



Winter affects local charities

As the days grow shorter, darker, and colder, the challenges that charities, and the people they serve, change.

Not having reliable transportation can cause difficulty in finding or keeping a job.

"There may be people who can't afford a vehicle, are unable to afford money for gas, or don't have a driver's license, who normally walk or bike to work. We can give them a bike, but when the weather changes,

it can be difficult for them to get to work, so they need rides or a taxi, which they can't always afford," said Laura Reif, a care coordinator at the Pella charity, The Well. "If people can't get to work, they might end up losing their jobs."

Another need that families living in poverty may have during winter is the need for appropriate winter gear.

"Getting winter clothes for kids can be a challenge, so it's helpful if they can have access to clean coats and boots that are still in good shape. There are organizations in Pella that provide those items for free, or they



can be purchased at a lower cost from the thrift store," explained Reif.

As the temperature drops, the cost of utilities increases. Even a small increase can be a huge burden on families living in poverty, who may only have a few hundred dollars left after paying their bills. This can cause an increased reliance upon charities to bridge the gap.

"When someone is living paycheck to paycheck or on a fixed income, even a slight increase in the cost of utilities, such as heat, can put them behind," said Reif. "As winter progresses, they may get more and more behind. So people are more likely to have an increased need for food and personal items because the money they usually have for those things goes towards utilities. That might mean that they rely more on food shelves to fill the gap."

While it is important to give at Christmas Time, local charities need contributions year round. "It's good to remember that people in our community have needs all year long," said Reif, "and any time is a good time to donate your time, money, or unused items to help others."

• Lily Pumphrey (lily.pumphrey@student.pella.k12.ia.us)

AcaPella "Never Gives Up"

This year's show choir season has kicked off and is in full swing. With their first competition taking place January 5, the group has been preparing for the season. Director Michelle Chaplin chose the show named "Never Give Up" for AcaPella. It is about the life of Thomas Edison and his perseverance in inventing the light bulb.

"It's a fun theme because we like to inspire people, and his story is unique because he kept trying over and over to get the light bulb and didn't see himself as failing but just improving. We can apply this to our everyday lives to inspire others," said Chaplin. "We also really like to use music that is vaguely familiar and not familiar at all."

According to Chaplin, this year's group of students are particularly passionate about show choir.

"This year's students have been the most dedicated, hard working students that I have worked with in my 20 years of teaching," said Chaplin. "I love going to every rehearsal and seeing and working with these kids."

Her goal this season is to show improvement after each rehearsal and competition. The group takes critiques from the judges at every competition and adds their input to further their progress.

"My goals are never to do with trophies, but the outcome of what our performance was," Chaplin explained.

Senior Andie Sunderman is excited to debut their show this upcoming January.

"I love the competitions," said Sunderman.

"Competing is so much fun, and I meet so many new people."

• Becca Bonham (becca.bonhamd@student.pella.k12.ia.us)

Athletes committ during National Signing Week



>>>COMMITT: Six of Pella High's seniors (first row left to right) Natalie Clayberg, Nick DeJong, Emily Holterhouse (back row left to right) Madison Parks, Jenna Schulte, and Grace Held sign letters of intent. During National Signing Week, those planning on playing Div 1, 2, or NAIA college sports can make their commitment official. "It's exciting to see them continue on with their athletic endeavors. These students have worked hard towards a goal to continue playing at the next level with a lot of time and training," said Athletic Director Dale Otte. "It's an opportunity that many athletes don't get."

Photo by: Ethan Gorden

Natalie Clayberg committed to play volleyball at Wartburg.

"As of now, my plan is to major in social work. I chose Wartburg because I loved the campus, had the chance to meet a few professors, and found the different opportunities the major offered to be very interesting," said Clayberg. "I am also so excited to continue my volleyball career at Wartburg! I'm excited to get to play under such amazing coaches and on a team with an awesome culture where team chemistry and relationships are in high priority."

Nick DeJong committed to play football at University of Iowa.

"I committed to Iowa because I really liked their coaches and felt like it was the best fit for me. Also, at Iowa I believe I can reach my full potential," said DeJong.

Emily Holterhaus committed to play volleyball at UNI.

"I'm planning to major in Psychology. I chose UNI because I really like their volleyball program, and they have many majors that will allow me to narrow down my studies to a more specific type of Psychology," stated Holterhaus.

Madison arks is committed to UNI and will be playing softball.

"I will be going into Exercise Science. This college checked off everything I needed to have a fun, fulfilling college experience," stated Parks

Jenna Schulte is committed to UCM (University of Central Missouri) and will be playing volleyball.

"I am planning on majoring in Interior Design with a Business minor. I loved the atmosphere, the coaches, and I felt extremely welcomed. I met most of my future teammates, toured the campus, and it felt like home," said Schulte.

Grace Held is committed to the University of Sioux Falls and will be playing soccer.

"I am looking to major in business administration, marketing, or finance. I chose this college because they have a strong business program, and I was given the opportunity to play for their soccer team," stated Held.

• Drake Beard (drake.beard@student.pella.k12.ia.us)