

As need climbs, companies rise to challenge

By **DREW AMO**

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WASECA — December is normally the time of giving. The clients and staff of iWealth in Waseca took that to heart with a fundraiser to help a new program that aims to give those in tough times a nice holiday meal.

This is the first year the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center has done a Holiday Food Basket program.

It is similar to the long-running Thanksgiving Food Basket program where eligible families are able to sign up and receive a complete meal in a bag.

Everything from a full turkey to stuffing and potatoes are included with the meal, depending on the size of the family. Those looking for a meal by themselves will be given a chicken instead of a whole turkey.

According to Service

Center Programs Manager Cindy Coy, there have been 325 applications for the program this year. Of those, about 150 are senior citizens.

Coy added that seniors on a fixed income and those with a non-livable wage make up the vast majority of the clients they see at the food shelf.

iWealth owner Brad Connors explained that they wanted to do something as an office and talked to the service center to see what they could do. He knew about the Thanksgiving Food Basket program, but learned about the new Holiday Food Basket program and thought it would be a good thing to donate to.

So iWealth sent a letter to all their clients explaining program at the Neighborhood Service Center. The letter also said that iWealth would match donations up to \$3,000 as well.

Eighty families ended up donating to the fund-



Brad and Trudi Connors, right, from iWealth present a check to Robert Modderman and Cindy Coy from the Neighborhood Service Center. The \$6,645 check is a combination of donations from iWealth clients as well as matching funds from the business. The donation will go towards the cost of this year's Holiday Food Basket program.

raiser from amounts as little as \$5 to as much as \$300. In total, the fundraiser and matching donation ended up raising \$6,645 for the

program.

Coy said this donation should cover the entire cost of this year's Holiday Food Basket program.

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