

# RESILIENT, RELIABLE, RESPONSIBLE







**ProAct Annual Report 2020** 



# **Dear Friend of ProAct,**



Who could have predicted the dramatic impact on our state and on services for people with disabilities that the coronavirus brought starting in March? The virus has edged its way into our conversations, and our practices through safety plans and many other changes that effect our everyday lives.

We were cautious, and the individuals and families we serve have been cautious, as experts and government leaders tried to gauge the possible impacts of the virus. Our work contracts continued, some life enrichment offerings went virtual and employment supports kept going as we planned and prepared to pour solid footings for the future.

As many know, we have operated efficiently for a long time. That has not changed, but our sources of income took a large dip at the end of our 2020 fiscal year, as we were not allowed to provide the vast majority of our services. We had to lay off staff for the first time in more than 20 years, which was a very difficult choice since a quality staff is the lifeblood or our company.

We would gladly take the normal challenge of attracting and keeping staff than the decisions we had to make when services were not allowed. And the staff who remained missed our participants greatly. From a management perspective, there were temporary relief programs that we pursued in addition to reducing expenses as much as possible. Funding from some of those will help considerably. We have fared better than many, and we are confident that we will recover and thrive again in the future.

The first element of our theme is resilient, and that, quite frankly, depends on each of us. As leaders, we look to our core values to define who we are and what we do. That focus is only magnified during difficult times.

We have also proven to be reliable, both in providing the more traditional services that people want and venturing out into new territories, both to help individuals live the best lives that they can. We try to strike a balance between informed choice and encouragement to strive for more. And, we have done well in that regard.

Much of what we have said here reflects a commitment on ProAct's part to be responsible toward the people we serve and their families, to our funders and to our customers. It is the third element in the theme for this report.

We pursue excellence; we maximize individual potential and self-sufficiency, provide person-centered services and enhance people's quality of life. We are modest, thankful and committed to move forward.

Two years ago, in this letter, we said there will be challenges ahead. That phrase still rings true but the challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic is not what we expected. Thank you for believing in ProAct, and for supporting our valuable mission.

Respectfully,

Steven Ditschler

President and CEO

James Louwagie

Chair, Board of Directors

Cover photos from top left, Eagan Adult Day Services group attends State Capitol rally on February 26, 2020; participants engage from home after many services were suspended in March.

# Pressing forward, overcoming obstacles, engaging, fulfilling

The story of ProAct's 2020 fiscal year is one of starting strong, and finishing well, despite financial difficulties presented by shutdowns and the coronavirus.

Funding improved slightly beginning in 2020 with a net rate increase of about 4 percent tied to the "Competitive Workforce Factor" approved through state level legislation. This reduced the impact of a 7 percent cut in 2018.

#### **Standing for services**

Participants also played a greater role with Capitol visits, including a sit down session with Rep. Barb Haley and Sen. Mike Goggin, who represent Red Wing. Both signaled their support for adequate reimbursement rates to cover services for ProAct participants.

Members of Eagan's Adult Day Services group gathered with The Arc Minnesota and related organizations for a Capitol rally to stand for work options and care staff.

### **Heralding commitments**

Recognition banquets, now sorely missed in the COVID era, featured a Special Olympics Alpine Ski Champion for 400 Eagan celebrants and many service awards. For the Red Wing and Zumbrota banquet, 50th Anniversary festivities continued with special guests and added accolades for valuable services across the region. The Hudson and Shakopee locations held in-house recognition events to mark participant milestones and build on strong relationships.

### 'Stay home' orders change plans

On the cusp of spring, the coronavirus stay home orders rolled in and ProAct responded. Participant care calls kicked off, followed by exercise

and slideshow videos to inform and keep people active. Several drive-by visits connected staff to participants who had to stay home. At ProAct, employees moved quickly to cover participant jobs in the skills training areas and keep up with customer demands. Several are "critical sector" businesses that couldn't cease production due to the virus.

