

Goodland teen visits with role model from television



Goodland teen Thomas McCurry, 15, talked with his role model, Jez Lockett, 24, of Garden City, and the two talked about their weight-loss journeys. McCurry has lost 60 pounds since August, and Lockett, part of the cast of NBC's *Biggest Loser* Season 4, 150.

Photo by Jan Katz Ackerman/Colby Free Press

By Jan Katz Ackerman

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A Goodland teen met his role model last Tuesday evening in Hoxie when Jez Lockett spoke about his year-long journey to losing 151 pounds as part of the cast of NBC's *The Biggest Loser*.

"I can't wait to meet him," said Thomas McCurry, a 15-year-old freshman at St Francis High School. "I've lost 60 pounds since August and can lift my dad now."

Hoxie Medical Clinic staff members invited Lockett, 24, to talk about how his life has changed since losing 122 pounds on the program. He said he lost another 29 after returning home to Garden City.

A case manager for severe and emotionally disturbed children, Lockett said he weighed 352 pounds before joining the television show's fourth season in 2007.

McCurry said he has battled his weight since early childhood. He said watching *The Biggest Loser* encouraged him and

his 41-year-old father, Dan, to lose weight together. Dan said he lost 60 pounds over seven years.

The McCurrys live in Goodland, but Thomas attends St. Francis High School. His father works at the Good Samaritan Center and his mother is a homemaker.

From a peak of 320 pounds, McCurry said, his weight started to plunge after he switched to the St. Francis schools. As a freshman, he went out for football and wrestling, and coaches asked his parents for permission to encourage him to lose some weight.

"He's down to between 235 and 240," his dad said. "The last 25 to 30 pounds will be hard."

Young McCurry said he dropped 40 of the 60 pounds with weight training and walking. In addition to success at his high school — through his weight loss and being more active in the football and wrestling programs — McCurry last week

was invited to join a summer baseball team in Colby.

"We'll be making the trip to Colby three times a week," Dan McCurry said.

McCurry's step-mother, Julia, 37, said her weight tends to "go up and down a bit," and she, too, has encouraged her step-son's efforts.

"We watch *The Biggest Loser* together," Julia said. "It's our family Tuesday-night ritual."

Lockett told the Hoxie audience his weight loss has not come without challenges.

"It's been quite a journey," he said, "and next month I'll have surgery to remove 15 pounds of excess skin."

Pam Popp, manager of the Hoxie Medical Clinic, said the appearance was paid for through a weight-loss grant the clinic from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

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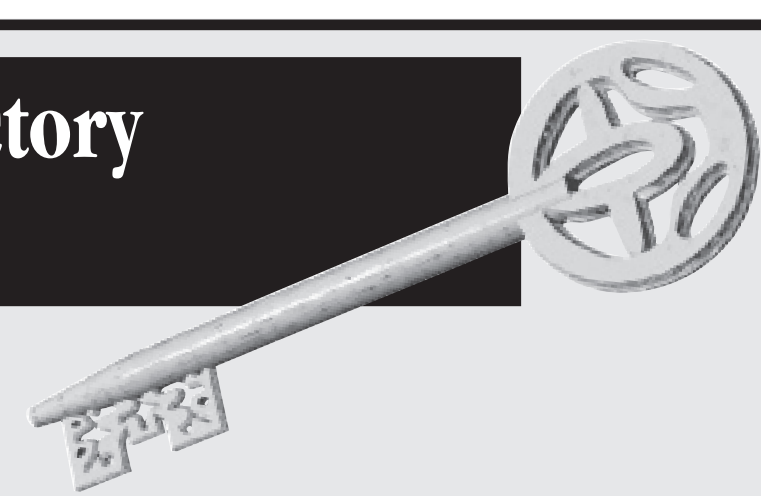
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