

## Equipment purchased with grant increases safety for consumers, staff

Three lifts, six wheelchairs and an automatic door opener are increasing safety and accessibility throughout ESR's community sites thanks to the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

The state department awarded ESR a grant late last year enabling the agency to step up its safety efforts on behalf of consumers and staff. Among the purchases made possible by the grant are two mobile floor lifts, located in Forest Lake and Stillwater, to enable staff to safely lift consumers and prepare for the changing mobility of an aging population.

"This equipment enables the agency to truly implement a no-lift policy to protect both consumers and staff," said Sara Hasslen, director of operations. "And as our population ages, their mobility often changes and we want to

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**Lifts purchased with a grant keep consumers and staff safe as the agency enhances its no-lift policy.**

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GoodSearch.com is a search engine that donates 50 percent of its revenue to charities and schools. You simply use GoodSearch.com as you would any other search engine. The money donated comes from

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### Agency anticipates topping 300 consumers served Forest Lake expansion project will provide breathing room to meet need for service

Ever wish you could remove a wall and have a bit more space?

For consumers and staff in ESR's Forest Lake site that wish will come true this spring as space is added to strengthen the agency's ability to serve adults with developmental disabilities.

"The building owner came to us with news that the space next to ours might be available and we started talking about the possibilities," said Ed Boeve, ESR's executive director. "It sparked a lot of discussion."

ESR has maintained fairly

steady growth over the last several years and anticipates welcoming its 300th consumer into service this spring. Many of the individuals served by the agency are supported in independent jobs at businesses located throughout the area. For those who do not wish to work in the community, employment is available at ESR's program sites in Cottage Grove, Forest Lake and Stillwater in the form of mailings, light assembly work and packaging.

The area experiencing the highest increase in requests for

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## *From the director*

### Surprising contradictions proving advantageous for ESR

Life is full of contradictions.

Companies accept bailout money from the government and then pay huge bonuses to management. The calendar indicates spring, but snow is in the forecast. And demand for our services continues at a level hard to keep up with while service payment rates are cut by the governor and legislature.

We are living through the toughest economic period since the Great Depression. Though not comparable to the 30's, unemployment rates are approaching double-digits for the first time in most people's memory. Almost everyone is related to or knows someone who has lost their job. Americans are so nervous about the future that the savings rate has actually risen. Logically, this should be a good thing, yet economists suggest that saving money works against the kick-start needed to spur economic growth.

Consumers supported by our service continue to gain and keep jobs in our community. The development and maintenance of

integrated employment is not easy considering today's economy. The fact is most consumers have held on and additional growth is taking place as we speak, which is a pleasant surprise to me. Continued community presence is credited to consumers and their employers for their mutual commitment, to support networks that place high priority on community participation, and to ESR sales staff and support specialists for their tenacity and high expectations.

We continue to grow despite the tough economic times and have the need to expand our service site in Forest Lake, and will soon consider options for changes in our Stillwater service center. Our goal is to enhance efficiency and reduce per-consumer expenses in accordance with directives coming from our funding partners. The goal is to emerge from the economic darkness prepared to support consumers' paths into the community.

We need your help more than ever. Donations of time and financial resources are crucial if we are to continue supporting consumers

in our community. Our most immediate project is renovating our Forest Lake site to meet the needs of consumers efficiently and safely into the future. We expect that project to be completed in May.

Plans are also coming together to significantly increase the number of consumers working in the Forest Lake community and in other areas served by ESR. It appears we will achieve all-time highs this summer in the number of consumers served by ESR and in the number of them working in community settings. I am especially impressed by the latter accomplishment in light of the depressed job market.

Join us by making a financial contribution to help offset the costs of renovating space or to support our ongoing efforts to bring consumers and community members together. The challenge is great, yet the rewards are sweet.



**Ed Boeve**

## Fundraising *Continued from Page 1*

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in 2005 after two businessmen envisioned what a fraction of the \$8 billion generated annually by search engine advertisers could do if it were directed to nonprofits.

