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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Valley Natural Foods Encourages Local Community to “Run for Hope” in May

Dakota County Co-op Sponsors Inaugural 5K, Benefiting Hope for Tomorrow

Burnsville, Minnesota- March 2nd, 2011- South metro families can take strides together for health, wellness and hope this May. Valley Natural Foods will be hosting its inaugural 5K walk/run – the “Run for Hope”- to benefit Hope for Tomorrow, a local non-profit mentoring organization for young boys and girls. The event will begin and end right outside the Valley Natural Foods parking lot on Saturday, May 7th, 2011. Participants must pre-register at <http://www.runforhope5k.com/> by April 7th, 2011 to receive a free t-shirt.

All proceeds from the event will directly benefit Hope for Tomorrow. This organization partners kids with successful individuals in the community, based upon the theme: “Partnering with Tomorrow's Leaders.” These mentors meet with the students once a month, utilizing curriculum focused on confidence building, planning for the future and building a healthy, mind, body and spirit. Paula Sahin, Human Resources Manager at Valley Natural Foods, started mentoring at Hope for Tomorrow last fall and pioneered the idea for a 5K event.

“Our mission is a healthy community and Hope for Tomorrow helps build healthy families,” says Sahin. “It is only natural that we create a joint platform for both organizations to work together.

Working together on a 5K event strongly supports both companies' values: promoting physical activity, a healthy lifestyle, nutrition education and bringing families together to develop sustainable relationships.”

Since Hope for Tomorrow's 1997 beginnings at Bloomington's Valley View Middle School, the organization has experienced continued growth. Hope for Tomorrow is now 70 mentors strong, with programs in seven south metro schools including those in Burnsville, Apple Valley, Eagan, White Bear Lake and Eden Prairie.

“We are experiencing much success but we do not have the resources for sustained growth,” says Renae Pereira, a Hope for Tomorrow board member and five year mentor. “I would love to see Hope for Tomorrow in every school in Minnesota because we do something unique- we help those kids in the “middle” who may be overlooked. These kids might be the first in their household to consider going to college. Mentors become a positive force in these kids' lives, helping influence which direction they may take toward their future.”

Hope for Tomorrow already has the City of Burnsville's support. Burnsville Mayor, Elizabeth Kautz, a former mentor who helped establish Hope for Tomorrow's Burnsville chapter, applauds the effort.

“There are many benefits to participating in this 5K,” says Mayor Kautz. “For one, it benefits a wonderful organization that helps young girls and boys not fall through the cracks; secondly, it promotes a high physical activity level an essential component to healthy living; and thirdly, it helps people network, build friendships, and enjoy an activity together as a family. It is truly a family event.”

About Valley Natural Foods:

Valley Natural Foods of Burnsville, MN is a community-owned cooperative serving the south metro area. For 33 years, Valley Natural Foods has fostered relationships in support of local and fair trade healthy food and community, creating innovations such as Down in the Valley, a local food program that works directly with and supports small Minnesota farms. More about Valley Natural Foods can be found at www.valleynaturalfoods.com.

About Hope for Tomorrow:

Hope for Tomorrow is a non-profit mentoring organization for young people with programs in Burnsville, Bloomington, Apple Valley, Eagan, White Bear Lake and Eden Prairie schools. For the last 14 years, the organization has paired successful people in the business community with young boys and girls, teaching them to dream, set goals to achieve those dreams, and develop greater public speaking confidence. Mentors help kids develop Roadmaps for the future through uniquely developed curriculum topics and other tools. Kids are also introduced to corporate office visits offsite along with college visits. Visit <http://hopefortomorrowmentoring.org/> for more information.