

# Lifting up vets

**Jim Price receives 2008 Salina Award for Outstanding Citizenship**

By DAVID CLOUSTON

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Years ago, a fellow member of the Disabled American Veterans asked Jim Price if Price could give him and his electric scooter a lift to the Wichita Veterans Administration medical center for an appointment.

Another veteran, an amputee, learned of the arrangement and asked if he could get a ride to his appointment. Word spread. Soon, Price was making as many as three to four trips a week to Wichita and piling up thousands of miles on his personal van.

Mind you, Price was already retired, after a 20-year hitch in the Air Force and another 20 years working as a postal clerk.

"It makes you feel good. A lot of these veterans I transport can't drive themselves," Price said Tuesday with a smile.

The 78-year-old received the 2008 Salina Award for Outstanding Citizenship presented during the Greater Salina Community Foundation's annual awards event Tuesday at Salina Country Club.

Price accepted a \$1,000 gift and a plaque from foundation Executive Director Betsy Wearing in front of an audience of about 150 attending the event.

For five years, Price transported veterans on his own. The demonstrated need for transportation to VA hospitals in Wichita and elsewhere in the state led the Salina DAV chapter to buy a minivan in 1998 and present it to the Wichita VA Medical Center, which provides maintenance and upkeep on the vehicle.

But Price and his wife, Ellen, continue to be the contact for all calls for rides. They schedule both riders and drivers, and maintain ridership and maintenance records on the van, which makes the trip to Wichita up to four days a week.

Price also drives a Salina-based DAV van to VA medical centers in Topeka, Leavenworth and Kansas City for area veterans to receive



**TOM DORSEY / Salina Journal**  
Jim Price (left) is congratulated Tuesday by Don Schroeder after Price was named the recipient of the 2008 Salina Award for Outstanding Citizenship presented during the Greater Salina Community Foundation's awards event Tuesday at Salina Country Club.

specialized care.

In 2007, the two vans served a total of 1,099 riders.

## Stein given youth award

This year's awards celebration also honored Elissa Stein, 18, a senior at Southeast of Saline High School. The daughter of David and Denise

Stein, she received the Youth Citizenship Award from the foundation's youth grant.



**Elissa Stein**

Maker's Council, an organization made up of Saline County high school students. Stein was awarded a \$100 gift and a plaque.

Nominees for the award are nominated by their high school peers and community members for significant volunteer contributions to the community.

Stein helped organize a meal and benefit auction that raised more than \$10,000 to benefit a classmate who was seriously injured two years ago in a vehicle crash.

As a junior, working for the Volunteer Connection, she completed more hours than any other Saline County student.

This year, as National Honor Society chapter president, Stein helped the chapter set a school record for collecting food for the Emergency Aid-Food Bank, taking in 4,000 items, well over the goal of 1,500 items. She's also been active in a student leadership group, "Friends of Rachel," named for Rachel Scott, the first student killed in the Columbine High School shootings in Colorado.

Stein's college plans include preparing for a career as a physical therapist and playing collegiate softball.

## \$43 million in assets

Before the announcement of the awards for community service, Wearing reviewed the growth of the foundation, which she said is holding steady with about \$43 million in assets.

In the past year, the foundation has awarded nearly \$9 million in grants for community causes.

"That is for us, an unprecedented amount of grants for one year," she said.

"This occurred because we had some significant gifts to the foundation and some significant grants that went back out."

Last spring, the foundation received a \$4 million estate. Of that, \$3.6 million immediately went out to various nonprofit foundations the foundation supports.

"What a day that was for me. I got to call those folks and tell them that we had more than a million apiece for them. Those are the single largest grants we've

made to date," she said.

The balance of the estate stays with the foundation and is creating a fund to be used to finance arts and humanities programs for youth.

Tuesday's awards ceremony also included a \$5,200 grant from the PET Project to Heartland Early Learning Programs.

PET, which stands for Philanthropy, Empowerment and Transformation, comprises young donors who, with the foundation's help, offer a significant grant each year to a program or project of their choice.

The grant to Heartland is to fund extended summer school for 17 kindergarten-bound children, some who are still learning English and who need help moving from preschool to kindergarten in the fall.

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