ProAct updates were frequent, responding to decisions made by Governor Tim Walz and the Department of Human Services (DHS). A Safety Preparedness Plan was created and updated frequently to guide operations.

ProAct Employment services took a brief time out as Minnesota assessed the situation but were soon back online. A virtual environment was emerging to cover a number of functions previously done in person.

This same approach made its way to day and adult day participants through virtual enrichment services first developed by the Eagan day training program by adapting a robust base of classes. The concept expanded to Red Wing and other locations served via Eagan, where participants needed service but were not yet ready, or allowed, to return in person. The need was great to relieve isolation and provide positive programming.

Per DHS rules, preparations were made in June for the July return of the first participants, those who live with family or independently. ProAct adapted and families responded positively as new realities took hold.

"Ours is a community, an intentional community, that truly cares about person-centered services," said ProAct President Judie Foster-Lupkin.



On February 20, 2020, staff and participants from ProAct in Red Wing gathered in the governor's reception room after meeting with their legislators.



On September 27, 2019 the Eagan Recognition Banquet gathered about 400 to celebrate years of service and hear from a special speaker.



Virtual enrichment services were formed in response to the COVID-19 service suspensions to connect and help participants.



# Bright future, new president

With 20 years in disability services, new ProAct President Judie Foster-Lupkin has several experiences bringing nonprofits back to life, but ProAct's situation was different.

A transition plan was in place to make CEO Steve Ditschler available for months, and, while coronavirus service suspensions took their toll starting in the spring, ProAct's systems and finances were in good shape. Foster-Lupkin joined the organization in June 2020.

Working with Ditschler, the two would tackle best practices, combining decades of leadership experience. Both have a background and interest in finance. "One of the sayings I heard early in my nonprofit career was, 'No Margin – No Mission,'" said Foster-Lupkin. "We cannot provide the services we do without being able to make financial sense as a business."



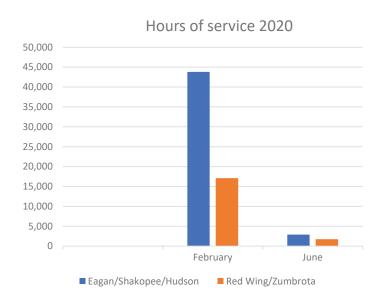
Judie Foster-Lupkin

With a for-profit background in finance before her foray into the industry, Foster-Lupkin has served residential and day service organizations in her native Oregon, Missouri and southeastern Minnesota. She holds an MBA from Walden University in Minneapolis and a bachelor's in business administration with an emphasis on management from Southern Oregon University in Ashland.

Funding streams and federal matches are similar everywhere, but she noticed something in Minnesota that set it apart. "Minnesotans are more open minded and embrace the folks with disabilities more than anywhere I've ever been," she said.

The new president's introduction to people with disabilities came at an early age. A cousin with special needs spent time with her at their grandmother's home. And, her sister fostered special needs children in Alaska. "As far as I was concerned, they were just family." Family, as well as admiration for the ProAct organization, are much of what drew her here. Foster-Lupkin has grandchildren in the area.

The new president said there's something infectious about the smiles, happy attitude and sense of accomplishment that participants have that "the rest of us often take for granted."



Service hours provided to participants are a primary revenue source for ProAct and dropped dramatically after COVID-19 service suspensions began in March 2020. The chart shows the pre-COVID hours in February and the impact felt in the month of June, when new coronavirus realities were in full swing.

# **Kwik Trip: invaluable partner**

For years, Kwik Trip gas and convenience stores have partnered with ProAct to provide opportunities for people with disabilities who fill support roles.

At the core is a "Retail Helper" program where the company pays wages directly for stocking and janitorial help. The positions, in essence, are not added to the individual store's labor expense, and improve customer service. Retail helpers stock items, empty garbage, clean and cover other duties. The shifts are often three hours long, five days per week, said ProAct employment specialist Ted Stam.

The stores work closely with Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and business consultant Marci Jasper. Individual locations request the optional help, and job candidates are pre-screened by VRS.

