

Council Bluffs Goodwill



Holly Schwietz from the Council Bluffs Goodwill talked at the Treynor Optimist Club on March 24. She has worked at Goodwill for ten years.

Holly currently works in the Work Experience Program, where she has worked for eight years. The program is for High School students who have been referred to the program by their school. There are currently 90 students in five of the area's 13 Goodwill stores. The focus of the program is Employment and Training. The students set individual goals, receive High School credit, and get paid minimum wage. Holly has 15 students every day,

with them working on shifts 8:30 until 3:00 p.m. She files a report on each of the students every Trimester.

Students learn skills such as regular attendance, handling stress, maintaining focus, interacting with others, etc. They need to attend school to work at Goodwill under the Work Experience Program. The students are a supplement to the Goodwill staff, so they learn to perform every aspect of the work.

Holly went to the University of Kansas majoring in film studies. She started working for Family Service on special needs adoptions. She that led to other jobs and eventually to her current position. She said that every job she found was through friends.

Goodwill started during the Depression. During that time employment was difficult to find, but people with disabilities had very few opportunities. At that time employees would refurbish clothing.

The Council Bluffs Goodwill is the only store on this side of Iowa. This summer because of the flooding they received 16 million tons of donations. Six million tons were not usable.

The emphasis at Goodwill he past 1½ years has been recycling. They refurbish and sell computers at 72nd and F in Omaha. Some clothing is sold in bulk in Omaha.

The Council Bluffs store puts out 2000 pieces of clothing every day. They also put out 30 carts of other items, such as books, shoes, etc. There are 22 staff at the store, plus support from the students.

The busiest month for Goodwill is October, for Halloween. The busiest donation month is December because of taxes. Goodwill also has an e-bay type website for expensive things they have to sell.

Holly said that 55 million people in the United States have some type of disability. Goodwill appreciates everyone's help for shopping and donating to Goodwill.