduced to the slopes by some neighbors in recent years, explains his mother, Dianne Morehouse. The competitions are through NASTAR, the NATIONAL STAndard Race, which claims to be the largest public grassroots ski race program in the world, with 95,000 competitors.

Welch competitions revolve around baseline ski times, which participants ski



Veteran ProAct participant Matt Morehouse is a medal winner.



against. Bronze, silver, gold and platinum medals are awarded.

"I was a little leery," said his mother. On a cold night in January of 2015, her son lost his balance and hit his knee against a metal stake. Matt's ACL was torn and he hurt some cartilage.

The 31-year-old recovered to race again. With a GoPro camera mounted on his helmet, he can watch his races afterward to polish his technique and skills.

"It has taught him a lot of independence," said Dianne. Finding his way around, asking questions, visiting with people and making friends are part of the experience.

In the summer, Morehouse works at Gopher Hills Golf Course in Cannon Falls. He's preparing to get his driver's license and hopes to work at Welch Village next season. "It's helping with the

Ski competitor, see page 2

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Sponsorships awarded with varying benefits of event registrations, free carts, various opportunities for name recognition through banners, tournament ads, and signage. Contact Sheena 651-289-3149 or shenry@proactinc.org or proactinc.org/proact_golf_classic.htm