"They're treating our people very well," said Stam.

"And have definitely taken it upon themselves to assimilate the population we serve."

Jasper said that as of May 2020, the company had

507 retail helpers, with 75 percent of stores employing at least one person with a disability. The company wants to increase those numbers.

Retail helpers sometimes move into regular staff positions, and a second store position is opening even more doors for people with disabilities. "Food product demonstrators" offer greetings and give samples to guests, working busy mealtime hours.

goes on to the next thing and do

Supported by ProAct, Bobbi Glewwe was hired as a food product demonstrator at a Kwik Trip in Eagan. Her captivating smile and outgoing personality help people to discover and buy food products.

Bobbi Glewwe, who uses a wheelchair, was hired as a food product demonstrator at the Slater Road store in Eagan. She had worked for a nursing home previously, but likes the food focus here. Glewwe explains the food sample offerings to passersby and watches a timer to assure freshness. "Would you like to try a sample?" she asks. "Yeah, how about one of these?" a man answers. "Thank you for coming and have a nice day."

Stam assisted with the job placement. "Ted was willing to help and it was really nice of him to do it," said Glewwe.



"He was very concerned about what I like and he was really fast about it. He didn't wait at all. He knew what he was doing."

Store Leader Heather Caine said her Kwik Trip recently reached the busiest level in sales. "If you want something to sell, you sample it," she said. Her hope for Glewwe's role is to increase sales of take home meals in the evening.

"Bobbi comes in and she does have a great smile (she uses a face shield)," said Caine. Guests look for her and appreciate her. Rejections don't get her down. "She just goes on to the next thing and doesn't skip a beat with it."

The VRS business consultant said Kwik Trip human resources is very responsive if any job placements have issues, often getting back within five minutes after reaching out to a store. Jasper was supporting about 100 retail helpers at one point.

Other aspects that make Kwik Trip so desirable as an employer, said Stam, are the good wages and limited hours. They often fit within

income limits that participants have to maintain their benefits.

Caine worked in counseling for 10 years before Kwik Trip. She met Stam at another store. "I understand how work helps people, how it makes people better," she said. "I've always been a huge supporter of our retail helper program and helping people like Bobbi in a job that's going to give them a sense of purpose and fulfillment," said Caine. "It makes them feel like they're part of the team, and gets them excited about something again."

# Thoughtful and considerate in Hudson



Participant Alicia Sanchez in Hudson talked repeatedly about her 10-year Service Award that was coming in 2020, then the coronavirus hit and ProAct was shut down for a while. As a person who enjoys attention, her 30th birthday also fell during that time, and her "big bash" party at ProAct was lost, said Case Coordinator LeeAnn Mergens.

When the site reopened, Sanchez returned with a great attitude, learned to

embrace the new face masks and unleashed her life enrichment talents with craft ideas and planning to help others, the coordinator explained. Sanchez is cost-conscious and innovative to use what's on hand. She's also been more consistent with attendance, choosing her schedule, said Mergens. "We call her 'Princess,' and she loves it." Sanchez was previously served by ProAct in Red Wing, but found the smaller Hudson setting more beneficial to her needs.

# Finding joy in Shakopee work day, contagiously positive



Asking participant Karen Haw about her happiness at ProAct can prompt tears of joy, an emotion that spills over to benefit others. "Karen is a very fun loving individual," said Case Coordinator Stephanie Schmitz.

"She is always really happy. She's chipper and she knows how to cheer up a room." Direct service professional Rebel Rozeboom said Haw loves to come to work. "I have not seen her in a negative mood, ever." Haw loves her job. "Stephanie is my boss, and Rick. He loves to tease

everybody," said Haw.

Rozeboom greets her each day as "her favorite Karen." It's no wonder that a return to ProAct brought dramatic changes for Haw, who was antsy at home. Upon her return, she had completely changed at home, said Schmitz "It's been awesome." Haw knows her jobs and works hard. "Her being happy is what makes me happy and it's always like that. It's like perfect," said Schmitz. "I really like it here. I like the people I work with, I like Rebel and everybody," said the participant.

