

## 2018 WEB CHRISTMAS FAMILY PROGRAM ...

## PARAQUAD



*Nicole Wagner of French Gerleman is the Coordinator for WEB's Christmas Family Program and she has selected Paraquad as our Charity this year. To the left is a picture of Nicole with her cousin, Sam, and her softball team, which is why this organization is important to her. Nicole dedicates 2 to 3 nights a week to Sam and getting him to all the varsity sports at Francis Howell North so he can give a pep-talk to the student athletes. Nicole would like to bring awareness to persons with disabilities and how they fit in our world. We hope everyone will once again be generous with their "wish list" for the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Can't attend, but wish to contribute, please send to EBMI office prior to November 12<sup>th</sup>.*

### **PARAQUAD'S IMPACT IN ST. LOUIS**

Paraquad has been empowering people with disabilities for more than 45 years. Their tagline — The Disability Experts — is more than just a catchy slogan. More than 100 employees are working hard every day to change the conversation about disabilities in St. Louis. In 2017, Paraquad provided services to more than 2,000 people with disabilities in the St. Louis region.

*There are several unique ways that Paraquad is instrumental in helping people with disabilities and WEB can help by providing some of the items on the attached "wish list".*



**Bloom Café** isn't just a great environment to stuff yourself full of Breakfast Blooms™ over a steaming cup of joe—although it is that, too! It's also an innovative approach to solving one of the greatest barriers to independence for people with disabilities: the significant lack of employment opportunities. On average, people with disabilities are twice as likely to be unemployed as the general population. They are also twice as likely to live in poverty. There are many different factors that contribute to these disparities, and **Paraquad** educates employers to dispel the myths about hiring employees with disabilities. We also help youth identify and accomplish goals related to employment so they can grow up to become independent adults. Over five decades of working to help people with disabilities get jobs, we have discovered that there is a lack of opportunities to build skills and get that "first job" experience.



That's where Bloom Café's job training program comes in. The program offers an innovative curriculum designed to help people with disabilities build hands-on experience in food service, including offering **ServSafe**® certification, and the soft skills required to be successful in any job. The students participate in an innovative curriculum that is offered each spring, summer and fall. Each session runs Monday through Friday for 12 weeks. At the end of each session, all students will have the option to obtain ServSafe certification through the **National Restaurant Association**. From the training program, students will advance to a paid internship at Bloom Café or with partner employers in the community, where they will hone skills and gain experience before entering the workforce. Bloom Café's staff will provide one-on-one, on-the-job training and ongoing support. Once students complete the internship, they will receive job readiness training, which includes resume writing, interview preparation, financial planning and assistance with the job search. Paraquad will help each intern find a job that meets his or her interests and skill set. On-the-job support will be available to eligible participants to ensure success. This café is located near the St. Louis Science Center/Forest Park Community College.



## TRANSITIONING

Oftentimes, people who acquire a disability have limited options presented to them, which can lead to them being placed in nursing homes. The Transition Program at Paraquad provides people with the information and resources that support their ability to live in the community independently. When these individuals work with Paraquad's Transition Coordinator, they learn about housing, financing, personal care, financial resources and independent living. By providing the items on the wish list, you provide someone with the necessary tools to become independent.

### Why not involve others....

\*Most people are always so generous and even one item makes a difference...so why not ask your co-workers, family and friends to help donate an item or two. Please forward to others who may wish to donate to Paraquad.

\*Take your kids/grandkids on your shopping trip and have them pick out a few items to help them learn the importance of helping others.

Please bring items listed on the WISH LIST to November WEB meeting. The November meeting is when we will have a speaker from their organization and we plan to have all items ready to give to their representatives at this November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. You can drop off at EBMI office as well (prior to date above) if you can't attend WEB meetings or mail in a check or Visa gift card and we will make sure this group receives all donations. As always, this program is optional for members, but we know that WEB members continually support this project and the charities are very grateful for the support received from our members. Any questions, please contact [annie@electricalboard.org](mailto:annie@electricalboard.org).

## PARAQUAD'S Wish List – 2 options:



### \*\* 1) WISH LIST FOR THE BLOOM CAFÉ: \*\*



#### Items to donate:

\*Thumb drives (2gb would be sufficient)

\*1" or 1.5" binders for portfolios

(Including page protectors, pens, small notepads).

