

Posted Online: June 24, 2012, 2:10 pm

## Goodwill voucher program clothing those in need

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By **Lindsay Hocker**, [lhocker@qconline.com](mailto:lhocker@qconline.com)

Putting shirts on people's backs and shoes on their feet is what Goodwill of the Heartland's voucher program is all about.

The vouchers, which can be used for clothing or shoes, are distributed by nonprofits in communities with Goodwill stores, including the Quad-Cities.

"The agencies we work with are really aligned with our mission as well, which is helping people overcome barriers to independence," Dana Engelbert, vice president of marketing, said.

The voucher program was started about 25 years ago with a one partner in Johnson County, Iowa.

Territory for the Iowa City-headquartered Goodwill of the Heartland includes the Illinois Quad-Cities and 16 southeastern Iowa counties.

Six Quad-Cities organizations are part of the voucher program, including Bethany for Children and Families, which has locations in Moline and Davenport.

At a recent distribution day at Bethany in Moline, Paulette Roland, of Moline, said she uses her vouchers to buy clothing for herself and her husband.

"It's hard times, and every little bit helps," she said.

Ms. Roland usually goes to a distribution day once every other month. She said the money she saves means more money for other expenses such as food and gas.

Bethany for Children and Families began distributing Goodwill vouchers in April 2009, and has distributed more than 10,340 vouchers, communications coordinator Katie Nelson said. "They have a huge impact for individuals who are in need."



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**Photo: Mike Bradley**

Volunteer Deb Owens distributes Goodwill vouchers at Bethany for Children & Families in Moline on Friday, June 15, 2012. Anyone with a valid photo ID can get one \$10 voucher each month.



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**Photo: Mike Bradley**

Volunteer Deb Owens distributes Goodwill vouchers at Bethany for Children & Families in Moline on Friday, June 15, 2012. Anyone with a valid photo ID can get one \$10 voucher each month.

The \$10 vouchers are

distributed at Bethany, 1830 6th Ave., Moline, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays, and at the Davenport site at 1202 W. 3rd St., from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays.

People do not have to be Bethany clients to get a voucher at Bethany. They must show a photo ID, and each household is limited to one voucher a month.

Ms. Nelson said people come in for vouchers for a variety of reasons. Some are young mothers who need infant clothing and parents who need scarves or other seasonal clothing for their kids.

Davenport-based Family Resources, which has programs focusing on child welfare and juvenile justice, mental health, victim services and education, began distributing the vouchers in early 2010 and distributes them to about 350 clients a year.

Vice president Mary Macumber Schmidt said employees distribute them to clients and take the clients to Goodwill stores to redeem them.

"It makes a huge difference, it allows clients to access donations that meet their needs," she said. "They get to experience the shopping atmosphere and get to make a choice."

Ms. Macumber Schmidt said clients who left domestic abuse situations "frequently escape with nothing but the clothes they are wearing."