



## Hope After Care

Jean Stephens spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club on June 30. She enjoys her work as the Program Director for Hope After Care Program, a part of the Hope Net Ministries in Council Bluffs.

Jean graduated from Oakland Community College with an Associate's degree in Social Work. She received her Bachelor's Degree with a double major in Biblical Studies and Psychology from William Tyndale College, which is also in Michigan.

Two years ago Jean began working with Hope Net Ministries to develop and oversee the Hope After Care Program which is for women who have been released from incarceration. The program is faith-based and a non-profit ministry in Council Bluffs. Hope Net operates two Sequels Thrift Stores. This program addresses poverty through Circles of Support. Since its inception, Hope After Care has expanded to include a women's weekly support group called the Winner's Circle, a weekly Overcomer's Bible Study, a Craft Class at the Women's Residential Correctional Facility, and a semi-monthly After

Care class at the Pottawattamie County jail.

There is a great need for women who have been released from prison to have assistance to change their behavior and start a new life. Many lack clothing and transportation for jobs. Sequels helps with the clothing needs, but Jean says bicycles are needed for those who cannot drive to help with the transportation. At various meetings with these women in need, help is welcomed to assist with child care.

Jean also explained how important it is to immediately assist those who are just released before they return to previous behavior problems. If assistance is not offered drug dealers will again seek associations with those released from incarceration.