# Her social outlet earns paychecks with ProAct support in Eagan



Personality and motivation easily lend themselves to opportunities, and Sophia Sullivan found one at the Old Navy store in Eagan's outlet mall. The transition student discovered ProAct and employment specialist Hannah Baker helped to secure the job as a greeter.

"She always manages to put smiles on everyone's faces, including her coworkers," said Baker. The employee loves fashion and music. Her mother, Linda Sullivan, said Sophia has "pep in her step" when she drops her off for work and when she picks her up. It's her first job.

Baker helped Sophia with the interview where she was hired on the spot, provided job coaching and then occasional visits. "She's worked really hard to be independent," said Baker. Her shifts of three hours, three days per week could expand after she graduates. "She's the kind of person who sets the scene for everybody," said Baker. "Really fun to be around, that's where she strives the most."

Sophia was complimented by a regional Old Navy manger who liked the way she greeted people and her dancing, which provide a good atmosphere, Baker said.

"ProAct will be the provider of choice for person-centered services that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities." ProAct Vision Statement

# He's independent, in demand, appreciated



"Houseman" Michael Halpaus, found a new job at Country Inn & Suites through a friend and continues to receive occasional support visits from ProAct in Red Wing.

Coworkers are friendly, he feels appreciated and there's much to do. And, Halpaus is reliable. He figures out rides to work and sometimes is called in for extra shifts.

General Manager Scott Hanson relies on Halpaus to keep common areas clean, and calls him in for extra shifts when needed. "I am thankful for Mike every day." Halpaus' favorite tasks involve food service for guests. Some give him tips.

"I want to keep doing this for a while," he said. The hotel is one of the most popular lodging spots in the river town.

# Strong connection, good conversation show caring for others



Sometimes the social aspects of work are just as important as the physical ones, and participant Genna Helfritz on the DARTS cleaning crew is well aware of this. As she visits seniors in their homes, Helfritz and ProAct Site Supervisor Ann Stocker know that interactions are just as important as the scrubbing.

"She always remembers what the last conversation was with that person," said Stocker. "She's very nice, polite, just wonderful." While Helfritz has worked independently and in ProAct's skills training

area, the crew setting has been her best fit. She considers the residents as her friends and said she wants to cheer them up when there's a need.

One resident, Joe C., said the ladies who clean his apartment are wonderful. "The floors and bathroom are immaculate. They do a really good job and I like the ladies very, very much." Helfritz's case coordinator, Linda Koenig, said she is agreeable, takes feedback and has a solid rapport with others. That interaction has been a big part of her quality of life.

# Scout values, determination, support for all seasons in Red Wing



In Red Wing's pottery area, 4 Season Sports, a fishing and hunting retailer, hired Chris Farrell to work the sales floor and stock items. Finding the job on his own, Farrell said he had an advantage. Both he and his manager earned Eagle Scout ranks in the same scout troop, though years apart.

Farrell has had many physical challenges, but refuses to give up. "It's hard and frustrating at times, but you've just got to keep on going." ProAct job coach Steve Whitmore visits Farrell at work to

provide any needed supports to make him successful.

He knows the correct baits to use in different applications. There are sinkers, hooks and many kinds of plastics. When he's not stocking or helping customers, Farrell breaks down boxes and takes out cardboard. A former golfer and employee of Mississippi National Golf links, he uses arm crutches to assist with walking and to maintain upper body strength.

"To provide person-centered services that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities in the areas of employment, life skills, and community inclusion."

ProAct Mission Statement

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From left, Mary Ellen Leary, Brian Knapp, Marty Stapleton, Paul Kramp, Charles DeNet, Dr. John Christiansen, Judie Foster-Lupkin, Arleen Sullivan, Teri McCloughan and Steven Ditschler.

