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Community Engagement awards celebrate outstanding contributions

Summary: Students, faculty and community partner recognized for service to the community

(May 10, 2012)-Last night, the University of Minnesota Morris Office of Community Engagement celebrated outstanding service and commitment to enriching the Morris community throughout the 2011-2012 school year. Awards were presented to Jodie Roy '12, Brooks, Maia Dalager '15, Duluth, Windy Roberts, Morris faculty member, and Robert Frischmon, community partner. Award recipients demonstrate an effect on the broader community, commitment to social justice and/or service, and concern for the "big picture" of the work beyond themselves.

Jodie Roy '12, Brooks, received the Student Community Service Award for her ongoing work with the Teaching, Reading, Enabling Children (TREC) and Big Friend Little Friends programs, as well as her role as a GreensCorps member working with stormwater management and water conservation. Jodie has been involved with TREC throughout her time at Morris, and served as a co-president of Big Friend Little Friend, with 50 Big Friend Little Friend pairs currently participating in our community. Through GreenCorps, Jodie pioneered a new position and assisted with other initiatives, including Earth Week activities, Parade of Lights, and work with watershed groups like Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) and the Pomme de Terre River Watershed Association.

The First-Year Student Community Engagement Award was given to Maia Dalager '15, Duluth, for her participation on the Community Engagement floor and her role as organizer for Red Thread week, which included various campus and community activities to raise funds and awareness of human trafficking in Nepal.

Teaching specialist Windy Roberts earned the Faculty-Staff Community Service Award for her extensive work with the Hispanic community in Morris. Windy has played a vital role in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program since it began on campus three years ago. She has mentored students serving as volunteer instructors and expanded beyond the Spanish language to incorporate cultural awareness. As the program continues to grow, Windy takes on additional administrative responsibilities. Windy is also involved with the Jane Addams Project, a program uniting students, members of the Hispanic community, and members of the greater Morris community through bilingual learning circles, and Lazos, a community organization dedicated to helping Latino immigrants build relationships within Stevens County.

The Community Partner Award was presented to Robert Frischmon, UMM alumnus who helps advise the ESL program on campus and teaches ESL at local dairies. Robert has been a major catalyst in the initiation, continuation, and growth of the ESL program at Morris. From offering sample lesson plans to volunteer teachers to classroom observation, Robert's humble approach provides autonomy and confidence to volunteers, many of whom are UMM students. Robert's advocacy has also helped to make the Jane Addams Project a success. For both programs, Robert serves as an important link to the local dairy that employs many Latino residents. He shares his personal experiences to promote a deeper understanding of human diversity and the needs of the Latino population in Morris.

In addition to these awards, the ceremony also honored graduating seniors involved with the Office of Community Engagement and Dr. Margaret Kuchenreuther, Associate Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies and recipient

of the University of Minnesota Outstanding Community Service Award.

“Because so many students, faculty, staff, and community partners are engrossed in the day-to-day work of making our communities better places, we don’t often take the time to thank each other and celebrate together,” says Argie Manolis, Coordinator for the Office of Community Engagement. “The award winners’ stories are just a handful of stories we could tell about how we have worked together this year to create change.”

The Office of Community Engagement seeks to engage members of the broader community and University of Minnesota, Morris students, faculty, and staff in meaningful, reciprocal course-based and co-curricular partnerships. These partnerships meet identified community needs advance the campus mission, learning outcomes, and key campus priorities and work toward more vibrant, just, and inclusive communities.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.