\*Bus Passes (No Uber/Lyft cards as their monies go farther with bus passes.)

### NO TIME TO SHOP BUT WANT TO ASSIST WITH THIS WONDERFUL PROGRAM???

**If you want to make a check out to "Paraquad" or donate VISA gift cards for whatever amount (no amount is too small), they will make sure they are put to good use in the following areas:**

**\*Funds to provide cash for call-a-ride for workers; \*Uniforms (A chef coat with Bloom logo is \$22; Baseball cap with Bloom logo is \$12 and white apron is \$4.) So their uniforms cost about \$40 for each person; and \*Groceries/Restaurant Depot supplies**

**(If you can't attend, but wish to donate, please mail check to EBMI, 900 S. Highway Dr., Fenton, MO 63026 but PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO PARAQUAD, NOT WEB!!)**



### \*\* 2) TRANSITIONAL HOME ITEMS NEEDED: \*\*

\*Toiletry items: combs, brushes, toothbrushes/toothpaste, mouthwash, deodorant, soap, shampoo, conditioner, etc.

\*Sheets (typically queen sizes) and pillowcases

\*Kitchen ware

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR NOVEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup> TO HEAR....

Paraquad's president and CEO [Aimee Wehmeier](#), who was recently named one of [St. Louis Business Journal](#)'s Most Influential Business Women of 2018 speak to our WEB group!

### \*\*ARTICLE FROM ST LOUIS BUSINESS JOURNAL\*\*

By [Diana Barr](#) – Associate Editor, St. Louis Business Journal

Aug 10, 2018, 5:00am

*[Aimee Wehmeier](#), president and CEO of disability services provider Paraquad, feels that everyone needs a champion.*

*“Early in my career, it was challenging to be the only person with a visible disability,” she said. “I attribute much of my success to mentors and champions who believed in me and gave me opportunities to build my confidence and leadership skills.” Wehmeier, 47, has muscular dystrophy and uses a power wheelchair.*

*Since becoming CEO in 2013, Wehmeier has used her personal and professional experience to advance independence for people with disabilities. Paraquad, one of the nation's oldest centers for independent living, provides nearly 2,600 people a year with services, including personal care assistance, training and employment and policy advocacy. There, Wehmeier oversees a staff of 90 full-time and 45 part-time employees, more than half of whom have disabilities, and an annual budget of \$16.5 million.*

*During Wehmeier's tenure, Paraquad has completed a number of capital projects. It opened a new \$3.3 million, 22,000-square-foot Health and Wellness Center, St. Louis' only fully accessible workout facility for people with disabilities and seniors, in January 2017 at 5200 Berthold Ave. That building is behind Paraquad's headquarters at 5240 Oakland Ave., where after a \$1.6 million build out, it opened social enterprise restaurant Bloom Cafe in April 2018.*

*While Paraquad charges some fees for services, it's been primarily funded through Medicaid and fundraising. “Trying to expand in the midst of state funding cuts was a challenge and we're still working on that,” she said. Wehmeier launched Paraquad's Change Makers Society, a major giving group. The nonprofit's wellness center expansion and restaurant development, as well as some office renovations, were financed through \$16.2 million in New Markets Tax Credits through IFF, Enterprise Bank and St. Louis Development Corp. Paraquad also is a landlord, renting space to for-profit businesses in several of its buildings.*

*Wehmeier serves on the boards of the St. Louis Regional Chamber, Diversity Awareness Partnership and Equal Housing Opportunities Commission; State Rehabilitation Council; and advisory boards for Missouri Foundation for Health, Missouri Botanical Garden, Washington University and Fontbonne University. She also volunteers with her church and a partnership working with ex-offenders, and mentors with Women in Transition. She's a member of the President's Council, a local meeting group for business and nonprofit leaders. She was also appointed by former Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon to serve on the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council.*

*Since moving back to St. Louis, Wehmeier has met and married her husband, Phil; the couple have two adult sons. She said she enjoys spending her spare time with family and friends, and enjoys the outdoors. A self-described “foodie,” she likes to decorate, cook and go to restaurants.*