

Teaching a Blind Student



Dennis White & Julie Campbell

Julie Campbell, a teacher's aid at the Treynor schools, spoke at the Optimist Club on March 19 about her experience. She started as a teacher's aid seven years ago. She has been working with a blind student named Tyler since he was in third grade. He is now in eighth grade.

The Braille system is a method that is widely used by blind people to read and write, and was the first digital form of writing. It consists of six dots that are raised. Each combination of dots represents a letter, digit, or character. Some words also have contractions in Braille. Julie uses a specialized machine

to type Braille which produces only one size of type for Braille characters, making them easier to read.

Julie said that her goal is to make learning fun for her student and to help the teachers. The first year she was with Tyler in his classes, but now she just goes along to math class, since math is difficult to learn if you cannot see. To help make Tyler independent, Julie folds papers different for each subject, similar to the method blind people use to distinguish different denominations of money.

The teachers at Treynor are very cooperative. They have to explain everything verbally, not just write things on the board. They provide Julie lesson plans a week ahead of time so she can transcribe the lesson into Braille.

Julie Campbell has always loved art, which makes her job easier when she has to create maps and charts for Tyler to use. She works closely with his parents also. Tyler gets additional assistance from the AEA three times a week. He is in Band and on the honor roll.