

Southern Minnesota Area Health Education Center and Rice Hospice receive grants from Wal-Mart

WILLMAR, MN. (December 4, 2008) – Surrounded by poinsettias and Christmas decorations, representatives from seventeen community organizations were presented with grants from Wal-Mart at an award ceremony in the Garden Center of their new superstore.

Rice Hospice was one of 16 organizations to receive a \$1,000 award. Sue Broberg, CHPN, accepted the check on behalf of Rice Hospice. “Rice Hospice is in its 26th year and has eight offices throughout the region,” Sue explained to the group. “This money will go toward providing direct patient care, including medicine, home care, and comfort care.”

Southern Minnesota Area Health Education Center (AHEC) received a \$25,000 award. Kathy Huntley, director of AHEC, which is hosted by Rice Memorial Hospital, had applied for the grant on the national chain store’s website.

“It was a wonderful surprise when we received the call,” Kathy said. “The money will be applied to youth programs. AHEC travels throughout 26 counties in the region to bring health career awareness to middle and high school students.”

Wendy Foley, AHEC health careers specialist, has made classroom presentations to more than 4,500 students to encourage their participation in science and health-related fields as they make class and career choices. This is especially important as rural areas face medical profession-



Left to right: Betty Jones, Wal-Mart store manager presents the \$25,000 award to Kathy Huntley, AHEC director, Amy Tersteeg, AHEC assistant, Wendy Foley, AHEC health careers specialist, Dale Hustedt, interim CEO Rice Hospital, and Pat Berg, Outreach & Community Relations director.

al shortages in the coming years.

Every year, Willmar Wal-Mart associates meet to recommend to the corporate office which local organizations should receive awards. The AHEC award is separate and was determined by the corporate office following a grant application process.

Bob Kulseth, Wal-Mart assistant manager, said the annual award celebrations are a good opportunity for organizations to be recognized and meet each other and store associates.

Grant recipients included: Let’s Go Fishing, Sonshine Productions, Habitat

for Humanity, DARE Kandiyohi, DARE Willmar, West Central Meals on Wheels, Warm the Children, Willmar Area Food Shelf, Relay for Life—Wal-Mart Associates, Willmar Area Arts Council, Rotary Club Literacy, ACGC North Elementary School, Woodland Center, American Legion Auxiliary, Willmar Shop with a Cop, and the Elk’s Club Christmas Party for Kids.

Betty Jones, Wal-Mart store manager, closed the program by thanking everyone for their good work and quoting Sam Walton who said, “It’s ordinary people doing extraordinary things that make our communities successful.” ■