



Giving Bear Hugs

Annual Meeting attendees received useful business tips from a savvy and philanthropic business owner – who happens to be a nine-year-old child.

However, **Taylor Crabtree** is not your typical nine-year old – she is the owner of Taybear Company, which sells decorated hair clips and uses the profits to buy teddy bears for children suffering from cancer and chronic blood disorders. The innovative Crabtree got the idea for her business after receiving many compliments on her hair clips, which she painted herself.

“Since both my grandmothers had cancer, I thought it must be hard for kids who get cancer,” she explained. “I wanted them to have something special to hug. I also wanted them to know even strangers care about them.”

She started her business small, selling hair clips that her friends helped her paint, to classmates and teachers at school. She then expanded Taybear Company by selling directly to the public outside a large retail store. As her business grew, she knew she needed

to get organized.

“Since people were buying my hair clips partly to help sick children, I had to know exactly where the money was going,” she said.

Crabtree learned how to use Quicken® software to keep track of her finances, learned how to use the Internet to order inventory, and approached the Union Bank of California to set up a business account.

“The manager of the bank told me I needed to raise \$12 for the

license fee. I was pretty worried, because every time I spent money, I couldn't buy as many bears. The license fee is worth two bears,” she said. “The bank manager was great. He even

bought some of my hair clips, and I don't think it was a coincidence he bought \$12 worth.”

As a business owner, Crabtree set goals for Taybear Company. She wanted to sell enough hair clips to be able to donate 50 teddy bears. She has far exceeded this goal, donating more than 1,300 bears to children in eight hospitals in Southern California. She's not stopping there – Crabtree has plans to donate an additional 6,000 teddy bears to pediatric hospitals throughout the United States.

How does she run a successful, philanthropic business and still have time to attend school and play with friends? Crabtree offered these tips: believe in yourself; keep good records; try different things; it's okay to make changes; be careful with your expenses; never, never give up; don't try to do everything yourself; ask for help; and enjoy the little moments. ☺



Taylor Crabtree

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MDRT President Brian H. Ashe sits with Taylor Crabtree as he reads a poem on the shirt of one of her bears.