

For Immediate Release
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The Excel Center Celebrates Its 3,000th Adult High School Graduate *Goodwill Helps Reduce the Education Gap in Marion County*

WHO: Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana presents The Excel Center winter graduating class of 2017 and 2018.

WHAT: The Excel Center will celebrate the graduation of its 3,000th network-wide adult student. Each graduate has overcome various barriers to receive a Core 40 high school diploma along with dual college credits or industry-recognized certifications.

WHEN: **Thursday, February 15, and Friday, February 16**
Doors Open: 5:30 p.m.
Program Begins: 6 p.m.

WHERE: **Indianapolis Metropolitan High School Puma Den**
1635 W. Michigan Street
Indianapolis, IN 46222

WHY: The Excel Center graduation ceremonies celebrate the life and academic accomplishments of the schools' graduating classes. According to the American Community Survey (2015), 15% of Marion County's adults had not earned a high school diploma. To reduce barriers to education, The Excel Center offers resources such as free child care, transportation assistance, extended hours and year-round classes.

The Excel Center is designed for students like Cordarryl Gray, 28, a 2017 graduate, who will share his experience:

"I didn't think it was feasible returning to school after being in a life-changing accident, which left me unable to walk. I never wanted to give up, even with all of the challenges of getting around the school combined with finding the strength to get out of bed sometimes. Even though there were plenty of times when I wanted to stop, the support of my teachers, coaches and family kept me going to reach my goal of getting my diploma. I wanted to come back to school to prove to myself that I could do it, even with this new life challenge that I have to face. This school gave me something that I didn't think was possible at my age."

DETAILS: The Excel Center graduation ceremony will begin with a processional at 6 p.m. The ceremony will include speeches from 2017 and 2018 winter graduates and remarks from the Senior Director of The Excel Center Network, Jeff Hoover, as well as various leadership members from Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana.

INTERVIEW/B-ROLL OPPORTUNITIES:

- **6 - 7:30 p.m.** Commencement ceremony
- **During Ceremony** Select students will share their stories
- **7:30 - 8 p.m.** The Excel Center directors and student speakers will be available for interviews upon request

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The Excel Center is operated by Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. (GEI), the not-for-profit charter school operator created by Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana. The school provides licensed teachers and life coaching; a free child care center; transportation assistance and a flexible and supportive environment that gives each student a realistic path for their educational success and career.