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For Immediate Release

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## **Ex-Offender Earns Second Chance, Pays It Forward**

*Goodwill employee to be awarded for contributions to non-profit's mission*

**INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.** – Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana will honor Jeremiah Davis, manager at its Outlet store in Greenwood, with its 2017 Employment Achievement Award, after six years of dedicated service and leadership. Jeremiah discovered Goodwill in 2011, after being released from prison. Recognizing the limitations created by his recent incarceration, he made a commitment to overcome those challenges through personal and professional growth.

A disproportionate number of ex-offenders are unemployed compared to the general population, which increases the likelihood that they will commit another crime and recidivate. According to the Indiana Department of Correction, 38% of those released will be re-incarcerated within three years.

“Nobody wants to hire you once you’re involved with the criminal justice system,” said Davis.

Goodwill’s mission includes employing those with a criminal history. Davis was first hired for a temporary, third-shift position at Goodwill’s Outlet store on the north side of Indianapolis. He consistently outperformed his peers in production and quality.

When Davis’s temporary position ended, he contacted Goodwill daily about job opportunities. His extraordinary work ethic attracted the attention of the store manager, who offered him a position when one became available.

Davis’s dedication was rewarded with several promotions, and his superior leadership skills earned him the role of Manager of the Greenwood Outlet, where he is currently responsible for more than 80 employees – 75% of whom face a barrier to employment of their own, including criminal history, disability or lack of a diploma.

“What I enjoy most about my position is that I have a direct impact on the mission of helping people overcome their challenges,” said Davis.

He continuously strives to learn and grow, but his sincere interest in helping others illustrates how he extends his influence. He actively encourages employees to pursue their own development and leads by example, often referencing his own experiences as proof that barriers can be overcome.

“I can relate to many employees, be a testimonial for them on what is possible and help prepare them for success,” said Davis.

“We are proud of Jeremiah’s achievements, but what really sets him apart is his desire to pay it forward,” said Kent Kramer, president and CEO of Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana. “Employees

have relocated to continue working under his leadership, which is pretty remarkable.”

Davis credits the opportunities he has been afforded through Goodwill to a change in mindset that encourages him to set bigger goals.

“I used to be afraid to fail, so I would only take on tasks I knew I could succeed at,” said Davis. “But now, I view failure as a learning experience.”

He plans to go to college to earn a business degree and hopes to put it to use at Goodwill.

“I want to be an example to my children and show them that you can overcome your barriers,” said Davis.

Goodwill will recognize Davis at its upcoming Awards Breakfast, an annual event that celebrates the achievements of its employees, students, families and partners. Davis is being honored for his significant progress in overcoming barriers and demonstrated commitment supporting Goodwill’s mission. The Annual Awards Breakfast is Friday, April 28 at 8 a.m. Register to attend by April 21 at [goodwillindy.org/breakfast](http://goodwillindy.org/breakfast).

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#### **About Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana**

Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana changes lives every day by empowering people to increase their independence and reach their potential through education, health and employment. The organization serves 39 Indiana counties and operates more than 70 retail locations, as well as charter schools for adults and youth, a maternal-child health program, a child care center and more.