To earn money for ESR each time you search the Internet, visit GoodSearch.com and designate ESR as your charity of choice. Then, before you make online

purchases, visit Goodshop.com to make the same designation and a percentage of your purchases goes directly to ESR.

There is a direct link to GoodSearch.com on ESR's website, [www.esrworks.org](http://www.esrworks.org). Register today and begin earning money for ESR by using your computer!

## Consumer accomplishments



### Service record honored

Central Bank in Stillwater honored Shannon H. for 15 years of service recently with the gift of a banker's lamp, which included a brass plaque engraved with his employment dates. Shannon helps with mailings and other projects at the bank.

### A comeback to celebrate

Matt H. has a lot to celebrate. He was honored as the 2008 Special Olympics Minnesota Outstanding Male Athlete as part of the Stillwater "Lumberjacks" Special Olympics team after fighting his way back from a serious stroke and learning to walk again. His inspiring story was featured in the Jan. 27, 2008 Stillwater Gazette and "Check It Out," the Cub Foods employee newsletter. Matt is an associate at Cub and was not only back at work less than a year after the stroke, he returned to athletic competition as well.



### ESR artist's work included in recent Art St. Croix exhibit

Among the colorful paintings and artwork of the recent Art St. Croix exhibit was the work of ESR consumer Melody W.

Art St. Croix provides opportunities in the arts for adults with disabilities in the St. Croix Valley to display their work.

Melody's painting appeared with other area artists' work at the Lake Elmo Regional Art Center throughout the month of March.

### Expansion *Continued from Page 1*

service has been Forest Lake, so when the opportunity to expand at the agency's present location came about, the idea was met with enthusiasm.

"We remain focused on placing people in independent jobs in the community," said Boeve. "At the same time, we want to be able to offer consumers sensory opportunities and a comfortable environment in which to work if their choice is not to work in the community. This opportunity

to expand helps us provide that comfortable space and comes at a great time."

The build-out project will entail creating access between the existing site and the new space, as well as identifying office space for program administrators. Project specifics have not been finalized, but Boeve anticipates the build-out will cost about \$30,000. The agency hopes to offset the costs through grants and donations from ESR supporters.

"Every dollar we get through

grants and donations lessens the impact on other programs and services," he said.

"This expansion project is definitely needed and is the most cost-effective measure we've found that both addresses our needs and allows us to remain responsive to our consumers and supporters," Boeve continued. "We're excited about this growth opportunity and look forward to being able to meet the growing need for services in Forest Lake."

### My sight

By Amy K.

Opening and closing  
my eyes tonight  
The world is dark  
without my sight  
Is it night or is it day?  
Without my sight,  
I cannot say.

If I could only have my way  
My sight would return  
and forever stay  
Now knowing God is near  
He teaches me from up above  
Following me with lots of love.

*Amy's poem was published in her high school's publication and in her church's newsletter.*

# The *WORKS!*

*Providing quality support in employment and community for people with disabilities and other special needs!*

## Safety grant *Continued from Page 1*

ensure we were ready to respond as needed.”

A slightly different lift was purchased for ESR’s Cottage Grove site. Because the agency owns this building, an in-ceiling, permanent lift was installed.

“The day after it was installed, staff couldn’t wait to use it,” said Kris Olson, Cottage Grove program supervisor. “Consumers feel more comfortable being moved with the aid of the lift, and I know staff appreciates the added safety for consumers as well.”

The grant also enabled the

agency to install an automatic door opener in Stillwater to operate a heavy fire door that prevented some consumers from being independent.

“An automatic door opener installed at this location means greater independence for our consumers,” said Christine Voss, Stillwater program supervisor. “We feel strongly that consumers need to be empowered whenever possible. This equipment allows us to do that.”

The grant also subsidized the purchase of six wheelchairs that were distributed to the sites as needed.

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***Thank you for your support!***



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