

Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana Inc.

December 16, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Cindy L. Graham, Vice President of Marketing
Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana Inc.
Work: 317-524-4212 Cell: 317-459-4162
Email: cgraham@goodwillindy.org

Goodwill's The Excel Center Awarded \$100K to Improve Education, Job Prospects for Young Adults

*New Annie E. Casey Foundation Initiative Aims to Strengthen
Next Generation of Workers, Meet Employer Demand*

The Excel Center, the adult charter school created by Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, has received a \$100,000 grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation through its new Generation Work initiative aimed at identifying effective ways to help young people from low-income families get and keep well-paying jobs. [The Casey Foundation announced The Excel Center's award, along with four others from across the nation, earlier this week.](#)

Over the next year, The Excel Center will work to increase access to meaningful work-based learning and skill-building opportunities for its graduates. The school will partner with business, education and community leaders to better align state education, funding and work support programs, such as those for child care vouchers and transportation, with the goal of improving young adults' access to certifications and on-the-job learning opportunities, leading to better employment outcomes. Partners include EmployIndy, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Conexus Indiana, the Office of Family and Social Services Administration and Ivy Tech Community College.

"Teaching and supporting young adults about how to do a job, keep a job and advance their skills are imperative to them and their families to move toward self-sufficiency," said Kent A. Kramer, CEO and president, Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana. "Indiana's skills gap illustrates the problem – every industry has stated a need for skilled talent. To meet that need, young adults must have work-based experience; while communities, employers, educators and support programs must partner to create models to access to those opportunities."

The Casey Foundation's award funds planning for an initial year of implementation and evaluation of strategies proposed by The Excel Center and its partners. Subsequent funding, which could extend to a total eight years, will support implementing and documenting the impact of their efforts and promoting the use of these strategies on a broad scale in the public, private and nonprofit sector.

"Our future workforce is one of our nation's greatest assets, and we cannot compete globally unless it is strong," said Allison Gerber, a senior associate who oversees the Casey Foundation's investments in improving job opportunities for low-income individuals and families. "The next generation is eager to work, but we must create more avenues for young adults to develop the knowledge and experience they need to succeed in the job market."

News Release

The Excel Center’s model, which coaches young adults through difficult situations and, through mentoring, provides the support a young person needs for success, leads to its participants’ having higher rates of placement than other employment service providers.

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Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana is a social enterprise serving 28 central Indiana counties and employing more than 3,000 Hoosiers. Goodwill’s approach links value-added resources that include access to education, employment and health services that many families need in order to become more economically self-sufficient. Learn more at goodwillindy.org.

The Excel Center is operated by Goodwill Education Initiatives Inc. (GEI), the not-for-profit charter school operator created by Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana Inc. The school provides licensed teachers and online support; a drop-in center with free child care; transportation assistance and a flexible and supportive environment that gives each student a realistic path for their educational success and career. Learn more at excelcenter.org.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation’s children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org.