

Salvation Army



Lt Brad Burkett was the speaker at the Optimist Club on Saturday, September 17. He and his wife have been in Council Bluffs just over one year.

Brad was born in Chicago. His parents were in the Salvation Army, so he traveled a lot as a youth. He was in Haiti twelve years ago.

The Salvation Army was started by William Booth. He wanted to take the message of Christianity directly to the poor, homeless, hungry, and destitute in London. His message and services in a Quaker graveyard became an instant success.

The Salvation Army is now in over 200 countries. Their focus, especially in some overseas countries, is preventing human trafficking, schools and treatment centers, and orphanages. In the United States they focus on adult rehabilitation from drugs and substance abuse, domestic abuse shelters, and human trafficking committees.

With the Council Bluffs office in the Lakin Center, the Salvation Army works closely with the other agencies there. They help people with rent, mortgages, utilities, and food.

This year has been a busy year. The Salvation Army provided 1000 youth with back to school kits. They helped with sandbagging, providing hydration and safety kits. They are now providing clean-up kits.

Brad said that most of their money comes from donations. The bell ringers at Christmas provide about 50% of their funding. They also receive some funds from United Way and from estates and large donors.

Unlike many charities, the Salvation Army does not have a management hierarchy with highly paid staff. Pay for officers is based on years of service and family size, so executives may receive less than local area workers. Officers accept 3-7 year appointments. They can also volunteer for an overseas appointment, which is for three years. All officers are ordained ministers.

The Salvation Army welcomes donations at their thrift stores, food, and monetary donations. They especially need meat items and volunteers. More information about the USA Central Territory, which includes Omaha and Council Bluffs, is available at <http://www.usc.salvationarmy.org>. Brad and his wife Cassandra are the officers for the Council Bluffs area.