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James Louwagie

Members as of June 30, 2020

# Leadership Team













From left, Steven Ditschler, President and Chief Executive Officer

Judie Foster-Lupkin, President (June 2020)

Kim Feller, Vice President of Programs and Services

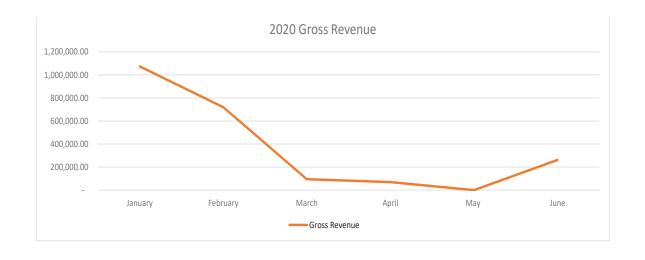
Sally Ogren, Director, Red Wing/Zumbrota

Jo Ann Peine, Human Resource Director/ Corporate Compliance Officer

Aimee Sandy, Controller

# **Financial Statements**

| Statements of Activities and Changes in Net Assets |                         |                         | Statements of Financial Position                                      |              |                     |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------|---------------------|
|  | 2020                    | 2019                    |   | 2020         | 2019                |
| Revenues   |                         |                         |   |              | _                   |
| Program Service Fees                               | \$9,751,720             | \$12,537,909            | Current Assets<br>Land, Building and                                  | \$9,728,878  | \$9,240,867         |
| Consumer Employment                                |                         | 4.007.300               | Equipment   | 3,512,039    | 3,643,397           |
| Services   | 3,898,818               | 4,826,188               | Investment  | 4,809,942    | 4,210,74 <u>7</u>   |
| United Way   | 7,250                   | 7,250                   | mvosimom  | 1,007,712    | 1,210,717           |
| Other Total Revenues                               | 718,267<br>\$14,376,055 | 869,879<br>\$18,241,226 | Total Assets  | \$18,050,859 | \$17,095,011        |
|  | \$14,070,033            | \$10, <u>271,220</u>    | Total Liabilities   | \$3,510,791  | \$1,911,999         |
| Expenses   |                         |                         | IOIUI LIUDIIIIIES   | 20,210,771   | 21,711,777          |
| Program Services                                   | ogram Services          |                         | Net Assets-without Donor Restrictions                                 |              |                     |
| Employment Services                                | \$7,437,623             | \$8,951,812             | Designated  | 4,560,784    | 4,524,779           |
| Day Services                                       | 5,617,434               | 6,995,385               | Undesignated  | 9,979,284    | 10,638,030          |
| Vocational Services                                | 427,153                 | 433,291                 | Net Assets-with Donor Restrictions - 20,203                           |              |                     |
| Total Program Services                             | \$13,482,210            | <u>\$16,350,488</u>     |   |              | •                   |
|  |                         |                         | Total Net Assets  | \$14,540,068 | \$15,183,012        |
| Support Services                                   |                         |                         |   |              |                     |
| Management and                                     | 1 514 100               | 1 00/ 00/               | Total Liabilities   |              |                     |
| General<br>Fundaciona                              | 1,514,130<br>22,659     | 1,226,336               | and Net Assets  | \$18,050,859 | <u>\$17,095,011</u> |
| Fundraising Total Support Services                 | 1,536,789               | 12,635<br>1,238,971     |   |              |                     |
| TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES                             | 1,330,707               | 1,230,771               | F. 1 ( 11.1.  |              |                     |
| Total Expenses                                     | \$15,018,999            | \$17,589,459            | Fiscal years from July 1 to June 30. Financial audit report available |              |                     |
| TOTAL EXPONSOS                                     | (642,994)               | 651,767                 | upon request.   |              |                     |
|  | (/ /                    | ,                       |   |              |                     |



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### **Zumbrota**

224 South Main St. Zumbrota, MN 55992 Phone: (507) 732-7888 Fax: (507) 732-4085

# Celebrating in a new way





Service awards were presented to Red Wing, Eagan, Shakopee and Hudson participants. Some received the award and gifts at home, others at work, and some came for a celebratory drive-by pick-up.

























