



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Walmart Foundation Awards Special Olympics Minnesota with \$50,000 Grant to Support Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Program

*Donation will help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness*

**What:** The Walmart Foundation will award a \$50,000 grant to Special Olympics Minnesota through its Minnesota State Giving Program to assist with its Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program. The Healthy Athletes program is dedicated to providing health services and education to Special Olympics athletes, and changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities.

“With the Walmart funding SOMN is able to conduct thousands of Healthy Athlete screenings for people with intellectual disabilities,” said Michael Kane, SOMN Vice President of Area Programs and Initiatives. “These programs are an important step in educating our athletes and their families on the importance of daily health. SOMN and Walmart are now joining forces to take Healthy Athletes programs to the next level in Minnesota and we will screen and educate more athletes this year than in the last two years combined.”

Special Olympics Minnesota offers children and adults with intellectual disabilities year-round sports training and competition. Through Special Olympics’ athletic, health and leadership programs, people with intellectual disabilities transform themselves, their communities and the world. The Healthy Athletes program works to improve access to health care for special Olympics Minnesota athletes; makes referrals to local health practitioners when appropriate; trains health care professionals and students about the needs and care of people with intellectual disabilities; collects, analyzes and disseminates data on the health status and needs of people with intellectual disabilities; and advocates for improved health policies and programs for people with intellectual disabilities.

“Walmart and the Walmart Foundation look for organizations that can positively affect social change through programs that impact the well-being of our customers, associates and the communities we serve,” said Lisa Kaspszak, Walmart health and wellness coordinator for AREA. “We are proud to support the Healthy Athletes program through this grant. Special Olympics Minnesota is an organization that shares our values of making a difference in the lives of people.”

The grant will be formally presented to Special Olympics Minnesota during the Fall Games Celebration Ceremony held on Aug. 17. During the ceremony, Walmart health and wellness coordinator, Lisa Kaspszak will present a check to Special Olympics Minnesota in front of hundreds of Fall Games athletes and Special Olympics supporters.

**Who:** Special Olympics Minnesota Representative  
Special Olympics Minnesota Fall Games Athletes  
Lisa Kaspszak, Walmart Health and Wellness Coordinator

**When:** Saturday, Aug. 17  
6 p.m.

**Where:** East Ridge High School  
42 Pioneer Dr.  
Woodbury, MN 55129

**Media:** All media members are invited to attend the check presentation. Those interested must RSVP to Kristin Merchant at [k.merchant@creativepr.com](mailto:k.merchant@creativepr.com).

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**Visual and Interview Opportunities Include:**

- Walmart presenting check to Special Olympics Minnesota
- Hundreds of Fall Games athletes

**About Special Olympics Minnesota**

Special Olympics Minnesota offers children and adults with intellectual disabilities year-round sports training and competition. Through Special Olympics' athletic, health and leadership programs, people with intellectual disabilities transform themselves, their communities and the world.

**About Philanthropy at Walmart**

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts. By operating globally and giving back locally, Walmart is uniquely positioned to address the needs of the communities it serves and make a significant social impact within its core areas of giving: Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating, Sustainability, Career Opportunity and Women's Economic Empowerment. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are leading the fight against hunger in the United States with a \$2 billion commitment through 2015. Walmart has donated more than 1 billion meals to those in need across the country. To learn more about Walmart's giving, visit [foundation.walmart.com](http://foundation.walmart.com).

The Walmart Foundation's State Giving Program supports organizations that create opportunities so people can live better, awarding grants that have a long-lasting, positive impact on communities across the U.S. To be considered for support, perspective grantee organizations must submit applications through the Walmart Foundation State Giving Program's online grant application. Applicants must have a current 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in order to meet the program's minimum eligibility criteria. Additional information about the program's funding guidelines and application process are available online at [www.walmartfoundation.org/stategiving](http://www.walmartfoundation.org/stategiving).

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**Special Olympics Minnesota**

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