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For Immediate Release

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Born Blind and with Cerebral Palsy, Woman Overcomes Daily Challenges
17-Year Goodwill Associate Finds Empowerment Through Employment

Indianapolis, Ind. - In acknowledgement of [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#), Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana is recognizing the contributions of our employees who overcome daily barriers. Lorena Salas, Goodwill's 2003 Achiever of the Year, is a valued associate who has consistently demonstrated excellence during her 17-year career at Goodwill. Despite living with blindness and cerebral palsy, Lorena has continued to persist and thrive.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, individuals with disabilities are twice as likely to be unemployed as individuals without disabilities.

"Goodwill employs more than 3,500 Hoosiers – 35% of whom have a disability," said Kent Kramer, president and CEO of Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana. "We encourage other employers to consider the many ways that they can help employees overcome their individual challenges."

Lorena is a textile hanger at Goodwill's Castleton store in Indianapolis. She organizes clothing on rolling racks that are used to transfer merchandise to the sales floor. Although she uses a walker and experiences weakness in her hands and low dexterity, she sets daily production goals to challenge herself.

"I get really excited when I hit six racks because it helps keep the store organized and improves our customers' experience," said Lorena.

Lorena's co-workers are integral to her success.

"She understands her role at Goodwill is important," said Ed Ball, Store Manager. "She takes her job seriously, but she also loves to laugh and brings a lot of joy to our store. We are proud she is part of our team."

National Disability Employment Awareness Month's (NDEAM) roots go back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Upon its establishment in 2001, the Office

of Disability Employment Policy assumed responsibility for NDEAM and has worked to expand its reach and scope ever since.

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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.