

Spring Move Out Days Drive collected more than a ton for Goodwill

by Kristin Stockheimer - Thursday, August 15, 2013

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/28839/spring-move-out-days-drive-collected-more-than-a-ton-for-goodwill/>

This past May while University of Wisconsin Oshkosh students busily moved out of the residence halls volunteers were at the scene next to Goodwill receptacles asking students to make one last decision before they ventured home for the summer.

Goodwill or landfill?

And, as the next academic year at UW Oshkosh comes into focus, the results are in.

2,020 pounds worth of items were kept out of the landfill and donated to Goodwill Industries during the 2013 UW Oshkosh Move Out Days drive.

With the slogan “Goodwill not the landfill” the committee consisting of Jim Vanden Boom, Brian Kermath, Brad Spanbauer, Steve Chesna, Emily Husar Martin, Lori Develice Collins, Dawn Dettlaff and Maureen Muldoon were able to reap the benefits of their hard work.

“This was a great event for three reasons. First, it supports Goodwill sustainability, by recycling and reducing costs at the university. Secondly, it helps educate to the next generation who we are at Goodwill and it also gives greater engagement at the university,” said Vanden Boom, the Goodwill Industries Community Engagement Leader.

The drive was sponsored by the UW Oshkosh Sustainability Office and the Campus Sustainability Council. It also received support from Residential Life, Custodial Services, professors, Hands on Oshkosh, Oshkosh Volunteerism and others willing to lend a hand.

UW Oshkosh had move out drives in the past but this was the first year that they partnered with Goodwill. This gave the University an opportunity to offer Goodwill large garment bags for students to place unwanted items.

“More than 1,000 bags were given to students before finals week. In the past all they had were emails and announcements, but the bags were something tangible to give to the students to remind them of the option,” said Brian Kermath, UW Oshkosh’s Sustainability Director. “Partnering with Goodwill this year was the extra ingredient we needed to make it work.”

The partnership with Goodwill was not only good for the students who donated and kept items out of the landfill, it also benefits people in need. Goodwill is 100 percent not-for-profit, so every dollar spent at Goodwill goes back into funding local community programs for those in need. It aims to make a positive image for the community.

“Goodwill uses every drive to create a partnership and has a goal of having every school leave with a good taste in their mouth wanting to get involved with Goodwill. We now have outlet store open that allows people to buy items by the pound, giving another cycle for the items, so very little goes to the landfill,” Vanden Boom said.

Vanden Boom also worked on the drive that happened in Green Bay, where there were options available to donate right inside of the residence hall instead of bringing them to the receptacles outside. Next year, UW Oshkosh hopes to do this as well.

Relocating the collection receptacles should make it more convenient for the people donating and create opportunity for more items to be donated. With the drive at UW Oshkosh, Vanden Boom was overall pleased with how it went for the first year and hopes to see it continue to improve.

“We had a shorter time frame to work on this but with everyone working together-- UW Oshkosh Residence Life, Sustainability Council and Sustainability Office--they made it happen and it came together really well. I was glad that UW Oshkosh had such a passion for getting involved in this project,” Vanden Boom said.

Vanden Boom said he was amazed at how much passion and hard work Spanbauer and all of the UW Oshkosh committee members put into the drive.

Spanbauer used his talents to become heavily involved in promoting the event as well as doing daily checks of the storage pods to make sure volunteers were present and that they understood what to do. He too was pleased at how much UW Oshkosh ended up donating.

“We diverted just over a ton of waste from going to landfill. Landfill diversion is extremely important because it keeps perfectly good items in the marketplace for consumers, rather than leaving consumers to have to buy new items constantly, creating a higher demand for more resources,” said Spanbauer, who is a UW Oshkosh graduate student who is going into this fifth semester studying ecology.

Keeping items out of the landfill is one of the objectives that the University has, so the ton that the drive collected was a step in the right direction. Kermath was satisfied with the amount this year but know UW Oshkosh can do even better.

“In the past we never weighed the items collected so it’s hard to compare, but more than a ton is a fair amount of material diverted. We learned how we can improve and we would like to double that number hopefully by next year,” said Kermath.

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