

# Wal-Mart commits to community, here and now

## \$40,000 grant goes to UW's anti-poverty campaign

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HERMITAGE – A \$40,000 grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation to the United Way of Mercer County’s “Lifting Families out of Poverty” campaign is helping the agency make a difference in the community, officials said.

“This is the first step in the process of changing our community and you are truly leaders in this regard,” United Way Executive Director Jim Micsky told Wal-Mart officials.

On Wednesday, Micsky thanked Wal-Mart for its generosity, saying the funds are earmarked for programs that focus on the health, education and financial stability of Mercer County families living in poverty.

“I think it’s really a great program and the money will stay right in the community, which is great to be a part of,” said Don Mason, assistant manager for the Hermitage Wal-Mart. “A lot of times when you get grants the money is filtered out far and beyond so you don’t really see the results. It’s great it will stay right here.”

Susan Ference, community involvement coordinator for Wal-Mart, said she is on the state grant council in Pennsylvania and most of the grant applications they receive are for eastern portions of the state.

“We don’t get very many requests from this side of the state,” she said.

Micsky said United Way is “listening to the community” to understand some of its emerging needs and changing the way they do business to meet those needs.

“Because the same old way of doing business wasn’t going to give us results,” he said. “We adopted the ‘Lifting Families out of Poverty’ initiative – it’s a bold goal, obviously – but there are many components underneath it.”

He said the agency is looking for ways to bring people together and collaborate in order to make the community stronger.

Only 35 percent of the 5,962 children under the age of five living in Mercer County have been educated in a quality, publicly-funded early education program and more than 11 percent of the population does not have a high school diploma or GED, according to United Way of Mercer County.

About 12 percent of the population also has no health insurance and 29 percent of the pregnant women here have not received prenatal care in their first trimester, according to the agency.

“This grant makes a difference,” Micsky said. “Thank you, thank you, thank you. You are changing the lives of people in this community.

“We commend you for your leadership roles.”

[http://www.sharonherald.com/news/local\\_news/wal-mart-commits-to-community-here-and-now/article\\_28c6d93c-9e2a-5fd6-9a0c-b1e7240fda69.html](http://www.sharonherald.com/news/local_news/wal-mart-commits-to-community-here-and-now/article_28c6d93c-9e2a-5fd6-9a0c-b1e7240fda69.html)